The View from the Traveller Site:  
Architecture that Begins Where the House Ends

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I, Anna Elizabeth Hoare, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.
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Abstract

The thesis explores Traveller sites, seasonal camps, funerary monuments and gift-horses as ‘post-nomadic architectures’: modes of dwelling and sites of personification that make visible the social force of relations between Irish Travellers, and mediate between Travellers and the state, in Ireland and the UK.

The metaphoric resources of post-nomadic architectures arise within the recursive variations of movement and camping, which emulate and elicit flows and intensities, divisions and comings-together of the names and embodied substance of Irish Traveller ‘breeds’. In camps, performative speech and symbolic action disclose nuanced dis/continuities of ‘breed’ and ‘back-breed’, directing actors’ understandings of symmetry, continuity and open-endedness.

When translated into official sites, this field of fractal personhood and relation impels the need for additional architectures as well as regular returns to camping. Funerary monuments, gift cycles of mares and foals, sites and camps form old and new ‘resources for interiority and contexts for self-elaboration’ (Warner 2002: 31), through which Travellers negotiate asymmetries between the public agency of ‘the name’ and the private debts and affections of ‘blood’. Post-nomadic architectures and the body form a distributed field of analogy and metaphor, and are reciprocally constituted as social capacities and sites of personhood and relation.

Post-nomadic architectures disclose the interagency of ‘public’-‘private’ worlds that bring each other into being with transformative potential. In 2004, the European Court ruled that the UK’s ‘G/gypsy’ sites were ‘homes’, recognizing their status in the field of the house. The UK site’s material relations of permanent temporariness, contingent on post-nomadic subjectivities, are upheld by psychiatric diagnosis of the ‘Gypsy’s’ ‘aversion to bricks and mortar’. Synecdochal relations between the UK site and the house contrast with Ireland, where ‘permanent Traveller-specific’ architectures encode non-negotiable difference. The house, a legitimate instrument of violence in reserve, enacts a structural fracture in the Irish state which the state is at pains to concede.
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Research Contexts and Methods

Research methods were led by, but not limited to, participant observation in the events, locations, actions, and conversations that dominated the daily lives of Irish Travellers¹ who were my principal research participants in the UK and Ireland between 2005 and 2007. The contexts of research were principally neither background locations nor familiar settings, but the legal, political, and practical circumstances of Travellers’ lives. An account of these, including notes on recorded population data and its limitations, precedes a description of the methods of research.

Research contexts

Some extended, multi-generational Traveller families are permanently resident in Ireland. Others are dispersed across Ireland and the UK, and as people cross back and forth they encounter different legal, political and material circumstances.² Residents of permanent sites in Ireland often have some relatives ‘beside the road’ in illegal camps, and others in local authority or private rented housing, as well as permanent or temporary sites across Ireland. ‘Traveller accommodation’- Ireland’s official term for the legal and material conditions of Travellers' lives as these are controlled by county councils, housing (Traveller Accommodation) departments, private security personnel, courts and police (known as gardai or guards in Ireland) – is a pervasive concern for Travellers. In practice, ‘Traveller accommodation’ means local authority sites, both the shortage of them and the poor, overcrowded conditions of many; the restrictive conditions, surveillance and quota systems imposed on Travellers.

Reasons for being beside the road are many. Some Travellers in Ireland have resisted being ‘sucked in’, as they put it. Others are unable to form a ‘compatible group’ in order to press for, and exert collective control over, a ‘permanent’ site. Some have fled conflicts to which sites can fall prey. Others, told that no more sites are going to be built,

¹ In the UK, the epithet ‘Irish’ is added to Travellers who originate from Ireland. In Ireland the same people are simply called ‘Travellers’.
² As a result of the historical relationship between the UK and Ireland, Irish citizens have full rights of citizenship in the United Kingdom, including the right to hold a British passport.
are unwilling to go into rented housing or ‘emergency’ sites. Some Travellers, having failed to be included in a requisite number of consecutive Annual Counts of Travellers, are not considered ‘local’. With no claim on a local authority, when these Travellers are prosecuted for camping, courts may seek to expel them from the county. In addition to all these reasons, couples setting up new marital homes are often compelled to leave overcrowded bays or council houses, and some go to the side of the road. In spite of Ireland’s Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, under which local authorities were obliged to make four year plans for ‘Traveller accommodation’, Travellers remain beside the road for any, or a combination, of the above reasons.

**Population and living circumstances**

Reliable data concerning the Irish Traveller population have always been hard to find. Annual Counts of Travellers\(^3\) in Ireland conducted since 1944 relied on the footwork and, more importantly, the perceptions of non-Traveller enumerators as to who was a Traveller. Enumerators only counted those beside the road or in ‘halting sites’,\(^4\) led by local (settled) sources of information. Since a key purpose of Annual Counts was to measure local authorities’ actions in providing ‘halting sites’, there could be a motive to under-estimate numbers or disregard Travellers not considered ‘local’. Until 1996 there was no demographic analysis of the figures. Recent figures for numbers of ‘families’ are uninstructive, such as the number of 4,898 recorded by the Central Statistics Office in 2000 (based on the Annual Count), since there is no explanation of the definition or practical significance of the category.

The 2000 Annual Count, in conjunction with a 1996 Central Statistics Office Report\(^5\) that recorded an average of 4.9 persons per ‘household’ (based on a sample of 10,981 persons,) was widely used to estimate a Traveller population of 24,000 in the Republic of Ireland. It did not include Travellers in housing, or in Northern Ireland and the rest of Great Britain, and was undoubtedly an under-estimate.\(^6\)

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\(^3\) Travellers, formerly called ‘tinkers’ by the settled population, were widely referred to as ‘itinerants’ in mid-twentieth century Ireland. Both ‘tinker’ and ‘itinerant’ are regarded as pejorative.

\(^4\) I.e., housed Travellers were omitted from Annual Counts.

\(^5\) The Demographic Situation of the Traveller Community in April 1996 (Ireland, Central Statistics Office.)

\(^6\) In 2000 the whole population of Ireland was almost 3.8 million.
An Irish Traveller Movement Fact Sheet on Traveller Accommodation reports that the 1995 Report of The Task Force on the Travelling Community ‘recommended that 3,100 units of Traveller-specific accommodation be provided by the year 2000. By the end of 2004 only 98 units had been provided. The number of Traveller families awaiting permanent accommodation at the end of 2004 was in excess of 3,500. The additional number of Traveller families accommodated in 2004 was 231’. (http://itmtrav.ie/keyissues/myview/52).

Ireland’s National Census of 2011 recorded the Traveller population as 29,495, but Travellers’ living circumstances have become even harder to ascertain. Accommodation is categorized as ‘temporary’ or ‘permanent’, with no figures for those in sites, camps or housing. It is unclear how many Travellers experience frequent changes of living circumstances, moving between camps, sites and housing, although this phenomenon is well-recognized.

Implied definitions of Travellers raise obvious questions. Annual Counts which exclude those in housing suggest that Travellers are those identified by a nomadic form of life. However, permanent accommodation, whether housing or ‘Traveller-specific’ architecture, which includes ‘permanent’ sites and group housing, does not alter the idea that someone is a Traveller in Ireland. The pre-Famine Royal Commission for Inquiring into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland notably described ‘tinkers’ as a ‘separate class’ who ‘intermarry with one another’ (1835: 574; 495). In a striking echo of the 1835 Report, Ireland’s First Report on implementing the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities states that the 1998 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act ‘for the first time in Irish Statute law, [recognizes] Travellers as a separate class of persons’ (2001: 50-51).  

In 2002 camping in Ireland was criminalised, and caravans could be confiscated by the guards without recourse to the courts. As a result sites have become increasingly overcrowded, sometimes with tragic results. In October 2015 ten people died in a fire in a Dublin site. In January 2016, Louth County Council decided to close a site in Dundalk.

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7 Ireland adopted The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPM) as part of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which established new political and institutional arrangements between Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic and the UK. For Ireland these included FCPM and the Republic’s first equality legislation, the Equal Status Act.2000.
and evicted twenty-three families. The caravans of five families were impounded, and a further fifteen remain camping beside the road under threat of the same sanction.

As in the UK, increasingly punitive sanctions against camping have not been matched by increased provision of legal sites. As the Traveller population increases at a faster rate than new sites are built, more and more Travellers find accommodation in the private rented sector of mainstream housing, either willingly or unwillingly.

**The UK’s ‘static’ sites**

The Traveller site in the UK originated in government’s attempt to rationalise an unkempt edge of dwelling without property that had eluded the post-war planning system. From 1960, compulsory licensing and the systematic elimination of hitherto legal, informal camps sought to cure a perceived ‘gypsy problem’ (Dodds 1966: 26,160) by seeking to coerce Travellers into adopting ‘a settled way of life’ (Adams, Okely, et al 1975: 11-12, 20-21) through means which fell just short of (perceived) actively ‘assimilationist’ policies. A few years later, a mode of officially ‘temporary’ dwelling in fixed sites invented by the state in 1968 embodied contradictory aims of active repression, enforced dependency and notional integration. However, for an alliance that included the Gypsy Council and the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL), official sites meant recognition of Travellers’ right ‘to participate in our multi-racial society as a minority group with a distinctive culture and style of living’ (cited in Adams, Okely et al 1975: 14).

Since the 1960s sites have been promoted, transformed and more recently privatised by Travellers themselves (both Irish and British,) and paradoxes have multiplied in the material relations of permanent, temporary dwelling (Hoare 2014). UK Traveller sites are described as ‘static’ as opposed to ‘permanent’, and since the late 1990s politics have gradually been dominated by the emergence of Traveller-owned sites. Settled opposition and the legal/illegal status of private sites have fuelled national media and party political campaigns.

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9 The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, vested development (i.e., land use) in the state, as the founding principle of the planning system. This is discussed in detail in chapters that follow. 
10 The Caravan Sites Act Part II (CSA) 1968 compelled local authorities to provide licensed sites for ‘gipsies’ (sic), strengthening earlier, ineffective measures in the first Caravan Sites Act 1960.
Sites, group housing schemes, camps and courtrooms became familiar research locations and enigmatic objects formed and contested across multiple discourses. The theoretical concerns from which research methods arose encompassed property, law, architecture, kinship, gender, subjectivity and personhood. Traveller sociality and site coalitions, post-nomadic subjectivities and material forms of life could not be divorced from legal rationalities, transnational politics and local protocols. However, this should not be understood to imply that I perceived Travellers as passive victims of forces wholly beyond their control. Contradictory processes occur in tandem, irresolution persists, and state policies turn out to have unexpected consequences.

**Research methods**

In 2006 I attended a public inquiry in the UK involving Irish Travellers seeking to legalise their site, and a meeting between Traveller activists from across the country and officials of the Gypsy and Traveller Unit at the Department of Communities and Local Government. A principal aim of a series of such meetings was to give government officials insights into a widespread backlash against the Labour government’s attempts to introduce reforms through the *Housing Act 2004*.

In Ireland (between December 2006 and January 2008), alongside participant observation with Travellers, I researched Traveller Accommodation policies, the role of official advocacy, patronage by the Catholic Church, quota systems, and the equality laws\(^{11}\) from which Traveller housing and accommodation policies are excluded. Sources included media reports, planning policy documents, council minutes and historical records and newspapers. I met with former advocates of the old ‘Itinerant Settlement’ movement, councillors, officials and Traveller Accommodation officers, as well as Irish Traveller Movement activists.

The frame of ‘Traveller accommodation’ in Ireland, in which Travellers are subjects of public policy, offers no insight into Traveller sociality. For Travellers, other ‘architectures’ (as I came to regard them,) delineate, refute, and extend the boundaries of the site. Understood separately and in relation to each other, they offered insights into the commitments and incommensurabilities of life in sites, and it was to these Travellers frequently directed my attention.

In the west of Ireland I was often a daily visitor to a collective site of four generations of ‘the one family’ for twelve months between 2007 and 2008. I accompanied women and girls on visits to camps, sites, and housing estates throughout south-west Ireland. I joined visits to family members in hospital and took part in shopping trips, outings to boxing tournaments, pilgrimages to shrines on occasions of sickness, and in visits to women’s graves on mothers’ day. I was included in special events such as christenings, first communions, and occasional nights out. Some activities afforded insights into the anxiety around relationships between ‘breeds’ in which women act as indirect mediators, and report at length to their husbands. In boxing tournaments, where youthful fighters and their supporters conceive the honour of the family and ‘breed’ to be on display, I was challenged about who I supported in bouts between eleven year old boys. Christenings, confirmations and first communions included upward of twenty visitors to the site for parties, and ‘private’ conversations (from which children are ejected) frequently involved between three and ten adults, sitting together in a crowded kitchen.

Within the site, conversations often concerned the politics and people that controlled the site. Men discussed finding ways round restrictions and the perennial difficulty of renting land for horses. At times, police patrols into and around the perimeter of the site, seemingly arbitrary searches of huts and trailers, and the dread of dawn raids to impound mares kept temporarily on the site during foaling created an atmosphere of extreme tension. People would remonstrate with me, urging me to witness the injustice: ‘You see what it’s like? It’s because we’re Travellers, Anna’. How far to trust local Council officials and official settled advocates was a constant concern, and I was often asked my opinion on the external politics relating to site life.

Unrelated male Travellers calling unexpectedly prompted discussion about events into which people feared being drawn. Young married men form the target of inter-breed grudges and hostilities. Their conversations with male elders sometimes concerned debates about avoiding violence, or whether to seize an advantage or reinstate threatened honour by launching an assault against an enemy. Accidental meetings with potential antagonists were invariably reported to the family head and the implications debated. At times of heightened tension between rival groups young men went into physical training and sometimes removed themselves from danger for weeks at a time.

In the area in which I lived in the west of Ireland Travellers were stricken by a series of suicides among young adults, both men and women, over several months in
2007. Accounts of individual deaths circulated continually for many weeks, and fear and despair spread through families who persistently asked themselves who would be next. Two (unconnected) murders of young Traveller men occurred locally in the same year. I attended several funerals over two or three days, each attended by two hundred or more Travellers. These violent deaths of young adults heightened the sense of danger that Travellers have been accustomed to living with to an almost unbearable degree. A period followed in which some people received visitations in dreams, others saw apparitions and received material signs and communications from those who had died. Family members visited the location and retraced the imagined actions of the person up to the moment of death, later vividly recounting what he or she must have heard, seen and done. The effect of such an account on a listener was like inhabiting the body of the person about to die and seeing through his or her eyes. People watched the effects of these accounts on others with intense concentration. A few people confided fears that they ‘would be next’. A mass was held in the site to expunge what people felt were now troubling presences, which I attended with everyone else.

Note-taking while on a site or in someone’s house or caravan would have constituted, at the very least, an unacceptable display of detachment. I did not conduct interviews or record conversations, techniques which smack of policing and surveillance. Travellers pay close attention to the details and nuances of conversation and behaviour, and I often heard conversations recounted in great detail. I was expected to do the same, and to remember everything that was said to me. Unwitnessed talk between two people of opposite sex is potentially suspect and therefore generally avoided. I was careful never to introduce sensitive subjects of conversation when alone with someone. I committed conversations and observations to memory as far as possible, and made descriptive and reflective notes away from the site each day. When visitors asked my hosts what I was doing they explained I was ‘writing a book’. An exception to the avoidance of writing while on site was my occasional production of large diagrams or charts to visually map and record large amounts of information that people regarded as factual, and that could be rendered anonymous later. Different people contributed and found this collaborative labour pleasuring. I had discovered the acceptability of this method in 2001 when using oral mapping and timelines to record travelling routes and migrations, later reproducing the data.
cartographically, accompanied by personal testimonies and camp names. In 2005\textsuperscript{12} I used charts and a timeline to record transformations of a camping coalition as it edged toward becoming a ‘permanent’ site community over several years. Large diagrams, which everyone could inspect, made it clear I was involved in ‘work’, and participants exhorted me to ‘Work away, Anna! Work away!’ The condensed materialisation of memory involved was considered a remarkable novelty, and people tested me by asking questions, nodding approval if the diagram proved correct.

In 2007 residents helped me map two large sites. The process, which encouraged description and explanation, gave insights into invisible aspects of the site. One woman, frustrated by my misplaced focus on trailers and notional plots, took a pen and rapidly sketched and assessed a series of curving arrows, with which she was satisfied. These curved arrows confirmed that the map was ‘right’. The ‘principle’ of the site was not the relationship between trailers and yards, but how each individual family could get vehicles in and out with ease, unobstructed by others. I charted a genealogy of gift horses, although with less success. Diagrams and charts could be less instructive than the insights people contributed to the process. Photographs were often requested and returned to their subjects as gifts. The architects of funerary monuments gave me permission to photograph them. However, I was advised not to photograph any part of a funeral itself.

Travellers place the highest importance on the privacy of relations within the site or ‘one family’, and such trust as friends placed in me was dependent on understanding that I never spoke about one family or community to another. I treated this as an absolute interdiction. Travellers often came to hear or guess who I might have met, but all contacts made independently remained confidential. Since groups were only occasionally interconnected it would not be accurate to describe an extending ‘network’ of research contacts arising from these methods, and I repeatedly sought to make new, independent connections in different areas. I did not live on a site while in Ireland, because to have done so would have identified me with a single group, preventing contacts with different site communities and Travellers elsewhere. The drawbacks were outweighed by the advantages of freedom of movement and association, and compensated by the generosity of those who allowed me virtually unlimited access to

\textsuperscript{12} During study for the MRes in Anthropology.
their homes, camps and sites. Frequent visiting between closely related Travellers is a familiar practice, and so my pattern of daily contacts was unexceptional.

Apart from sites across several counties to which I was a frequent or occasional visitor, I visited Travellers in council housing estates in the west, south-west and midlands. Disillusion and self-doubt afflicted many older people; the hopes they had held out for their children have not been realised. Many young adults, having grown up in houses, find themselves living in trailers and shipping containers on emergency sites, or beside the road. I attended christening parties in council houses and with young Travellers living beside the road.

A group whose camps were frequently forced to move as a result of threatened or actual evictions became close friends. I accompanied them to court and witnessed the misery of Travellers unable to escape the sanctions attendant on their situation. Over the summer of 2007 I was a frequent visitor to their camp as new occupants arrived week by week. I passed time in trailers and around fires at night, activities shared with relatives of the camp members from a nearby site, whose children often hitched rides with me. I was later welcomed to homes and camps in other parts of Ireland by camp members. This camp became an important source of insights into gender, temporality and personhood.

Post-nomadic architectures involve settled people in a variety of roles and capacities. In Ireland I sought the testimony of a monumental mason involved in constructing Travellers’ funerary monuments. I visited a horse pound, and interviewed a County Council official involved in the burial ground controversy in Rathkeale, as well as local Travellers and settled Rathkealers. I attended an Irish Traveller Movement conference of activists from across Ireland, and had regular contacts with a professional Traveller activist, from which meetings with different families ensued. Conversations with an older Traveller advocate offered insights into the ‘Itinerant Settlement’ movement of the 1960s and ‘70s, and priests, nuns, a village doctor’s wife, a retired publican and police officer offered insights into Ireland in the 1950s, at the moment when those popularly known as ‘tinkers’ were recast as ‘itinerants’. I consulted Council Minutes and newspapers of the same period and met with Travellers housed by the Church.

Renewed contacts with people I had known from 2001 contributed to the development of my research methods, and while in the field I continually sought to

\[13\] ‘Settled’ means non-Traveller in Ireland.
expand my perspectives through making new contacts. The thesis is based on research undertaken between 2005 and 2006 while I was in the UK, and for twelve months between 2007 and 2008 in Ireland. Some background data in Chapter Seven, ‘Towards ‘Traveller-specific’ Architecture’ recounts my experience in Ireland during 2001-2002, when ‘emergency sites’ first appeared and the impacts of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act began to be felt. Much of my research on funerary monuments was undertaken in 2005 during the MRs that preceded my doctoral study.
A Note on Nomadism

Nomadism is a troublesome concept in anthropology. If nomads are commonly understood to pursue ‘a lifestyle involving a regular pattern of physical movement’ (Frantz 1980: 63), they frequently fail to conform to typologies scholars once designed for them, and challenge the ‘stereotypic nomadic-sedentary dichotomy’ (Swidler 1980: 21) yet without, seemingly, obliterating the need for such distinctions. Rejecting nomadism’s association with timeless autarchy, some anthropologists have distilled spatial movement to its supposed residue as ‘a trait of cultural ecology’ (Spooner 1972: 130) or ‘central pastoral technique’ (Humphrey and Sneath 1999: 1), reaffirming ecology’s emphasis on ‘adaptation’ to marginal environments. In the anthropology of South Asia the concept of ‘peripatetics’ (Berland and Salo 1986:1-4; Berland 2003; Casimir and Rao 2003; Rao and Casimir 2003: 60-61; Rao 1987) engenders a category of ‘service’ nomads, who, according to Weisssleider are ‘non-ecological’ (1978: xvii). ‘Peripatetics’ differentiates these ‘other nomads’ (Rao 1987) from nomadic pastoralists, while subscribing to economism.

These approaches towards nomadic ‘adaptation’ involve problematic assumptions as well as empirical weaknesses. First, their object of inquiry is economic subsistence, to which nomadic forms of life are seen as simply the means and corollary. Spatial movement itself - its variety of forms and social impetus, forms and variations of dwelling, and the political characteristics, styles, and transformations of nomadic societies (Aronson 1980; Barth 1961; Salzman 1980; Berland and Salo 1986; Lockwood 1986; Morgenthaler 1977; Salo 1986) - are frequently ignored. As Burnham noted of Gbaya and Mbororo in Cameroon, ‘the contingent quality of inter-personal and inter-group relations in spatially mobile societies is a fact of their political organization and must be considered as an independently significant phenomenon whatever the environmental conditions’ (1979: 350). If a radical decline in mobility is likely to become the experience of ever-larger numbers of nomads in the twenty-first century (Casimir, Lancaster and Rao 1999), the question of how post-nomadic socialities and modes of dwelling may emerge and transform is of considerable importance. Gellner’s conclusion - that the dominance of sedentary state systems at the expense of the former political power of nomads meant that nomadism had already become ‘an economic rather than a
political adaptation’ (1973: 7) - may be premature. While peripheralism itself does not necessarily preclude certain political benefits (Irons 1974; Ahmed 1982), the role of mobility, fission and dispersal in resisting stratification and maintaining and adjusting competitive alliances realised in marriage and patterns of residency may continue to generate a level of independence from, or within, the state.

Economic or ecological classifications appear inadequate or irrelevant in the face of evidence that ‘nomads’ combine, or alternate between, ‘settled’ and ‘nomadic’ estate, occupations and modes of dwelling, occupying positions as herders, horticulturalists, land and cattle owners, traders, wage labourers, transporters, and craft producers across nodal points of extensive regional economies. Salzman’s term ‘multi-resource economies’ (1972; 1980; 1980b; cf. Marx 1978; 2006; Chatty 1980) recognizes this variety as the norm rather than the exception. Lockwood similarly rejects the ‘stable’ symbiotic connotations of ecological ‘niches’, describing the Xoraxané capacity to adopt what he calls ‘holding patterns’ (1986: 66-67). It is also clear that nomadic movement is not necessarily motivated by or linked to subsistence. Barth recorded of the Basseri, who had been forcibly sedentarised under Reza Shah, that the collapse of the Persian administration was marked by an immediate resumption of migration among families who no longer had viable herds, or indeed, any animals at all (Barth 1961: 149): ‘the great migration’ itself was ‘vested with extreme value’ (147). Implications of passivity in terms such as ‘response’, ‘adaptation’, and ‘ecological compulsion’ (Johnson 1969: 2) are therefore misleading, and perhaps also, the sedentist account of nomads as moving from one ‘place’ to another (Ingold 1986: 175). Rather than moving, I have suggested that nomads might be understood to live in much larger places than sedentists, in which internal variation is experienced as a constant dynamic feature, passage and variation being ‘perennial concomitants to the experience of the physical and social world’ (Hoare 2006: 70-71).

If nomadism itself is an over-simplified term for complex and varied phenomena, ‘sedentarisation’ inevitably presents similar difficulties. Swidler (1980) describes complex varieties of economic inter-relations between ‘sedentarised’ nomads and sedentary societies, from whom ‘nomads’ often remain distinct, ‘frequently incorporating very subtle economic and social relationships’ (Bulliett 1980: 35). According to Bulliett sedentarization is not a single phenomenon or process, but occurs ‘in a great variety of ways’ (35). The concept of ‘post-nomadism’ (which Wink (2004) has used to describe historical political formations, such as the Mongol empires,) has tentatively been taken
up in recent studies. Abu-Rabia, Elbedour and Scham (2008) term the mode of life of Bedouin of the Israeli Negev ‘post-nomadism’, without defining the term. Bussow, Guedy and Paul (2011) ‘include ‘post-nomadism’ on our agendas because the boundaries between ‘real’ nomadism and ‘post-nomadism’ are blurred and because many people continue to cultivate a self-representation as ‘nomads’, or are still seen as such by the neighbours, even after several generations of settled life’ (2011: 1).

Settled-nomadic conflict as well as inter-dependency, together with many of the variations, resistances and paradoxes described above are also found among Irish Travellers in their relations with sedentary society, commonly called in Ireland the ‘settled community’. Travellers’ movements are multidimensional, their economic, social, religious and political functions are not necessarily coterminous but flexible and partible. Irish nomadism, the continuity of which is contested, has persisted (or recurred) in a complex range of forms from the earliest records of the Gaelic Order, around the 8th Century AD, through the prolonged wars against English re-conquest and settlement, and in the formation of a ‘class’ of tinsmiths or ‘tinkers’, who have been a distinctive feature of Irish society since the eighteenth century at least. Like other nomads, Traveller ‘breeds’ or family groups disperse into sedentary and mobile formations. Extended periods of sedentary dwelling can be followed by a resumption of movement, and camps combine with ‘sedentary’ dwelling.

What may be distinct about ‘nomadism' may be neither the degree nor constancy of movement itself. Understanding movement as a strategy, technology or mechanism has tended to eclipse its social, imaginary and expressive possibilities; its resistance to, or reconfiguration of, public-private distinctions, and intersections between sedentary, nomadic and post-nomadic architectures. Travellers generally continue to identify themselves (and be identified) as Travellers in ‘sedentary’ life and forms of dwelling. While some believe that ‘travelling life is finished’, others regard sites as a temporary interruption to life on the road, or a stable base to which to return for relative safety. In the UK, ownership of sites has become a key aim for those who can manage it, and Travellers are also house-owners in the UK and Ireland. As used in the thesis, post-nomadism is no less ‘real’ than nomadism. The thesis is thus concerned neither with notions of identity nor authenticity, but with complex transformations of a nomadic form of life whose trajectory cannot be assumed. Post-nomadism, as used here, precludes any supposition that living in a house means ‘becoming settled’, an idea most Travellers and settled people alike reject in Ireland. Instead, the concept is used to explore
intersections between architecture, familism, settlement form, the sociality and materiality of a post-nomadic world, and the political status of Traveller subjects.

Within the thesis the currency of the concept of nomadism is also recognized as legal, political, historical and academic. In all these respects it is not simply (or primarily) an analytic concept but an instrument of differentiation, defined so as to perform particular politico-ideological or legal functions. These specialised uses and their effects are of principal importance throughout the thesis and are defined in the relevant contexts. ‘Nomadism’ is variously applied to Irish Travellers by international bodies, in international law, by activists, state legislatures and in academic texts, as a form of affirmative recognition, or scholarly refutation, and as the logical justification of political protections, or legal controls, exemptions and material constraints. These functions and effects of the terminology of nomadism are discussed further in the following chapters.
Walls and chalets appear among the rubble as the old site is rebuilt.
Limerick 2007.
Introduction

As you fly into a certain airport close to Ireland’s western seaboard and search the landscape from the descending plane, the first thing you notice are the traces of tiny field outlines engraved all over what is no longer agricultural land, but has long since returned to what used to be called ‘waste’. Once reclaimed from the bog, these former potato plots are the still-visible scars of land hunger, and of the notorious practice of subdivision through which people struggled to survive under the colonial land system. The minute size of these plots is astounding, and you may look around for some other object through which to regulate your sense of their scale. The plane descends over a clachan or cluster of whitewashed cottages, a classic picture of Irish rural settlement. But as the ground looms closer, a discordant expanse of concrete appears surrounding these cottages and you realise they are too small to be dwellings. Each building is split in half by a transverse wall, and their setting is somehow too ordered, too precisely marked out, and although isolated, they are also curiously enclosed. These are service units, also called day rooms or simply ‘huts’, and if the sea mist is light, you might momentarily notice a caretaker’s concrete hut standing alone in the style of a checkpoint next to an entrance barrier, and scattered trailers and vans. Together, these are the unmistakeable features of a contemporary Irish Traveller site.

In the few seconds it takes to absorb these images, you have taken in aspects of a history of control and segregation played out in Irish landscape and architecture for over five hundred years. Ruined castles, tower houses, model villages and the ghosts of ‘cabin districts’ replaced by ‘improved’ labourers’ cottages, might be regarded by the romantically-minded visitor as picturesque features of the unique Irish landscape. In one way or another, all are emblems or products of war and of a relentless restructuring of land ownership and use.

The Traveller site, signifying the incremental containment and segregation of Ireland’s indigenous nomads, is a phenomenon of the independent Irish state. It began in the 1960s and ‘70s with the first official ‘halting sites’, as they were known, and prefabricated tigeens (tiny cottages) on the peripheries of some small towns. In response to policies that evolved in the early 1960s, local Itinerant Settlement Committees conceived of halting sites as a step
towards assimilation, a term that meant the absorption of Travellers\textsuperscript{14} into the majority sedentary population, and thus, their disappearance (\textit{Report of the Commission on Itinerancy} 1963). However, forty years later, new ‘emergency sites’ for Travellers outwardly resembled internment camps, with high fences, security guards stationed at the single entrance and exit, and surveillance cameras trained on the bays that housed the trailers of separate families. By the late 1990’s, sites, now conceived as permanent ‘Traveller-specific’ architectures, were widely regarded by politicians, Traveller activists and advocates as the way forward to state-sponsored Traveller accommodation, and in spite of misgivings, by many Travellers themselves.

\textbf{post-nomadic architectures}

‘Traveller-specific’ architectures, heralded by Ireland’s 1998 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, were the starting point for a study about architectures that begin where the house ends, and where conventional abstractions such as households (Netting, Wilk & Arnould 1984; Yanagisako 1979) and domestic groups (Fortes 1971; Goody 1971) that constitute nomothetic reifications of familism naturalised by the house, peter out and lose their meaning. The study soon assumed a wider perspective, seeking to explore how architectures, which are understood here as the material forms, practices and imaginaries that arise from, and give shape to the sociality of dwelling, elicit or provoke each other in complex, unanticipated ways, materialising relations between Irish Travellers and the state in Ireland and the UK on the one hand, and on the other, between Irish Travellers themselves.

In other words, official Traveller sites are one among several architectures that interlace the lives of Irish Travellers interdependently. Furthermore, sites themselves are not a single form but a range of different types, and not all belong to the category of state projects, like that described above. Different legal regimes surrounding property, sites, camping and public housing result in evolving practices, tenure and legal status, spanning Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The heuristic of post-nomadism which frames this approach is used in relation to architectures in the sense described above, and to Irish Traveller subjects. Rather than supposing a transition between nomadic and sedentary forms of life conceived as whole and

\textsuperscript{14} Irish Travellers are simply called Travellers in Ireland, and where there is no risk of confusion the terms are used interchangeably here.
distinct and defined by opposition (e.g. McVeigh 1997), post-nomadism concerns transformations of a nomadic way of life without assuming that they constitute a trajectory towards sedentism, or ‘becoming settled’. These transformations, which are variously legal, material, political and sociocultural, cannot in practice be disentangled; nor may we assume that they result in either greater incorporation or increased alienation of Travellers vis à vis the state. As the European Court described in its judgment in Connors v the United Kingdom (ECtHR Registrar 2004, App. No 66746/01), contradictory processes occur in tandem, irresolution and legal insecurity may persist, and state policies may have unexpected consequences; to quote the Court, Travellers may be ‘nomadic in spirit if not in actual … practice’ (ibid. 4). In the UK and Ireland, as elsewhere, the homogenising impulse of the state is belied by ‘culturalist rhetorics’ of incommensurability (Stolcke 1995:4) which reproduce hierarchies of citizenship as irreducible facts. Familism, architecture and settlement form, and the status and claims of legal/ extra-legal subjects are interdependently involved, producing subjects and socialities, architecture and modes of dwelling that are neither ‘sedentary’ nor ‘nomadic’ in any straightforward sense, but where the salience of oppositional categories remains critical (cf. Spicer et al 1981).

In sum, post-nomadic architectures disclose the interagency of public-private worlds that bring each other into being with transformative effects, and thus afford a meeting point between two perspectives of the thesis which are outlined here.

First, the thesis asks what is set in motion in the relation between houses and their symbolic shadow-forms, marked by exclusion from the status, rights and protections conferred by the house. In both Ireland and the UK, the legal- material forms of the Traveller site refract the mediation of the house between personhood, property, familism and the state, as described by Engels (1968 [1891]). An Irish notion of natural or inalienable Traveller personhood finds a corollary in site architectures described as ‘permanent’. By contrast, in the UK, the legal status of the ‘gypsy’ is co-dependent with the officially temporary architectures of Traveller sites: both caravan and personal status may be legally removed. It will be shown that these configurations of persons-in-relation- to- sites reflect political archaeologies of the house which differ profoundly between the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the integrity of these archaeologies of the house is vested in the state.

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15 The notion of the ‘settled Traveller’ is often used in the media in Ireland to describe house-dwelling Travellers, but commonly rejected by Travellers themselves.
16 See Chapters One and Two for accounts of the impacts of Connors.
17 I draw on Simmel’s suggestive concept of the ‘shadow body’, the self as an ‘instrument’ of ‘sociability’ that gives interaction ‘self-sufficiency at the level of pure form’ (1971: 136).
18 The (uncapitalised) ‘gypsy’ category in UK planning law describes a ‘nomadic’ way of life, discussed further below, and is applied to Irish Travellers.
More fundamentally, both house and site and the unstable relation between them constitute distinctive refractio
ns of the limits of governance. Ireland’s recent ‘Traveller-
specific’ architecture, and the paradox of permanent temporariness embodied in UK sites, implicate new synergies between the ‘real’ house and its shadow-forms, bringing new modalities of what might best be termed unintended ‘houseness’ into existence. ‘Houseness’, which is explored in the following chapters, forms a shorthand for how personhood, property and familism are mediated and rendered official in the legal, social and material forms of dwelling. To sum up, the Traveller site – which is always in a relation to houseness - is the material centre of unresolved questions about the role of law and the state in dwelling, property and familism.

Understood as post-nomadic architectures, sites have both practical and political roles in Traveller sociality, as well as serving symbolic and political functions in Traveller – settled relations. These analytically distinct architectural formations within the site - mediating Traveller personhood and legal status, Traveller sociality, and settled- Traveller political economy - cannot remain altogether separate. That which sought to contain and suppress becomes simultaneously a locus of reproduction and transformation. Where firm correlations once seemed to obtain, a series of unstable intersections arises between law, dwelling, citizenship and the state. The modalities of these intersections forms the subject of later chapters. They include, for example, that between property, the material status of dwelling and post-nomadic subjectivities, and between the house as a trope of normative familism in the post-war UK planning system and one (in the site) with resonances of a Lévi-Straussian house society (1982, 1987), only partly glimpsed within the site itself. In the field of the house, as Engels (1968 [1884]) describes, the tension of contradictions between political economy and the materiality of dwelling and family life ultimately gives rise to new house forms and concomitant social relations. The Traveller site (both Irish and British forms,) is at the cusp of such transforming social and material relations. In summary, this first perspective explores the house (or houseness) as a field of productive instability in relation to the site.

This takes us to the second perspective of the thesis, where the concept of post-
nomadic architectures is not limited to sites alone, and the force of the (conventional) house mediating property, familism and the state disappears from view. Here, sites, seen together with camps, gift-horses and funerary monuments make visible the force of social relations between Irish Travellers themselves, differentiating between conjugal and complex Traveller families, sibling groups of adjacent generations, different Traveller ‘breeds’, the living and the dead, and Traveller and settled. The thesis explores the interagency of performative configurations of social relations: those objectified in sites,
partly controlled and resourced by the state, as well as those outside formal state recognition, in camps, gift-horses, and funerary monuments. All these are considered as architectures in the sense described: material forms, practices and imaginaries that arise from and give intentional form to kinship and dwelling.

The following sections explore these perspectives in greater detail and in relation to other anthropological approaches. I further outline the social, political, material and economic transitions in twentieth century Ireland that frame post-nomadism, and review the dominant themes of the literature on Irish Travellers, emphasising the 20th Century contexts of post-colonial ideology, the legacy of early anthropology, and recent formulations of a ‘separate’ Traveller culture in Ireland.

Multiplying architectures, embodiment and ‘breeds’

First, the question may well be asked: If the social force of relations between men and women, descending sets of brothers, the living and the dead, Traveller and settled, etc., (referred to above,) is elicited by the practices and contingencies of dwelling, as maintained here, why are they not simply implicit in the social life and material arrangements of sites, where multigenerational Irish Traveller families reside? What drives the need to materially differentiate relations in multiple forms in the way suggested, and why are these forms ‘post-nomadic’?

To answer these questions we must first turn to the function of camps in Traveller sociality. Although, in the wake of legislation,\(^{19}\) few people live permanently in camps in recent years, camps have not disappeared among many Irish Travellers who now live in houses or sites. This is because sites and houses, being static, are unable to emulate the way that serial, changing camps configure aspects of personhood across multiple variations of ‘closeness’,\(^{20}\) each with its own distinctive social force or potential.

Movement and camping can be understood as an analogy, or trope, in Wagner’s sense (1986: 34-57), of how bodies and persons are made, each camp forming a unique

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\(^{19}\) The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002 effectively made camping in Ireland illegal, by granting powers to the gardai (police) to confiscate the dwelling without recourse to the courts. In the UK the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 granted new powers of eviction and arrest to the police against camps that included six vehicles or more.

\(^{20}\) For use of the term ‘close’, see, for example, Johnny Collins in Pavee Point 1992: 36.
architecture of the reproductive pasts, presents and anticipated futures that meet in individual bodies, and an analogy of how they combine, intensify, separate and reproduce in ever-new forms, foregrounding some aspects (or temporalities) while necessarily muting others. Camps, thus understood, are performative sites of memory and recognition, and the repetition and variation of camps in nomadic life emulate and produce multiplicity through relations with others, evoking the body as the metaphor of dwelling and its reproductive source.

Furthermore, in the concept of the ‘breed’ among Irish Travellers movement and camping give rise to a metaphor (both noun and verb) of bodily extension, amplification, intensity and continuity through time. Depending on the context of speech, the ‘breed’ refers to innate bodily substance, where it may be glossed as ‘blood’ (someone’s ‘breed’). It stands also for the embodied person recognizable as a ‘name’, without which substance would have bodily, but no social continuity. Finally, it asserts the social force of a superordinate body, past, present and future, ‘the breed’ that someone belongs to, whose image is that of a man writ large - composed of men - with an immortal name, personality and reputation. To speak of someone’s ‘breed’ is to refer to any of these three aspects of physical embodiment, social personhood or collective agency. Once again drawing on Wagner (1991), the breed can thus be understood as a fractal unity: an entity composed of different scales of the same ‘holographic’ form whose meaningful imagery and references, composed internally, are to each other. However, that is not the end of the story, because every Traveller is necessarily formed of several different breeds, the inherited ‘blood’ of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of different breeds, some of whose names are significant and remembered, while others are forgotten. When no longer recognized in someone’s name or social relations, these half-forgotten, insignificant breeds (and their living members) may be referred to as a person’s ‘back-breeds’.

It is implicit that non-Travellers are unaware of, and indifferent to, questions of breed among themselves. Irish Travellers clearly perceive that breeds do not exist among settled people as a way of understanding the body, of distinguishing people, and thus, as the source of social knowledge and motivation. Furthermore, the implications and an understanding of the concept of breeds among Irish Travellers are seemingly unknown to settled people and scholars alike. One example of its salience may serve here. During a discussion about the geographical links of different Traveller breeds, a Traveller in his late seventies was reluctant to include certain names whose bearers were well-known as
Travellers. To his daughter’s consternation, they were, he said, ‘not right Travellers’. These ‘not right Travellers’ had inherited ‘settled’ names as a result of Traveller grandmothers or great-grandmothers marrying settled or ‘country’ people. Although Travellers, they could not be seen as being (or having) Traveller breeds. There is a suggestion here that breeds may have long historic associations among Travellers, and ‘not right’ Traveller names do not eventually accede to becoming Traveller breeds, but remain, in some sense, excluded (Hoare 2002: 130-2). This example also makes clear the prominence of the name itself in what the breed entails as public recognition.

As serial camps (the mode of dwelling common among Irish Travellers until the 1970s, ’80s, and often later,) have given way to sites and houses, the interdependent relation between dwelling and the fractal body has begun to be elicited instead in the creative substitutions of post-nomadic architectures. Like camps, funerary monuments, gift-mares and sites foreground the intensities of some relations (and aspects of the body) at the expense of others. Post-nomadic architectures thus perform aspects of what camps made possible, and for what these cannot do Travellers may return to camps, leaving behind sites or council houses for weeks or months at a time.

It follows from this account that Traveller embodiment encompasses an idea of the physical and social person as a multiplicity realized through intentional relations with others of one’s breed or breeds, and these include the living and the dead and those yet to be born. A person’s substance (physical and social) can be understood to contain both the residual hopes of others and the futurity of their possible fulfilment. The body, rather than being an inert site of given relations, emphasises the multiplicity of social capacities, creativity, and the force of will through which these complex temporalities of relations with others are elicited.

There are resonances of, and debts towards Marilyn Strathern’s (1988) account of Melanesian partible personhood. Performative elicitations of the embodied person may be used to shape the intention of social interactions, instrumentalising the body not as a pre-given totality, but as capacities and sources of difference. But importantly, in the concept of post-nomadic architectures, no ‘Melanesian’ distinction is drawn between relations mediated by goods and unmediated relations of production (Strathern 1988: 177- 180). This underpins a theory of gift economy whose symbolic resource is the body: a container of labour and relations that may be transposed and infinitely expanded through gifts. Among Irish Travellers, enduring public monuments, short-lived camps, sites and the performative architecture of gift mares – occupy the place of production.
and goods. Each elicits and enacts particular relations (described below), but Strathern’s contrast between mediated relations, (where ‘aspects of persons’ are transacted,) and unmediated relations, where one person ‘directly affects the disposition of another towards him or her’ (178-179) is not apposite here. This distinction touches upon the metaphorical resources that underpin Melanesian and Irish Traveller bodily imaginaries. The transitory architectures of intentional, serial camps revolve precisely around perceived problems of temporality, dis/continuity and individual and collective embodiment. They elude the kinds of objectification offered by houses, land, labour and distribution. Instead, as later chapters will show, the day to day practices of camp occupants articulate the shared intention that motivates a particular camp, performing the architectures of its temporality and relations, and distributing persons (living, dead, and yet to be born,) across multiple formations of past and future camps.

The following section explores how a perceptual analogy of the body’s temporalities, referred to here, objectified in the ordinary life of camps, might develop toward the self-conscious chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981) of post-nomadic architectures, where the force of distinct temporalities of human relations is mediated in shared, visible and often public forms (Basso 1984).

From analogy to chronotope

First, let us recap the basic analogy between camping and the body. I have suggested that the metaphoric resources of (camps as) intentional architectures arise from within the recursive variations of movement and camping, which emulate and elicit generative flows and intensities, divisions and coming together of the names and embodied substance/s that Travellers call ‘breeds’. Serial camps foreground changing imageries of relations between women and men, sibling groups, parents and children, the living, the dead and the unborn. Memory, anticipation and embodiment, distributed between adjacent generations, extend, ideally, across an endless series of camps, where performative speech and symbolic action disclose nuanced dis/continuities of ‘breed’ and ‘back-breed’, and direct refined understandings of symmetry, continuity and open-endedness between actors. I argued above that the permutations of intensities that arise in camps are the impetus of post-nomadic architectures, which now elicit the social force and reproductive agency of the (fractal) body in new and unfamiliar circumstances.
Through designing and creating monuments, breeding gift-mares and dwelling in sites, post-nomadic architectures and the body form a distributed field of analogy and metaphor, and are reciprocally constituted as social capacities and sites of personhood and relations.\(^{21}\)

However, post-nomadic architectures possess characteristics altogether different from the camps that preceded them. Permanent Traveller sites in Ireland, for example, by foregrounding the masculine force of the breed hypostasised in descending sets of men ‘of the name’, constitute what Warner (elsewhere) calls new ‘resources for interiority and contexts for self-elaboration’ (2002: 31). The perceptual image of the breed as concentrated, male reproductive force, which is the ideological core of what Travellers call ‘the one family’, is ideally represented in the site by the ‘own families’ (wives and children) of a group of brothers. Thus, the site, which takes the name of the breed, objectifies the fixed, present-time of the breed in its primary metaphor of male siblingship.

The implications of this are gendered and political. The site’s magnification of the agnatic name accentuates existing asymmetries between the two vectors of the breed, ‘blood’ and the ‘name’, that is, between the trope of male siblingship whose temporality is always the present, and the hidden debts, affections and productivity of bilateral ‘blood’ whose temporality spans generations, and whose intermittent intensities (named and unnamed,) are sustained in relations between the descendants of cross-siblings. The ‘blood’ of a maternal breed or back-breed, always muted in adult men, is absent from the site’s official self-representation; sites configure a male Traveller world, in which named breeds are made visible in the permanent present of material architectures.

In camps, the intergenerational losses inevitably incurred by ‘blood’ and ‘the name’ - non-synchronous vectors of the breed whose unequal destinies appear in the descendants of women who marry outside their breed - could be recouped by the architectures of nomadic life. Camps frequently reunited the descendants of cross-siblings, where names had been lost and blood had followed separate paths, in the hope that future marriages would reunite ‘the one family’. Now, the site forces a need for additional architectures to mitigate its all-encompassing claims over social life and to escape its unending present.

\(^{21}\) For discussions of how embodied persons are imaginable in relation to the symbolic resources of economy, see M. Strathern 1988, D. Reason 1979.
Is this drift towards virilocality and the public agency of the name responsible for a common perception among Travellers that something is missing or altered by the site? A few months after a voluntary camp coalition has undergone a long-awaited transition into becoming a site, people typically say, ‘We are not the same as we were’, ‘Something is wrong in the site’, or, more generally, ‘Travellers have changed’. Memory and anticipation, implicit aspects of the extensive temporality of camps, are curtailed by the fixed present-time of the site. Now, they extend beyond the site into new objects, projects and forms of sociality that carry a sense of urgency. Hectic rounds of visiting and the intensity of new, collective endeavours dominate daily activity and conversation. In short, among other functions, post-nomadic architectures engage problems that arise from the dominance of male siblingship and the name in the permanent, present-time of the site.

A critical tension can now be understood between the embodied present of the ‘name’ and temporal variations implicit in the flow and diffusion of ‘blood’. It is not reducible to differences between camps and sites, women and men, or even modes of dwelling. It is a tension that characterises the body itself, its temporalities and personhood. Reproductive flows of ‘blood’ mean that adult bodies, whether male or female, are never simply ‘in time’ with names by which they are known in the present. Post-nomadic architectures make these different temporalities of the body separately visible, thereby directing particular flows of blood and names towards generative futures. This leads us from the analogy between dwelling and the body to the emergence of post-nomadic architectures as chronotopes: objectifications of temporality.

Wagner states that space and time are ‘reversible and irreversible analogues of one another… [A] unit of space, or of a spatial analogue of time, is a modelling of the perceived world, objectified independently of the act of imagining it’ (1986: 88). As chronotopes – spatial/ material analogues of worlds of time - post-nomadic architectures anchor a particular moment and form of embodied relations to past and possible future configurations of ‘the one family’, creating conscious frames of memory and anticipation similar to those once evoked by camps and landscapes. The material architectures of a familiar camp, its trees, dark corners and expanses of sky, are repositories of sensory connection to dispersed sibling groups, the remembered dead, and one’s younger self, and they excite vivid narratives and mental pictures. A person may travel a hundred miles alone to revisit an old camp for the purpose of reawakening its material memory, or conversely, take circuitous routes to avoid passing a camp where loss and longing
remain alive. These material worlds of temporal relations revisited in camps form imaginative resources for the chronotopes of post-nomadic architectures, which imbue contemporary Traveller life with the emotional intensity, and shared creative purpose that surrounded- and still surrounds -camps.

Post-nomadic architectures are thus neither conventional expressions of obligation nor ritual manifestations of relatedness. Rather, they are scenes of invention that enlist persons in certain capacities and debar others, making visible the force of particular relations and contexts. Those who participate in creating and ‘inhabiting’ them, as it were, do so by virtue of others’ acts of recognition and consent. In particular, they foreground two enduring, connected problems: that of gender - where continuity and discontinuity are made visible in the different trajectories of women and men, and generation - the succession of parents by children, the dead by the living, and the living by the unborn.
Ka’s tattoo memorial to her parents and mother-in-law: a gift from her husband. Ireland 2007
Post-nomadic architectures thus foreground temporalities of embodied personhood whose futurity remains uncertain, and, in seeking to shape perceptions, to foreclose such uncertainties. Funerary monuments, camps and gift-mares engender sites that are memorious and anticipatory, where loss, risk and generative potential combine within and between breeds, confronting asymmetries between the ‘blood’ of women and ‘names’ of men, between intergenerational sets of brothers, and the living and the dead; between old men, whose personal procreative careers are completed, and young ones whose are yet to begin, and between Traveller and settled. In so doing, camps, sites, gift-horses and funerary monuments thus bring to the fore those whose hopes are invested in each other; whose social force and visibility depends upon others yielding theirs; or whose embodiment beyond death is linked to the actions and intentions of others.

The architectures that pervade the lives of Irish Travellers in the UK and Ireland lack the nostalgia of settled (non-Traveller) home, as well as the imagined permanence and, often, the materiality of the house. Like other domestic architectures, however, they mediate the intensity, submission and resistance that surround obligation, affection and hierarchy. Like buildings, they shape insides that people inhabit, formalising modes of entry and degrees of access, and configure outsides that proclaim containment and exclusion.

Marilyn Strathern notes the paradox of ‘gift exchange without a gift’ when modelling mediated and unmediated relations in Melanesia within ‘the frame of a single conceptual system’ (1988: 179). I acknowledge a similar paradox in including architectures without buildings along with those that are recognizably ‘architectural’. The ‘unmediated’ relation at the core is dwelling, whose temporal architecture of repetition and variation, drawn from camps, is an analogy of the generativity of individual and collective bodies. As with gifts, so with architectures: the differences between them ‘are related to each other’ (Strathern 1988: 179).

Towards the site

Over the last thirty years Traveller dwelling has undergone an accelerating shift away from seasonal movement and camps towards sites and housing estates, marking - not the
assimilation of Irish Travellers into settled society intended by the 1963 Commission on Itinerancy - but the ‘emergent ontology’ (Haraway 2003:7) of post-nomadism.

This section turns to what two generations of older Irish Travellers think of as normal life. This was life in Ireland as experienced between the nineteen thirties and seventies, before Travellers’ lives changed dramatically, reflecting social and economic transformations that had been underway since Independence and were sealed by Ireland’s entry to the European Economic Union in 1973. Traveller life of the mid-twentieth century was neither a pristine tradition, nor do Travellers regard it as more authentic than contemporary life, although many of its iconic objects - horses, wagons, and the products and paraphernalia of tin-smithing - collectivise a symbolic self-identity based on economic self-sufficiency and nomadism that animates contemporary Traveller activism.

The testimony of Travellers bears out the fact that life on the road was never free from hardship, exploitation or conflict (Joyce 1985, Maher 1972). Wherever Travellers were perceived as a threat to local employment, trade or settled land use in the twentieth century they were persecuted, often with the active support of local Gardaí (Irish police) (Hoare 2002). Routine manifestations of ‘anti-Traveller racism’ (Fanning 2002:144; cf. MacLaughlin 1999; McVeigh and Lentin 2002; O’Connell 2002; Ni Shuíneá 2002) - made illegal under equality laws introduced as part of the 1998 Good Friday agreement - remain commonplace and take a range of forms, from denying Travellers service in commercial premises, segregated and/or rationed state services such as accommodation, healthcare, and (until recently) education, to direct attacks on camps, caravans and houses occupied or owned by Travellers (Helleiner 1993: 193).

In spite of this grim contemporary record, the testimony of Travellers, townspeople and farmers from different parts of Ireland consistently reveals that relations between Traveller and settled, ‘big men’, ‘small farmers’, townspeople and landless labourers were much more diverse in the early twentieth century than recent accounts suggest. Among those now portrayed as a cohesive group, the ‘settled community’, deep inequalities proliferated, evidenced in a continuing tide of labour-driven migration, emigration, and the demise of numerous small, mixed farms, and farm families (Kennedy, R. 1973; Kennedy, K.A. 1998; O Tuathaigh, G. 1998; Vaughan & Fitzpatrick 1978). Land reform, persisting until the 1970s, remained ‘notoriously divisive’ (Dooley 2004: 230). On the other side, much greater co-

operation and even interdependence existed locally in particular towns, regions and farming sectors between settled and Traveller. The variability of settled-Traveller relations was linked principally to wide variation within the small farm sector itself, part of which had been drawn into market production while much remained predominantly subsistence based (Clammer 1978; Gudeman & Rivera 1990, Kahn & Llobera 1981). Local labour practices, migration and farming systems, varied levels of cash dependency and systems of exchange shaped the tenor of local relations between Travellers and settled people (Bloch and Parry 1989), and where production was directed principally towards consumption, many Irish Travellers enjoyed considerable acceptance among the small, mixed farmers of the west and in poorer lands north and south, into the late nineteen sixties and early seventies (Hoare 2002). By misrepresenting this variation, recent accounts have ignored relationships that could arise where cross-cutting inequalities affecting settled and Traveller populations imbued ordinary life with predictable patterns and alliances.

At a time when small farms kept only a light horse and trap for the weekly trip to mass, many people ranged little more than ten miles from home. Travellers brought news and goods from places ‘country people’ had never seen. They ‘knew the town’, said one fisher-farmer, born in 1959 in the Gaeltacht24 of Connemara, who, like many of his neighbours, never made the fifty mile journey to Galway before the mid-1970s. Travellers were worldly-wise, they ‘knew where to get things’, and fetched goods to order that were otherwise unavailable, such as ropes to tie down haystacks and sheets of tarpaulin. Their regular advent as traders and occasional labourers connected the waning population of small farmers (Hannan 1979) with a changing world outside, and at a time when many small farms were reverting to ‘waste’, they helped stem the isolation and ease the burden of the land among aging farmers with no heir to take on the farm.

Many western county Travellers moved between summer camps in the west, where land was unenclosed and grazing limitless, and the large tillage farms of the mid-west and central lowlands. In the west, they traded essential skills, goods, little luxuries, religious icons and ‘help’, in return for cash and the summer surpluses of milk, butter and potatoes that almost every house had in abundance. As winter approached they returned inland to the tillage regions, which soaked up the under-employed labour of poor townspeople, small farm neighbours and Travellers, ‘pullin’ the beet’ (i.e., sugar beet) for cash. This general pattern, with many local variations and skills such as tinsmithing, horse-trading and cart-building, characterised the lives of western county Travellers.

24 Irish-speaking areas were conserved from Independence by financial grants to parents of school-age children to bring them up as Irish speakers (pers. comm. A. Kelly). (Hoare 2002)
From the late 1960s, as official determination in Ireland strengthened to eradicate a form of nomadism it termed ‘itinerancy’, the freedoms were eroded and responsibilities jeopardised of what Travellers called ‘coming and going’, a phrase that speaks not simply of mobility, but of the interests and obligations of bilateral kinship. Gradually, the new architectures of state intervention and repression began to replace the old, invisible architectures of Irish nomadic movement whose forms were linked to what had seemed like the unalterable structures that connected landscape, agriculture and rural settlement: the rhythms of seasonal change and growth of new grass, and the farming seasons and technologies that shaped demand for trade or labour, and generated the surpluses that paid for them.

The sociability of long winter camps among those Travellers call one’s ‘own people’, and the independence of summer treks to the scattered settlements of the western
seaboard\textsuperscript{25} had to be made visible in new ways, or else abandoned. Even the certainties of the physical world itself had changed. The plain materials that daily served the fundamental needs of people and horses—standing grass, peat, hazel wattles and underwood\textsuperscript{26}—and the simple technologies of the tent began to pass from hand and eye into memory, where their evocations remain unbearably poignant for many older Travellers. Men and women—who cut hazel wattles (rods) to make the frames of bed- and shelter-tents, jamming them between heavy rocks and stone walls until they gave up their resistance and took the curve; sewed sugar sacks with tight double seams to make the ‘piece’ (tent cover), thrown over and

Photograph courtesy of Pat Galvin
Roadside camp, Christmas day, 1970.
(Reproduced in Hoare 2002)

secured by ‘skivvers’,\textsuperscript{27} and who threw off the piece at the end of winter, smoke-black and ragged, and burned it amid an atmosphere of festivity before taking to the road again—found the skills they had taken for granted and used to survive no longer required.

\textsuperscript{25} Mauss’s \textit{Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo} (1979) on dual ‘social morphology’ remains relevant here.
\textsuperscript{26} The dry sticks at the base of a hedgerow, which provided fuel for cooking.
\textsuperscript{27} ‘Skivver’ is Hiberno-English for ‘skewer’. They were made of small lengths of barbed wire, hammered to shape, with a ring at one end and a point at the other.
The rupture between landscape, people and dwelling involved more than stopping moving. The decline of nomadic land relations (Abramson 2000) encompassed the textures and technologies of dwelling and livelihoods that imaged Travellers’ knowledge of themselves and their unique place in the world. The concreteness of countless sensory incorporations, the embodied knowledge and materiality of a largely unremarked and misunderstood history, now belonged, as Seamus Heaney (2006) later put it, to a mythic Irish ‘storytime’, a marginal note in the rational account of Irish land, whose ‘extra-ness’ in Irish landscape, economy, political and social life held neither value nor meaning beyond the lives of Travellers themselves. The reciprocity that lingered on between small farmers of the west and Travellers through the 1960s gradually diminished with the last generation of small farmers themselves and the advent of a new economics that involved subsidies, part-time farming, and land that returned to the waste.

Tinsmithing, dealing horses and asses, farm work, chimney-sweeping, trading ‘swag’ and begging (known as ‘asking’) at the cottage door formed the staple of Travellers’ diverse rural occupations through the 1960s, but their key role in Irish industry has been under-recognized. The mechanization of peat and sugar beet harvesting developed slowly, and, amid the tide of emigration from mid-twentieth century Ireland, these industries relied on the disposable labour of Travellers, particularly in the mid-west and midlands where many Travellers had winter camps. In its heyday in 1945, the sugar factory at Tuam, County Galway, processed 19,083 acres of manually harvested sugar beet in a year. By 1971, sixty per cent of the crop processed in the west was still harvested by hand, but now amounted to only 4,500 acres. The steep decline of the Irish sugar industry founded in the 1930s, which averaged 68,000 acres of production annually between 1950 and 1970, meant that Travellers’ labour, once so essential, was redundant by the mid1970s. The story was similar with potatoes, mangolds and peat, all of which had seasonally employed Travellers as manual labourers.

The halving of the Irish agricultural labouring sector, from 160,000 to 80,000, between 1930 and 1955, and its continuing decline thereafter (Ó Tuathaigh 1998: 42) resulted in mass emigration throughout these years (Walsh 1970). There were echoes of the post-Famine consolidation of agricultural holdings a century earlier. Large farmers absorbed the ‘uneconomic’ holdings of their small farm neighbours, and the tensions between small, mixed

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28 The 1981 Census reported that 48 percent of small farmers in Connacht were aged 55 or over, and around a third of these had never married (Breen, Hannan et al, 1990: 200-201).
farmers and the ‘big men’ who supplied brewing, distilling and food production, and between those who remained on the land and the landless, are vividly described by both Traveller and settled who emigrated in the decades following independence (Hoare 2002; Dooley 2004). Inequalities entrenched under colonial rule and only partially masked by the fight for Independence re-emerged in the new state, in spite of efforts to defray them (Hannan 1979; Rottman and O’Connell 1983; Kennedy 1998; O’Tuathaigh 1998; Haughton 2000; Dooley 2004). Following Ireland’s entry into the European Community in 1973, price supports for dairy products, beef and cereals favoured larger holdings and capital intensive farming, widening the gap in farm incomes. ‘Land-hoarding’ was unintentionally encouraged by state welfare supports for small farmers through the Smallholders Assistance Scheme, 1966, and a policy to promote off-farm employment through rural industrial development accelerated part-time farm enterprises. (Breen, Hannan et al, 1990: 196-198.) Many who remained technically on the land became ‘marginal farmers’, ‘dependent upon direct cash payments from the State’ (Breen, Hannan, Rottman and Whelan 1990:200; Brody 1973). The existence of this smallholding, albeit dependant class was critical to national ideology, and land-hoarding of unproductive holdings combined practical security with the symbolic value still attached to land in post-colonial Ireland.

In the early 1970s, with the economic base of rural nomadic life in decline, Travellers began to pull into camps on the outskirts of Dublin, Cork, and Limerick and small towns, and, amid public plans for ‘Settlement’ accompanied by routine evictions, into the halting sites and tigeens30 that pre-figured permanent, Traveller-specific architectures. The pattern varied; In Galway (Helleiner 1993: 186-193), resistance to ‘hardstands’ (sites) led to an early policy of housing Travellers in new estates and a ‘special segregated “village” estate’ (191). George Gmelch’s (1977) ethnography of Travellers in Dublin documents Travellers’ ambivalence towards housing and the often violent resistance of settled people towards Traveller neighbours. It reflects Gmelch’s not uncritical sympathy with the rehabilitative aims of ‘Itinerant Settlement Committees’. In an autobiographical account of the same period, Nan Joyce (2000), describes the loss of hope of Travellers who endured the appalling conditions of unserviced urban sites around Dublin, and the early development of Traveller activism and the grass-roots organization Minceir Misli31 in 1983.

The most recent restructuring of Irish landscape - the construction of new roads enabled by European infrastructure grants - has all but eliminated the physical geography of nomadic life. ‘Old roads’ thread their way across fields, inaccessible and unused, and

30 ‘Little huts’- prefabricated and usually sited on the peripheries of towns.
31 Cant for ‘Travellers Arise’.
Travellers point to them from van windows recalling childhood camps and journeys made with wagons and horses. The names of camps - 'burning bush', the 'wide turn', and 'the monument' - once widely shared between Travellers, and the knowledge of roads learned and replayed between 'the eye and the head' are possessed only by the older generation (Hoare 2002). With the disappearance of camps and many of the old roads, the material memory of an Irish nomadic geography is rapidly disappearing, and with it the shared substance of a particular landscape and mode of dwelling.

From this unpromising context a corpus of new material architectures, distinct but importantly inter-linked, has arisen. These architectures, the subject of subsequent chapters, make persons and relations visible in ways that emanate from, and act upon the urgent pressures and novel opportunities of post-nomadic dwelling.
The limits of agency

‘For the same reason that the social cannot be reduced to the interiority of a fixed system of differences, pure exteriority is also impossible’.

Laclau and Mouffe (2001: 111)

The approach taken here to the architectures of camps, Traveller sites, funerary monuments and gift-horses bears some affiliation to Gell’s Art and Agency (1998). Rather than regarding art objects semiotically, as elements of a ‘human representational system’ (Morphy and Banks 1997: 2), Gell treats them as vectors or ‘indexes’ of ‘agency’ – implying purpose, and real or anticipated effects - in social relations.32 However, in his descriptions of Maori houses as an ‘extended mind’ mirrored in human ‘consciousness’, and ‘structure’ as ‘externalized and collectivized cognitive process’, (1998: 222), individuals appear as epiphenomena of collective processes directed from beyond. Gell’s conceit of ‘extended mind’ seeks to resolve an agency-structure dichotomy his theory of agency seemingly could not avoid, but in doing so misrepresents the problem Simmel framed as ‘objective culture’ (1971: 352), which, ‘autonomous from the flux of interaction [is able to] react back on it to organize it’ (Craib 1997: 56). ‘Objective culture’ points to the problem of subjectivity that Balibar properly designates as ‘onto-political’ (1994: 9), and thus, of institutionalised power, which Bourdieu (1993, 1990: 66-68) describes in the concept of fields of practice.

The difficulty arises from Gell’s erroneous interpretation of ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu 1977) as ‘mind externalized in routine’, which he explains by stating that ‘the sedimented residue of past social interaction … structures ongoing interaction’ (Gell 1998: 127). This rather colourless account of the relentless march of History ignores Bourdieu’s notion of ‘practice’: the interagency of collusion, competition and conflict that constitute a ‘field’ in which the ‘habitus’ of differently-positioned subjects is produced (1985; 1990: 66-68). The problem as I see it is twofold: first, Gell’s account lacks a sense of the inventiveness and anxious conflict

that pervades shared projects where so much is at stake. Surely, Maori houses came into being with no less intense private debate, compromise and dogmatic self-assertion than Travellers’ funerary monuments, for example, and women and men, elders and their juniors held distinctive views and corresponding claims. Second, his emphasis on ‘enchainment’ (1998: 141) between the ‘psychological’ and the ‘social’, or ‘internal’ and ‘external’ (126-137) ignores the fact that the interiority of the ‘Vierge Ouvrante’ (his example,) is merely a slightly kitsch effect until ‘consecration’ turns the image into ‘a vehicle of power’ (143). ‘Consecration’ is the operation of experts in a field of institutional or symbolic power which Bourdieu calls ‘the power to make things with words’ (1989:23). Why is this important here? Because the social force of post-nomadic architectures, that is, their visibility and effect, is linked to fields of symbolic power that are both differentiated and continually re-forming around what remains contested or unresolved. Gell unshackles art from art-historical aesthetics, but his account of Maori architecture neglects objectification, the process through which ‘the magic of a world of objects’ (Bourdieu 1977: 91, 183-5) reifies a field of (symbolic, social, economic and embodied) capital and seeks to underscore its claim to autonomy.

The interagency and mutual resistance of fields

While Bourdieu’s concept of ‘fields’ is important, its limitation lies in the strict notion of mutual reinforcement or ‘homology’ between fields that stems from his accounts of Kabylia. ‘Structuralist constructivism’ (Bourdieu 1989: 14), over-determines ‘invariable laws of structure and history of the different fields’ (Bourdieu 1985: 18), where ‘one never goes beyond history’ (1985: 21). The contradictions of the Traveller site challenge the coherence of such ‘relatively autonomous universes’ (1985: 22).33

In Bourdieu’s terms, we may say that the legal status and materiality of the UK Traveller site are ‘officialised’34 by the field of dwelling normatively determined by the post-

33 The ethical force of embodied ‘belief’ implicit in this dialectic for Bourdieu marks his opposition to the self-transparent consciousness of the subject in Sartrean existentialism, and defines Bourdieu’s distinctive position in relation to Marx, Freud and Sartre.
34 ‘Officialization is the process whereby the group (or those who dominate it) … binds itself by a public profession which sanctions and imposes what it utters, tacitly defining the limits of the thinkable and the unthinkable’ (Bourdieu 1990: 108).
war house\textsuperscript{35}, whose material, legal, economic and social entailments circumscribe the thinkability of ‘family’, and simultaneously pathologize alternative objectifications of familism, such as the camp. The post-war house is aptly conceived as a field, and its ‘structures of capital’ - subsumed into separate orders of ‘house’, ‘home’ and ‘property’ - might be glossed, for convenience, as ‘houseness’. The official Traveller site in the UK, ideologically and legally excluded from this bounded field of ‘houseness’ yet subsumed by its formal elicitation of dwelling \textit{tout court}, is formally constituted in the UK as a paradoxical condition of permanent temporariness. That is, its official status as a material mode of temporary dwelling for ‘nomads’ (Caravan Sites Act 1968) has become, in effect, permanent. But, using Bourdieu, how may we understand the paradox of this inside-outside position in the field of the house? In brief, the field’s spatial metaphor is analytically inadequate.

However, turning to Simmel, the site might be understood as a ‘shadow-body’ (1971:136) of the house that discloses a particular, formal relation between them. Simmel writes of sociability - the ‘play-form’ of society that leaves ‘objective culture’ unchallenged - that in order for ‘the play of relations’ to ‘retain its self-sufficiency at the level of pure form, the content must receive no weight on its own account’ (136). The function of the legal site as a weightless ‘shadow-body’ affords such a ‘play of relations’ between ‘temporary’ Traveller and ‘permanent’ settled dwelling ‘at the level of pure form’; like flirtation or sociable argument, this play of pure form constitutes a self-sufficient relation which has no ‘weight of its own’.

In confronting the significance of such an interplay of ‘pure form’ in the political field of ‘houseness’, the thesis addresses questions of internal contradiction that recall those of ‘The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State’ (Engels 1968 [1891]), in which collisions of political economy, gender, generation and the materiality of dwelling engender historic instabilities between houses and the subjects and social relations of dwelling. In contrast to Bourdieu’s ‘relatively autonomous’ (1977:184) fields where power and domination are continually reproduced, Engels demonstrates that houses collapse through the tension of internal contradictions, and new house-forms (including material architectures) and concomitant social relations come into being. Laclau’s and Mouffe’s observation is particularly apt here: ‘For the same reason that the social cannot be reduced to the interiority of a fixed system of differences, pure exteriority is also impossible’ (2001:111). The impossibility of confining dwelling and familism to ‘the interiority of a fixed system of differences’ corresponds to the absence of architecture’s ‘pure’ exteriority. Both Gell’s

\textsuperscript{35} The post-war house is a creation of the planning system, in which the \textit{use} of private property is owned by the state, and commodity value is underwritten by the state’s limitation of building land. This critical mediation of the house in post-war government is discussed through the lens of the Traveller site.
account of extended mind and Bourdieu’s habitus fall short here; sociality remains an unfixed system of differences, and the unstable boundaries of the house extend inward among its occupants as well as out to its materiality. Thus, fields, including that of the Traveller site, may be structured by contradiction, and the ‘magical’ objects that reflect their supposed autonomy are prone to deformation or re-interpretation.

In this respect, the thesis draws on a body of architectural anthropology that explores material and performative boundaries that are habitually marked, transgressed and exploited in acts that are central to official ‘house’-projects themselves. Verandas, entrances, compounds, alleys, shops, and bars compose series of differentiated intersections and linked passages, where consumption, labour, and exchange, and hierarchies of gender, age, ethnicity and class are relationally reconfigured (Bahloul 1996; Bank 2011; Colloredo-Mansfield 1994; Drucker-Brown 2001; Feldman 2001, 1997; Pandolfo 1989; Robben 1989; Wolfowitz 1991). Relational architectures prioritise not forms but surfaces, where divisions, crossings and resistances are marked in particular ways (Moore 1986). Powerful ideologies of ‘surface’ cling to bedrooms, bars and back-rooms, sanitised urban corridors and inhabited zones of dereliction (Feldman 2001, 1997; McDonogh 2003; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009), or appear unexpectedly as the ‘crisscrossing’ of social interaction exposes hidden resistances (Wikan 1990: 75). Freed from the constraints of structural-functionalist definitions,36 households form multiple, separate and inter-dependent tiers of social, economic and bodily interactions, whose spatial and temporal forms - although frequently constituted as overspills, discontinuities, and in-betweens of houses, settlements and families (Stack 1974) - may usefully be thought of as architectures. Besides the reproductive dynamics of fields, we must then also consider their permeability, interagency, and mutual resistance in ways that Bourdieu’s emphasis on homology neglects.

Finally, whether perceived as ‘mutually constituting’ normative sites of ‘family and household’ (Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zúñiga 1999:3), as objectifications of relations (Pine 1996; Levi-Strauss 1987,1982; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995), or in the mediality of negotiation between past, present and future (Marcoux 2001; Behar 1986; Bloch 1995; 36 The household conceived in relation to diffuse social and spatial structures beyond the house, as well as reconfiguring it, is at odds with Hammel and Laslett’s (1974) definition: ‘those who share the same physical space for the purpose of eating, sleeping… growing up, child rearing and procreating’. Bender (1967) sees ‘residence’ as significant and multifunctional in its own right, while Verdon (1980) argues for an ‘operationalist’ approach to residence, as a factor distinct from ‘family’ or the complexities of ‘households’. These views foreshadow more encompassing feminist critiques of the ‘domestic sphere’ (cf. Harris 1984). Miller notes the ambiguity of ‘household’ as ‘a social rather than physical entity, yet one that because of its stress on residence seems to implicate the house itself’ (2001: 12).
Douglas 1991), relations between persons and houses, camps, sites, and multi-local residence patterns (Rodman 1985) bring into play reflexive problems concerning containment, division, continuity, extension and relationality of the body itself. In architecture and the intentionality of dwelling, the body ‘acts itself out in the world’ (Huxley 1977: 30), as Bourdieu has shown in the case of Kabylia. From this perspective the ‘field’ of Maori meeting houses engages problems more urgent than out-doing the neighbours and less abstract than instantiating an ‘external mind’. As in post-nomadic architectures, what is at stake is the configuration of the body in time and space under forms of colonial rule.

**Architecture, kinship and substance**

The role of architecture in objectifying relations involves much that anthropology assembles under the category of kinship, but, as suggested above, the thesis rejects conventional dualisms that have frequently constituted the axes of kinship studies, such as public and private (‘político-jural’ and ‘domestic’; ‘official’ and ‘practical’), the given and the symbolic (‘nature/culture’), or the ‘biological’ and the ‘social’. As Carsten notes, not only do the boundaries between these categories ‘often seem irrelevant, blurred, or difficult to ascertain’ (2004:29), but more penetrating approaches to idioms of embodiment and sociality are needed to explore the body’s instrumentality in articulations of power and difference. The approach also rejects structuralism’s account of kinship as arising from a ‘foundational form’ - that of the conjugal family - whose reproduction, as part of a group, is secured by exchange (Lévi-Strauss 1969), a model McKinnon describes as the ‘enterprising up of a natural base’ (2001: 289).

For Irish Travellers the self-conscious boundaries of architectures made visible as camps, sites, funerary monuments or gift horses assume only provisional limitations of permeability, mirroring the unfixed boundaries of bodies themselves. In the breed we encounter notions of generative continuity, lineality and political force, as well as the limitations of breeds as objective entities. Breeds, which in some contexts appear as

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37 Huxley (1977) follows Piaget’s idea that the body takes two forms of existence with a ‘reflexive twist’ between them, as a result of the sensory, physical and psychic complex of human cognitive development. This ‘symbolic anatomy’ is ‘simultaneously form to the content it subsumes and content for some higher form’ (Piaget 1973: 35, cited in Huxley: 30), a ‘twist’ echoed in the notion of the ‘breed’.

collective persons, require architectures to instantiate the force of such a perspective, and to elicit the practical relations that make them imaginable as agents. The boundedness of architectures, whether spatial, material or temporal, is not, therefore, an end in itself, but the theoretical means to an end. In the proliferation of post-nomadic architectures, Travellers’ creative endeavours to compensate for, or accentuate aspects of what the repetition and variation of camps made possible, reveal the redundancy of assumed categories of given relations, and suggest rather the aptness of Wagner’s concept of analogical kinship - ‘relationship in depth rather than … relatives’ (1986: 34-5), in which ‘flows of analogy’ are articulated in tropes of substance. The aim of this section is to consider how anthropologists have made use of this concept of substance in order to better delineate its role here.

If we can use the trope of substance in relation to the concept of (the) breed - a term which conflates verb and noun, and essence and collectivity - we must distinguish it from the terms made familiar by Melanesian and Indonesian anthropology, where exchange, substitution and transformation configure equivalence (or analogy) between things and persons. Transfers of objects anticipate social relations in their wake; things act as persons; and people are said to ‘detach parts of themselves’ in transactions with others (M. Strathern 1988: 178; cf Carsten 2000, Kelly 1993, Wagner 1986). Carsten notes that in ‘bodily transfers and transformations’, ‘substance’ is a trope of ‘mutability’ in kinship (2004: 29). Marilyn Strathern sums up the role of objectification of bodily substance in the observation that ‘[t]here is nothing self-evident about body substance. On the contrary, it is the very possibility of substitution that creates separately conceptualised body “substance”’ (2001b:234). I want to explore these ideas further here, comparing them with other conformations of substance from outside Melanesia and Indonesia.

Among Irish Travellers, who speak of ‘breed’ as both transmissible bodily substance, and as a person writ large (‘the breed’), none of the metaphors of ‘transient’ and ‘permanent’ relations that produce the allegory of Melanesian and Indonesian kinship are to be found. Soft flesh and hard bone; the interplay of nurture, labour and indebtedness resonate analogies between generative bodies, land and its organic products. Marilyn Strathern has suggested that a Melanesian ‘creative play with form’ (1985: 203) that enables the ‘detachability’ of labour into transactable objects (bridewealth), also makes the ‘partibility’ of persons thinkable. We might then expect that where the linked entailments of labour, property and bridewealth are absent, similar possibilities should not exist. Certainly, Irish Traveller bodies are perceived neither as repositories of labour, nor as artefacts of others’ labour or nurture, and the breed cannot be conceived as an immortal, land-endowed body. Nonetheless, the metaphysics of (the) breed differentiates distinct, embodied ‘aspects’ of
persons, which are elicited to shape the intention of interactions with others (Strathern 1988: 130-132; cf Csordas 1993,1994; Lambek and A. Strathern 1998). In camps, unmediated by objects or labour, these elicitations occur in the performativity of dwelling. It thus becomes clear that ‘the possibility of substitution’ does not engender (the) breed as ‘separately conceptualised’ substance among Travellers. Somehow, this occurs through other means.

This problem raises the question of objectification, which frequently appears to imply the material mediation of sociality through objects. I draw here on Whitehead’s definition of objectification as the way ‘the potentiality of one actual entity is realized in another actual entity’ (cited in Haraway 1997: 147), where an ‘entity’ - something which ‘plays diverse roles in self-formation without losing its identity’ - ‘combines self-identity with self-diversity’ (Whitehead 1978: 25). Whitehead’s insistence on the composite, relational character of entities, which are ‘not describable in terms of the morphology of … “stuff”’ (41) is helpful here. Objectification among Travellers makes visible relations in which ‘substance’ obtains social force. This seems to coincide with Whitehead’s statement that the ‘definite status [of an entity] in the universe [is] determined by its internal relations with other entities’ (ibid: 59, my emphasis). The implication of the philosophy of organism is that ‘substance/s’ and ‘relations’ create ‘persons’ and ‘worlds’ (59), in the sense of ‘causal efficacy’ as opposed to ‘presentational immediacy’.

Where, as in (the) breed, temporality is integral to an ‘actual entity’ continually reforming itself into multiplicity, objectification requires modes of mediation that elude simple objects. Priorness, succession, concurrence and recurrence – the critical ‘substance’ of an entity-through-time – are not easily realised in consumable or transactable ‘stuff’. Where objectification among Travellers does involve ‘objects’, they perform temporal acts and demonstrations, simultaneously making visible the ‘self-identity’ and imminent ‘self-diversity’ of (the) breed as ‘substance’. This is particularly clear in camps, funerary monuments and gift-horses.

I cautiously suggest that this notional ‘Melanesian’ – ‘Irish Traveller’ difference in what is objectified and how, might correspond to a more fundamental distinction between ‘house societies’ and ‘gift economies’. Lévi-Strauss prefers comparison over distinction between the two, recognizing similarities in a common resistance to a ‘classical’ opposition between consanguinity and alliance, so that, being ‘placed together, exchange [constitutes] almost a

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39 An ‘entity’ is a ‘concrescence of prehensions which have originated in the process of becoming’ (cited in Haraway: 147). More concretely, it is ‘self-creative; and its process of creation transforms its diversity of roles into one coherent role’ (Whitehead 1978: 25).
40 Whitehead’s account overturns a supposed opposition between (human) ‘meaning’ and the internal constitution or ‘materiality’ of things.
separate order’ (1987:165), whose function mirrors that of the house. Lévi-Strauss describes the symbolic economy of the New Guinea body in terms that evoke (the) breed among Irish Travellers: ‘[t]he result is a social crisis at once inevitable, wished for and feared, of which New Guinea has had the originality to propose a physiological version, with the individual body as locus of an unending scenario’ (ibid: 167) (my italics). Leaving aside the question of whether this is a ‘social crisis’, or a crisis in structuralism’s ‘atom of kinship’, the body as a locus of ‘unending scenarios’ is precisely the necessity that, among Irish Travellers, gives rise to post-nomadic architectures.

“Thing fall apart; the centre cannot hold” 41

I wish to extend the problem of what ‘substance’ objectifies to the question of ambivalence, differentiating my understanding of (the) breed from formulations of ‘transformation’, as well as Strathern’s important emphasis on substitution. Janet Carsten draws on Malay precepts of the ‘transformation of acquired characteristics into given ones’ (2004: 131), and states that nurture (2000: 27) configures ‘relatedness’ by ‘[moving] between the ‘biological’ and the ‘social’’. This account consigns the body to the status of ‘signifying effect’ (Grosz 1994: 21) of a symbolic frame which manifests ‘the social’ as consumable stuff. ‘Nature’ as materiality - the weighty or fluid stuff of bodies, food, milk etc. - is subsumed by ‘culture’ in a move Grosz calls the ‘logocentric gesture par excellence’ (ibid). The effects of eliding bodiliness in the guise of ‘biological substance’ with transacted objects are twofold. First, Carsten’s overarching category of ‘relatedness’ obscures differentials of power in these transactions, and second, the instability or resistance of objects and bodies, whereby power may be either legitimated or challenged, is ignored. Put succinctly, the ideology of ‘nurture: kinship’ gives the feeder the whip hand over the fed. The very slipperiness of Malay ideologies of transformation should alert us to what it is that ‘substance/s’ obscure, in the slithering back and forth of social and bodily consolidations that constitute the symbolic economy of kinship.

Instability, power and resistance- the very aspects of relations that Malay kinship seems to suppress- are prominent in Nuer ‘concepts of blood [that] meander along the experiential boundary line separating what lies within and beyond human control and influence’ (Hutchinson 2000: 57). Kelly’s (1985) study of Nuer political expansion reveals symbolic economies caught in the pull of historical accidents and dilemmas, where things

41 The Second Coming, W.B. Yeats.
and people unaccountably destroy, reveal or become other things. Cattle, dwellings, bridewealth and property rights become detached from relations of production, co-residence and marriage that held them together. These ruptures depend precisely upon the ability of objects to resist being transformed into ciphers of relatedness.

That intention and the directional force of transactions are key to revealing the sociality of ‘substance’ is contained in Locke’s assertion that ‘a great part of our complex ideas of substances’ is that of ‘power’ (cited in Whitehead 1978: 18, 56-7). Locke describes power as either ‘active’ – having the ability to effect change- or ‘passive’- having the ability to receive change; the ‘self-identity’ of a thing that retains ‘its substantial form amid transition of accidents’ (Whitehead: 55) is its ‘power’. By this account, neither transformation nor substitution is the source of ‘separately conceptualised body substance’; rather, power - the ability to undergo ‘accidents’ and remain unaltered, or the capacity to effect alteration– is a ‘principal idea in our complex ideas of substances’ (ibid: 58). In Whitehead’s philosophy of organism another term for ‘power’ is objectification: ‘the ‘power’ of one actual entity on the other is simply how the former is objectified [realised] in the constitution of the other’ (58). The ‘substance’ of (the) breed is thus its power to be objectified in the constitution of another entity, and to exert or receive change and remain unaltered ‘in essence’.

The desire to pre-empt the unpredictability of power/ substance/ objectification, reflected in Nuer preoccupations with ‘blood’, is illustrated in Kelly’s (1985) account of the changing resonance of bridewealth transactions. In the wake of forming new settlements, vanguard agnatic groups engaged in territorial expansion were joined only later by matrilaterally-linked relatives. Perceptions of bridewealth payments began to change. Previously, substantial numbers of bridewealth cattle distributed to the matrilateral brother’s descent group ‘encoded an obligation that was substantial and invariant, in acknowledgement of their superordinate status’; now, this payment became a pay-off: ‘a model for the dissolution of matrilateral relations rather than a ratification of their centrality’ (Kelly 1985: 223). Repeated fission and the reduced status of the ‘late-comers’ manifested asymmetries previously muted by the bridewealth system.

More recently, technologies such as guns, whose ‘calves’ are bullets, and ‘paper’ - the law’s material metaphor which indefatigably reproduces itself in identical form - configure change and destruction without human agency, being possessed of a ‘mysterious inner force’ (Hutchinson 2000: 67). Cattle, guns, and legal documents exercise the intractable internal power of ‘substance’ that resists transformation while imposing it on others.

42 Whitehead notes that these two aspects of power in the philosophy of organism are the ontological principle (or ‘causal objectification’) and (‘presentational’) objectification (58).
What does an account of substance as power/objectification, at the ‘boundary line separating what lies within and beyond human control and influence’ (Hutchinson 2000: 57), contribute to an understanding of the materiality of social relations, as it wrestles with the opposition between logocentrism and materialism? In the tensions that attend objectification/substance we might perceive what Cheah has called the unpredictable ‘dynamism of matter’. In *Mattering* (1996), Cheah writes that ‘the giving of body or matter - what I propose to call “mattering”- may be the process where history and nature become uncannily indistinguishable in a manner that is both enabling and disabling for political transformation, its condition of (im)possibility’ (1996: 109). The ‘inner force’ of substance thus evokes fears of what surrounds and attends it, even as it stakes claims or invests hopes in those with whom it is shared.

Post-nomadic architectures - underpinned by the metaphysics of (the) ‘breed’, whose ‘unending scenario’ of embodiment is objectified in camps - seek to shape perceptions of the present, to reanimate the past as present social force, and to foreclose what remains uncertain in human relations. As objectification/substance/power they distil ambiguities where ‘history and nature become uncannily indistinguishable’.

What concerns us next is how Travellers, their mode of dwelling and its relation to Irish history, have been perceived, and how these perceptions have shaped a diverse literature.
‘Tinkers’, nationalism, and the idea of Ireland.

‘The great burden of post-colonial national elites is that unlike the islanders of Great Blasket or Inishmaan, they must have an idea of Ireland.’ (Kiberd 1996: 288)

From the early twentieth century, writing about Travellers in the guise of literary ‘tinkers’ or sociological ‘itinerants’ has been coloured by the politics that mediated ‘an idea of Ireland’. Literary criticism, historical and cultural studies have recently begun to explore the ‘tinker’ stereotype (Bhreatnach & Bhreatnach 2006; Botheroyd 1982; Burke 2009; Delaney 2001, 2003; Saddlemeyer 1969; Whelan 2002, cited in Delaney 2009: 83), and a literature focusing on public discourse, (principally the press and politicians,) has addressed the colonial precedents and institutional acceptance of anti-Traveller racism in mid-twentieth century Ireland (DTETG 1992; Helleiner 1995, 1998; McVeigh and Lentin 2002; McVeigh 1992; Ní Shúinéar 2002). Only a small proportion of the literature has involved Travellers directly in ethnography (DTETG 1992B; G.Gmelch 1977; S. Gmelch 1979; Helleiner 2000; McCann, Ó Síocháin and Ruane 1994; McCarthy 1974; Ní Shúinéar 2003), and outside several recent studies of racism and ethnicity in Ireland (Fanning 2002; MacLaughlin 1998; O’Connell 2002), the social sciences in Ireland have markedly ignored Travellers. In order to weigh the achievements of a sparse anthropological literature, the reasons for these exclusions require careful consideration.

I propose to address the following questions: in view of the wealth of twentieth century Irish history, anthropology, folk studies and cultural geography, why, with few exceptions, have social scientists overlooked (or avoided) Travellers? And what is the significance of the enduring ‘tinker’ stereotype, popularised by the Celtic Revival on the eve of Independence, in Ireland’s post-colonial cultural politics? I shall argue that the ‘problem’ of the ‘tinker’ on the cusp of Irish Independence is pivotal to the omissions and preoccupations of later literature, and the discussion therefore begins at this point.

43 As far as records can tell, Travellers have always described themselves as ‘Travellers’ and rejected terms used by settled people, most of which are more or less explicitly derogatory.
44 This excludes policy-directed research into Traveller health, illness and education, referred to below.
Memory, history and modernity

The ‘tinker’s’ imaginary potential for the Celtic Revival of the early twentieth century variously reflects the challenge Travellers\(^{45}\) presented to historical scholarship, their lack of capacity for resistance, and above all, their capacity to channel troubled conceptions of Irish unity on the eve of national independence. ‘Tinkers’ embodied the paradox of stigmatised but quintessential ‘Irishness’, exposing the vulnerable core of colonial Ireland’s endeavour to sublate its multiple history. The following sections show how literature dominated a field left open by history and anthropology.

Sources that might have thrown light on a Gaelic nomadic sector with possible connections to Travellers were already lost or still unknown, and this was compounded by the destruction of the Four Courts, Dublin, in the Civil War of 1922-23, in which crucial documentary sources were destroyed. Travellers exemplified the complexity and selective obliteration of historical memory that formed the core of colonial experience, but now they also stood out, distinct from the totalising relation to land that was nationalism’s cause. Not until the 1989 publication of A.T. Lucas’s\(^{46}\) *Cattle in Ancient Ireland* did this gap in Irish historiography begin to be filled. Lucas revealed the nomadic sector’s role in the political economy of pastoralism from at least the eighth century AD, its role in the wars against ‘reconquest’, and widespread presence at the end of the seventeenth century. Although a dramatic revelation to Irish historians,\(^{47}\) the implications of Lucas’s disclosure of the nomadic sector’s transformation under colonialism, and thus of the continuity of a nomadic population into recent times, remain unassimilated by historians of Ireland.\(^{48}\)

Dominated by twentieth century debates on revisionism and counter-revisionism (Brady 1995), Irish history assumed its role in the state, deeming other subjects more fitting for research than perceived social outcasts, widely viewed as an unfortunate relic of the colonial order. Thus, the seeds of official oppression compounded Travellers’ susceptibility to

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\(^{45}\) When Travellers began to identify themselves as such is not known. In the 1930s this was the name they used in research for the Irish Folklore Commission, rejecting the term ‘tinker’. The occupation of ‘tinman’ appears earlier in a twentieth century wedding certificate, but notably, not ‘tinker’.

\(^{46}\) Former Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

\(^{47}\) I am indebted to historian Sean Spellissy for directing me to Lucas’s work and for his account of its reception by historians.

\(^{48}\) Absent from Lucas’s sources is John Prendergast’s (1868) *Cromwellian Settlement*, including evidence that under Penal Law nomadic creaghts became ‘objects to entice into a neighbourhood’ by planted army officers, owing to their ability to contribute to the ‘assessment’, i.e. pay tax on their herds, in spite of the proscription of their ‘barbarous mode of life’ (1868: 156). Creaghts were also subject to transplantation, together with the settled population. I have discussed elsewhere the question of a link between the creaghts and later ‘tinkers’ (Hoare 2002; 2010).
being enlisted in conflicting visions of Irish history and modernity, as historians avoided the
taint attached to ‘the idea’ of ‘tinkers’. A familiar, shared logic linked history, politics, and
nationhood: how could nationalism’s ‘idea of Ireland’ reconcile with itself a mode of dwelling,
subsistence and familism that were doubly excluded: first, from the mythic time of Irish
sacramental landscape (Taylor 1995) that spoke of a continuous Gaelic past, and second,
from the time and space of national modernity objectified in the idealised farm family of de
Valera’s 1937 Constitution? In Irish history’s ‘particular formation of the modern subject’
(Chakrabarty 2000:74), citizenship is rooted in the relation to land as property and territory,
and its primordial basis is the sacramental relation with landscape’s spiritual and ancestral
presences, strongly promoted by the Catholic Church. Thus, in post-Independence Ireland,
history’s ‘self-revelatory’ (Collingwood 1993 cited in McLean 2004: 168) account increasingly
framed ‘tinkers’ as victims of colonial land confiscation. As the residue of history stopped in
its true path, ‘tinkerdom’ revealed the expropriation from which Ireland had freed itself, and
those without interest in property or territory remained outside the national project, as
Ireland’s traumatic past that refused assimilation. The absence of Travellers from the canon
of twentieth century Irish scholarship, which has only recently begun to be rectified, thus
registers the centrality of land and landlessness in Irish modernity’s account of progressive
continuity.

To better understand how the ‘tinker’ has influenced both later scholarship and public
policy, we must trace the mythic aetiology of the ‘idea of Ireland’ in which the tinker was
enlisted.

**Tinkers, nomads and Irishness**

The late nineteenth century figure of the Irish ‘tinker’ emerged in the interstices of what
might be thought of as two intersecting axes: one between anthropology and history, and an
opposing one between literature and cultural nationalism. Folklore occupied the mid-field
between the poles of literature and cultural nationalism; and anthropometry, followed by
socio-biology, that between anthropology and history. A definitive ‘anthropology’ of Irish
Travellers cannot be isolated from the diverse literature these two axes enclosed, nor,
perhaps, is it useful to do so - the literature on ‘tinkers’ or ‘itinerants’ constituting an
anthropological object itself. Thus, as Ireland was discovered as a prime site for the
anthropometric study of European ‘survivals’, ‘tinkers’ began to appear as politico-mythic
creations in the works of W.B. Yeats, Augusta Gregory, and J.M. Synge.
A.C. Haddon, persuaded (in spite of evidence to the contrary,) that pristine Celtic communities might be found on Europe’s most Western coast, established his ‘anthropometric laboratory’ for the study of ‘racial types’ and ‘ethnical islands’ (Cunningham and Haddon 1892:36; Haddon 1893). For a succession of later researchers including Synge (1992 [1907]) and Messenger (1969, 1964), the Aran Islands’ hybrid ‘poetics of race’ (Ashley 2001) bears resemblances to later ‘scientific’ studies of Travellers, in a recurring impulse to apply science to the study of culture, in order to prove or debunk ‘pure’ histories.

Folklore collector, Augusta Gregory, on inquiring about tinkers’ ‘origins’, recorded that her informants replied that tinkers ‘originated in themselves’ (2010 [1903]: 123). This enigmatic response anticipates the logical exclusion of Travellers from twentieth century studies of migration and demography to the post-conquest transformations of Gaelic society, on the basis of their mysterious, ‘self-originating’ marginality. Folk life scholar, Estyn Evans, writing on the much-debated question of pre-colonial Irish settlement patterns, confronts the suspicion that ‘tinkers’ antecedents might have belonged to the pre-Settlement49 Gaelic order. Evans writes scathingly that ‘a bourgeois notion of respectability, which equates nomads with tinkers, is also responsible for playing down the nomadic element in the old Gaelic order’. Real nomadism, he explains, was no tinkerish ‘aimless wandering’, but was ‘institutionalised … in the form of booleying or transhumance’ (Evans 1971-1973:134-5). In Evans’ ideal of Gaelic clan society - free from bourgeois pretension and embarrassment - ‘nomadic’ land use is organized and legitimate, and the Gaelic order thus becomes a precursor of the modern state which properly has no tolerance for ‘aimless wandering’.

Peasant communities, islanders and ‘tinkers’ raised questions as uncomfortable as they were difficult: what could be attributed to land confiscation and the Penal Code’s systematic oppressions? Or, as Corkery’s (1967 [1924]) ) ‘hidden Ireland’ had shown, what might be understood as the stubborn persistence of denigrated cultural forms? What insight into Ireland’s past or image of its modernity did ‘tinkers’ songs and oral literature disclose (Court 1985; Delaney 2004; Munnelly 1975), and what clues did their ‘secret’ language hold (McAlister 1937; Meyer 1909, 1891; MacGreine 1934, 1932, 1931; Sampson 1890)? Were they, in some sense, ‘survivals’ of Gaelic Ireland, as the philologists maintained, or the marginal dependents of colonial political economy, marking ‘not what lies outside capitalism’,

49 The Act of Settlement of 1652, the culmination of the Cromwellian conquest, set into law the confiscation of land and property that formalised colonial rule, followed by Penal Laws that outlawed the Catholic religion and barred Catholics from entry to higher education, law and the professions, as well as from property and land ownership (Prendergast 1868).
but ‘what arises historically, in contestation, and “in difference” to it’ (Lowe and Lloyd 1997:2)?

**Outsider-Irishness**

To understand the derision that rendering ‘tinkers’ as ‘nomads’ could inspire, we must look first to the cultural nationalism of the élite Protestant class, in the works of Douglas Hyde, W.B. Yeats, Augusta Gregory and, in particular, J.M. Synge. In the dying years of colonial rule which marked the heyday of Irish Catholic nationalism (Miller 1973), the old Protestant literary élite’s identification with outsider-Irishness epitomised by the ‘tinker’, reflects their alienation in face of a newly assertive Catholic bourgeoisie. The claim of the drama and poetry of the Celtic Revival to give voice to a truer, older Ireland is configured in mythical ‘tinkers’ who mediate between human and supernatural worlds (Yeats 1902, 1902B; Hyde 1902; Gregory 1903). Synge’s critique of a political economy he condemns as ‘Anglicised and civilized and brutalized’ (Greene and Stephens 1959: 95) lends an explicit political edge to the tinker. Synge’s tinkers represent not only ‘the best of Irishness’ (Burke 2009: 81), but also, according to Burke, the ‘non-Gael’, predating both Christian and Celtic Ireland (cf. MacNeill 1919). With echoes of Haddon and Browne, Synge’s ‘A Tinker’s Wedding’ celebrates his hero’s rejection of Irish Catholic modernity, personified in the mercenary priest.

The nostalgia that spawned Synge’s ‘tinkers’ and his quest to Aran in search of cultural survivals that had eluded Haddon and Browne, would also collapse in dystopian images of ‘vitiation’: the self-observing parody of Aran’s ‘Gaelic survivals’ and the tinker’s elective destitution are, for Synge, all that remain. Modernity’s condition of loss, prefigured by colonialism, is exposed in those now relegated to its margins: ‘[t]he slave and the beggar are wiser than the man who works for recompense… Every industrious worker has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.’ (Synge, *People and Places* 1898, cited in Burke 2009: 84). Thus, Synge’s tinkers come to frame what Faubion calls ‘the indeterminacy of the modern’ (1988: 366). Lloyd describes this mood in the art of Jack Yeats as creating a space ‘for the unfit in representation, for those that dwell only among the ruins’ (2005: 474).

What is the enduring significance of this cultural configuration, which maps simultaneously the co-ordinates of social isolation and core belonging? The ‘tinker’ is contoured by what Gibbons calls the confusion of insider-outsider discourses of colonial Ireland, where dissenting culture took the forms of allegory and mimesis, sharpened by a sense of ‘otherness from the inside’ (Gibbons 1996: 147); the dualisms ‘Gaelic’ and ‘Irish’, like ‘Traveller’ and ‘settled’, which mirror the most problematic of all: ‘Irish’ and ‘English’, do
not exist outside the social relations which reproduce them as performative categories through the sensory media of ‘gesture’, which relays ‘not the sphere of an end in itself but rather the sphere of a pure and endless mediality’ (Agamben 2000: 57-59). Augusta Gregory’s earnest inquiry about ‘tinker origins’ among the peasantry elicits what I understand as sharp reactions to stereotypes of ‘Irishness’ that underlie the question. The ‘marginality’ of ‘tinkers’ delineates what Tsing calls the ‘edges of discursive stability’ (1994: 279) between notions of Irishness ‘where discrepant kinds of meaning-making converge’ (Ibid.). Stoler’s (1989) critique of over-simplified categories of coloniser-colonised is pertinent here, as she urges attention to the ‘contradictory colonial locations’ of large numbers of people in ‘late’ colonial societies, which ‘allowed privilege at certain historical moments and pointedly excluded them at others’ (1989:154).

Loaded with such symbolic freight, W.B. Yeats considered ‘A Tinker’s Wedding’ ‘too dangerous’ to stage at Dublin’s Abbey Theatre in 1907 (Saddlemeyer 1969: xxvi; cf. Delaney 2001). However, a curious shift occurs: the ‘dangerousness’ that belongs in reality to the relation between Protestant Ascendancy and Catholic bourgeoisie begins to colour the ‘tinker’ himself. The language of Henry Mayhew’s (1851-1861) London imbues Gregory’s ‘Wandering Tribe’ with a distinctly modern style of anarchic threat, as she claims that ‘tinkers’ form ‘a class of themselves’ (97) that ‘few of the police would like to grapple with’ (1974 [1903]: 96). The emblem of Celtic twilight falls victim to what Girard calls the ‘sacrificial crisis’ (1977: 64), in which implacable enemies close in upon a surrogate, their mutual accord defusing an otherwise-endless cycle of reciprocal violence. The role of justified victim is thus the enduring fate of the ‘tinker’.

Synge’s celebration of the Irish subaltern coincided with the series of Land Acts (Hooker 1938) that made Irish proprietorship the precursor to national self-determination. As the campaign for ‘Home Rule’ became one for Independence, ‘tinkers’ were further distanced from the national project: new internal divisions imposed order on colonialism’s ‘contradictory locations’, separating the recursive space-time of sacramental nature (claimed by the Church) from the space of history, economy and the state, and framing the tinker as an ‘itinerant’.

Liminality, the spatio-temporal inbetween-ness of Gaelic folklore’s mythic protagonists (Nagy 1981), configured also in the sacred patterns and presences of twentieth century Irish landscape (Taylor 1992), now slid towards ‘marginality’ in the tinker, discovered as a ‘dangerous’ ‘itinerant’. In this slippage, where law and the state usurp the immanence of things that ‘originate in themselves’, the incommensurability between ‘nomadism’ and ‘itinerancy’ arises for E. E. Evans and scholars who have followed him. The ‘chimera' of
‘origins’ (Bhreatnach 2005) among twentieth century scholars of Travellers resonates with Girard’s account of myth, where, ‘Whatever [language] may say on the subject … the reality of the sacrificial crisis slips through its grasp. It invites anecdotal history on the one hand, and on the other, a visitation of monsters and grotesques…’ (Girard 1977: 64).

Like the Aranite, the ‘tinker/ itinerant’ conflates the distinction between the colonial and the Gaelic necessary for the task of ‘inventing Ireland’ (Kiberd 1996). Both inhabit incommensurate worlds both inside and outside history, where ‘identities… never manage to be fully fixed’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 111; cf Ashley 2001), and like the Aranites, who patiently submit to having their heads measured by Haddon, Travellers are assuredly familiar with the ‘inside-otherness’ they signify for others, weighing up the gains and losses of ‘history as a sign of the modern’ (Dirks 1990: 35) in state-funded ‘Traveller heritage’ projects, dependent forms of ‘community development’, and in the double-edged assurance of the Traveller site, that they remain officially unassimilated by the national project.

**Origins, itinerancy and socio-biology**

The question that concerns us is how cultural nationalism’s ‘tinker’, the concept of itinerancy, and Haddon and Browne’s anthropometry have inflected later studies of Travellers. Three themes stand out in the literature prior to the mid-1990s: a preoccupation with Traveller ‘origins’; the elaboration of itinerancy and its inherent ‘disadvantages’ (Report of The Commission on Itinerancy [COI] 1963: 11), and socio-biological approaches.

The ‘origins debate’ gained ground following the Irish Folklore Commission’s 1952 questionnaire on the subject and drew little consensus apart from the fact that ‘it was lost in the mists of time’ (Ní Shuinéar 2004: 16). A popular view was that:

“‘The tinkers was the original inhabitants that was. The half of them, most of them all, their forbears was run off their bits of land, the people that’s classified now as ‘tinkers’. They were great, hard-working people… Skilled.’” (Brough, Ó Catháin & Gallagher 2003: 223.)

A belief in Travellers’ ‘original’ place in Gaelic Ireland, wrapped up in the logic of being ‘run off’ the land (cf McGrath 1955), contains the idea of Travellers continuing to inhabit dispossession’s unchanging temporality. Elaborated by hypotheses of deviancy, this idea, advanced by anthropologist George Gmelch, is widely associated with Oscar Lewis’s (1965) ‘culture of poverty’ (cf. McCarthy 1994; Okely 1994). Gmelch interpreted ‘itinerancy’ as an
'adaptive response' to colonial dispossession, a kind of ‘ecology’ of landlessness complicated – it is assumed by famine, alcoholism, prostitution and the other social pathologies (1977; Gmelch and Gmelch 1976). His sympathy with the aims, if not the dogmatic paternalism of the Itinerant Settlement Committees (cf. Gmelch and Gmelch 1974), is reflected in his use of questionnaires to consult the police and Settlement volunteers as authorities on Traveller matters, and he voices these informants’ opinions uncritically concerning those he calls ‘tinkers’ or ‘itinerants’. Gmelch (1996) has refuted Okely’s (1994) claim that his work validates a ‘culture of poverty’ theory – a charge which carries an accusation of being ‘assimilationist’. Nevertheless, according to Gmelch, whose Dublin fieldwork records the heightened social and economic tensions of the early 1970s, ‘itinerants’ ‘were forced to live’ a ‘marginal, nomadic existence’ and were desperate to ‘escape from the problems endemic to itinerant life’ (1977: 151).

In the correlation between assumed ‘origins’ and ‘itinerancy’ the validity of the Irish State’s ‘assimilation’ policy is at stake: if Travellers had ‘adapted’ to colonial expropriation, a project to reintegrate them was justified; ‘itinerancy’ was an historical accident. Reacting against the ‘culture of poverty’ theorists of the 1970s (Gmelch 1977, Gmelch and Gmelch 1976; Kearns 1977; McCarthy 1972; Dempsey and Geary 1979; Rottman, Tussing & Wiley 1986), MacLaughlin (1995, 1998, 1999) and Ní Shuinéar (1994, 2002) challenged earlier accounts of Traveller ‘origins’ and the denial of rights implied in ‘assimilation’. Ní Shuinéar calls the ‘origins debate’ as a ‘smokescreen’ (1994: 73) making Travellers’ lives a matter for approval by dominant settled society. Nonetheless, deferring to history’s badge of validation, she offers three hypotheses: rather than ‘dispossessed peasants… clinging to customs which the rest of us outgrew long ago’ (Ní Shuinéar 1994: 66), Travellers could be (1) ‘descendants of a pre-Celtic group… relegated to inferior status by Celtic invaders’; (2) the ‘descendants of one of several distinct Celtic groups’; or (3) ‘descended from indigenous nomadic craftsmen who never became sedentary’ (1994: 70-71; cf 2004: 17).

This uncritical account of ‘survivals’ draws on MacNeill’s notion that a pre-Celtic ‘population… preserv[ed] in a large measure its ancient organisation and subdivisions’ (73) among the Celts ‘during the early Christian period… often under their own ancient lines of chiefs’ (MacNeill 1919: 82). MacNeill even speculates that the ‘tinker clans of recent times in Ireland and Scotland may well be survivals of some of these ancient communities’ (ibid).

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50 MacNeill (1919) cites the Book of Genealogies by Mac Fir-Bhisigh, and the Book of Lecan, both written around the 8th century AD. It included an occupational caste system encompassing metal-workers (75), leather workers (the ‘Men of Bags’ or Fir Bolg), as well as other ‘Rent-paying tribes’ (80).
What MacLaughlin and Ní Shuínéar now called nomadism rather than itinerancy (cf Noonan 1998) linked Travellers' stigmatisation with critiques of colonialism and Irish nationalism. Court (1985), Helleiner (1995, 2000), and Mac Laughlin (1995, 1998) cite mediaeval observers (such as 12th century Giraldus Cambrensis) of Gaelic Ireland's generalised 'mobility', suppression of mobility becoming a justification for colonial subjugation (Helleiner 2000: 31, 245). 'Mobile' occupations are purported to have included 'learned classes such as poets, bards and doctors, as well as lower status groups such as jesters, gamblers, musicians, merchants, and craftsmen' (Helleiner 2000:31; cf. Quinn 1966: 18). The colonial stigmatisation of nomadism/itinerancy becomes 'anti-Traveller racism', the 'internal colonialism' (Hind 1984; Hechter 1975), of twentieth century Ireland (Ní Shuinéar 2002; Helleiner 1995; McVeigh 1992).

None of these speculative or, at best, broadly historical accounts differentiates 'mobility' from nomadism, or relates 'mobile' occupations to the particular structures of mediaeval Irish society (cf Lucas 1989; Patterson 1994). MacLaughlin's fanciful portrait of 'sixteenth- and seventeenth century' 'tribal' Ireland's 'professional' classes of 'Travellers', including 'poets, genealogists, seers, druids, doctors and historians' (1995: 19) is flawed in virtually every respect,51 but his principle aim - to combat 'anti-Traveller racism' and the concept of 'itinerancy' - accords with the aims of Traveller advocacy organizations such as Pavee Point and the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), by asserting the intrinsic value, historicity and 'Irishness' of Traveller life.

Romantic or élite 'origins' (e.g.,MacNeill's 'survivals') are generally preferred over prosaic ones, (Lucas 1989; Patterson 1994), and the difficulty of understanding an evolving state combining sedentary and nomadic sectors is avoided. MacMahon's account of 'outcasts who lived beyond the circle of Brehon laws of ancient Ireland', or dispossessed 'native chieftains' (1971: 33) is a prime example: tinker 'clans' 'bear the names of some of the noblest clans in Ireland- McCarthy…, O'Brien, O'Driscoll, McDonagh, O'Reilly, and O'Connor' (33), and he states that 'to some extent' people 'are still associated with territories reckoned as the home of the eponymous ancestor' (ibid).52 Although tinged with pre-Celtic

51 In pre-conquest Ireland physicians, genealogists, poets, brehons and many other professions were of necessity tied to clan lords and territories (De Breffny 1979: 196-7; Patterson 1994). Duffy, Edwards & Fitzpatrick state that the perception of mediaeval Ireland as 'unstable and its settlements … impermanent' (2001: 57) is unfounded. MacLaughlin’s bizarre reference to 16th century ‘druids’ is unsupported by historical evidence.

52 Although proscribed, maps of Irish clan territories and transcripts of multiple deeds of transfer of properties were meticulously maintained, as records of expropriation ‘in anticipation of a Stuart restoration’ (Whelan 1999: 146; 149-153). Knowledge of where Traveller breeds ‘come from’ in a remote sense is widespread among Travellers; in several cases this closely corresponded to pre-Settlement clan territories, although no such connection was made by Travellers themselves. (Hoare 2002).
twilight, MacNeill’s criticism of the coloniser’s account of history finds renewed acceptance in postcolonial theory. Resonating with Lloyd’s exhortation for postcolonial analysis to ‘split apart the conjunction between the nation-state and its history, opening space for the recovery and articulation of alternative narratives’ (2001: 16), MacNeill condemns the ‘cheap and easy history of successive populations, each… completely exterminating those that inhabited the land before them’ (1919: 82-83). ‘Hybridity’, Lloyd states, is ‘only partially grasped as a process of cultural mixing and juxtaposition’, and must also be seen as ‘a continual and contradictory process of productive and reciprocal displacement’ between ‘cultural forms that are constituted as mutually incommensurable but are irreducibly contemporaneous’ (2001: 22). Postcolonial critique in literature and politics (Flannery 2007; Gibbons 1996; Graham and Maley 1999; White 2007) opens up similar reflections for anthropology: ‘How do incommensurate worlds emerge and how are they sustained in their incommensurability?’ (Povinelli 2001: 319; cf, Tsing 1994, 1994B). Anthropological approaches might then pose more critical questions about the socio-political transformations of Irish nomadism, whose historical bases are already well-attested (Lucas 1989; Prendergast 1865).

In contrast with the persistent ‘origins debate’, Helleiner’s study of Galway-based Travellers (2000), set within the context of local and national politics, draws on recorded political debates of the mid twentieth century (cf Helleiner & Szuchewycz 1997), and argues for an historicizing account of how Travellers are ‘produced and reproduced’ through ‘economic and political processes and relations of power that produced them’ (2000: 30). While avoiding over-simplified portraits of Traveller economy as either predatory and dependent, or egalitarian and self-sufficient, her account of resilience, collusion, resistance and persistent inequality leaves untapped understandings of how labour, consumption and distribution ‘produce and reproduce’ personal, gendered and generational relations.53 Identifying ‘anti-Traveller racism’ opposes the cultural homogeneity claimed by the Irish state, and the shorthand of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘separate culture’ (e.g McCarthy 1994), acknowledge the structural agency of racism and support claims for political recognition; this is the tenor of almost all recent writing on Travellers. Several authors besides Helleiner (1995, 1997, 2000) have located the ‘specificity of Irish racism’ (McVeigh 1992) in Ireland’s colonial past and the agrarian class relations of the emerging independent state (Fanning 2002; McVeigh and Lentin 2002; Ní Shuínéar 2002; O’Connell 2002). Reflecting, as Nandy

53 Observing that ‘complex and dialectical relations’ between ‘part-societies’ and those by which they are encompassed ‘may persist…rather than shift inexorably in favour of the dominant society’, Myers (1988: 265) argues the need to attend to ‘internal structures’ and ‘local meanings’. 
states of colonized India, Irish political culture’s ‘powerful collaborationist strand’ (2009:7), Ní Shuínéar observes that the ‘entire package’ of colonialism’s Irishness was ‘transferred… onto Irish Travellers’: “Yes, the stereotypes are all true- but not about us! About them!!” (2002:190). As de Valera’s utopian vision of a classless agrarian society ebbed away in the mid- twentieth century, following Ireland’s failed policy of isolationism, the prototypical ‘Irishness’ (Whelan 2002) and visible poverty of Ireland’s Travellers now seemed a haunting parody of the colonial image of Irish backwardness.

‘Origins’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘racism’ form dominant themes of *Irish Travellers, Culture and Ethnicity* (McCann, O Siochán & Ruane 1994), several authors modifying earlier essentialist constructions of ‘Gypsies’ in order to ‘categorise’ Irish Travellers under the rubric of a common European Gypsy identity (Acton 1994: 49; cf. Okely 1994; Kenrick 1994). McCarthy recants the sub-culture-of-poverty (1972), citing language, labour, nomadism, and norms and values as evidence of Irish Travellers’ ‘separate culture’ (1994: 121-129). In a series of articles Ní Shuinéar has sought to dispel long-held prejudices: she rejects the “drop-out’ theory’ of Travellers (2004: 17); challenges the concept of ‘factions’ to label conflict between Traveller groups, and contests assessments of Travellers’ language, called Cant or Gammon, as merely a limited vocabulary of back-slang designed to exclude settled speakers, arguing that Cant, in combination with a singular form of Hiberno-English, forms part of a living pragmatics (cf. Crofton 1886; Mac Gréine 1931, 1932, 1934; Kirk and O Baoill 2002; Binchy 1994, 2002; Kenny and Binchy 2002). Binchy’s claim for the antiquity of a number of Cant words refines the notion of Travellers’ ‘separate culture’ (1994; cf Leland 1891; MacRitchie 1889, 1901; MacGreine 1931, 1932, 1934; Macalister 1937; Sampson 1890). ‘Origins’, having evolved into historicity and reified culture, thus remains an important underlying principle of recent scholars’ self-conscious advocacy for Travellers’ rights.

Ní Shuinéar’s investigation of Traveller kinship, however, uses an outmoded methodology of ‘family trees’ and an unexamined concept of systematically intermarrying ‘families’ (2003; n/d). Although her respondents occasionally refer to ‘breeds’ of people, Ní Shuinéar has failed to explore the concept of the breed, or to relate kinship to the sociality of dwelling.54

The literature thus divides into political economic approaches such as those of Gmelch and Helleiner, and those emphasising cultural distinctiveness (understood as ‘ethnicity’), drawing on history, language, marriage practices or ‘pollution taboos’ (Griffin 2002, 2008; Okely 1994: 9). Opposition between the two is manifest in much of the

54 E.g www.travellerheritage.ie/brigid_o_reilly.asp
literature, and for many writers, the ‘Gypsy’ constitutes a category in which authenticity, cultural hierarchy, and political / or strategic essentialism are manifested. A common view of ‘ethnicity’s’ force as a politico-legal qualification based on a checklist approach (e.g., Ní Shuínéar 1994) is promoted by the Irish Traveller Movement, and endorsed by a recent Equality Authority report (2006). In sum, many concepts reiterated throughout the literature have instrumental rather than analytic value.

Both approaches ignore what Castile (1981: xvii) calls the ‘special case of pluralism’ of cultural enclaves: economic interdependence within a single polity which coincides with ‘a greater or lesser degree of autonomy, and a set of institutional structures in other spheres of social life’ (Van Den Berghe 1973: 961). Castile and Kushner (1981) reject ‘psycho-cultural’ approaches which focus on ‘ethnic identity’ - a concept ‘heavily overlain with suggestions of race’ (Castile: xvi) - in favour of more variable modalities of ‘groupness’ (Brubaker 2004). ‘Cultural enclavement’, linked to migration, colonialism, ‘administered communities’, diaspora or religious separatism, invites comparative analyses of complex inequalities and changing forms of ‘persistence’, while avoiding essentialist typologies such as that of the ‘Gypsy’ and categories such as Rao’s ‘peripatetic people’ (1986; cf. Berland 2003), the latter based on economic repertoires and modes of dwelling that prove, on examination, to be inconstant (sometimes sedentary and sometimes pastoralist).55 The South Asian model of ‘other’ (i.e. non-pastoralist) nomads employs the analytically weak concept of the ‘ecological niche’ in order to stress the productivity of politically unpopular lifeways, while distancing ‘peripatetics’ from the stigmatised and essentialist ‘Gypsy’ category of the West.

Recently, historians such as Bhreatnach (2006) Bhreatnach and Bhreatnach (2006; 2006B) have documented the effects of law and social policy on Travellers’ lives and changing relations with settled society, tracing the previously hidden histories of Irish Travellers within the state and situating Traveller movement within diverse histories of Irish migration. These works, including collaborative studies with Travellers (Cauley and

55 See Salo (1986) who records a flexible range of occupations among ‘Rom, Romnichels, Ludar and Irish Travellers’ in 19th Century U.S., & finds that Travellers exhibited greatest economic stability by remaining in the Southern States where demand for livestock remained highest. Critics of primordial Gypsy ‘ethnicity’ include Belton (2005), Lucassen (1997) and Lucassen et al (1998), who argue that policing and social control, the post-feudal stigmatisation of free labour, and scholarly exoticism are responsible for the category of the ‘Gypsy’. These arguments (cf. Jenkins 1994) challenge attributions of ‘Gypsy’ identity, such as Okely’s, when people do not describe themselves as such.
O’hAodha 2004, 2006) and of Travellers’ art and oral literature (Walsh 2008) recognize Travellers as both critical and creative agents and political subjects, rather than merely seeking to determine them according to time-worn categories.

An additional body of writing follows the socio-biological approaches of Gmelch and Crawford (1974; cf North, Martin & Crawford 2000). Echoing Haddon and Browne’s doomed efforts a generation earlier, and serological studies of the Aranites in the 1950s (Hackett and Folan 1958; Hackett 1958), Travellers have been studied repeatedly as a ‘population’ characterised by biological differences (cf Nash 2006). Whether the aim is to explain ‘ethnogenesis’ in terms of ‘genetic difference’ (North, Martin and Crawford 2000), or to adduce evidence of Travellers’ ‘exclusion’ or ‘disadvantage’ in health and education statistics (Flynn at al 1989; Kirke and Barry 1997; Ó Nuilláin and Forde 1992; Cleemput and Parry 2001), socio-biology is committed to the notion that Travellers constitute a measurable physical ‘type’. The body and its postulated prehistory are used to map origins or ethnicity, social isolation and exclusion in accounts that constitute Travellers as both enabling instruments and representational effects. Fluid conflations of the social and the biological, embodied persons and ‘populations’ thus make Burke’s cautious distinction between the ‘literary construct’ and ‘actual contemporary Traveller culture’ (2009:19-20) more wishful than reliable. The ability of universalised terms such as ‘exclusion’ and ‘disadvantage’ makes the findings of many sociological and socio-biological studies (e.g., Carlson & Casavant 1995; Flynn, Martin, Moore, Stafford, Fleming & Phang 1989; Bhopal 2004; Kiddle 2000; Barry and Kirke 1997; Cemlyn 2000a, b; Van Hout 2011) amenable to radically opposed social policies, and suggests why the output of such research outweighs all other categories of literature.

In conclusion, the material relations of nomadic and post-nomadic architectures remain invisible throughout the literature; still less is the productive interagency of multiple architectures recognized. The scant portrayals of Travellers’ lives on sites or housing estates, viewed through the lens of failed adaptation or forced settlement, give no insight into the projects Travellers associate with ‘names’ or ‘breeds’, the generative forces of embodiment, nor of the mediating functions of sites between Travellers, and with settled society. In the invisibility of Travellers’ lives in the literature as a whole, we may be reminded of Mitchell’s (1991: 23-33) description of frustrated colonial visitors to Egypt, to whom Cairo failed to furnish a ‘point of view’. Mitchell describes the unyieldingness to ‘laws of perspective’ of architectures that lacked an ‘outside’ in architecture’s ‘proper’ sense. Nothing

56 Catherine Nash (2006) has argued that recent genetic studies of Irish ‘populations’ perform similar roles in contests to prove or disprove connections of blood and territory.
enabled the viewer to capture the city’s ‘structure’ - its ‘separate realm of meaning’. Nomadic architectures, formed between labour, skills and subsistence, the needs of horses, seasonal forms of landscape, and the variation and repetition of intentional camps held exactly the same kind of invisibility to observers, as reflected in MacMahon’s observation in 1971 that Travellers moved ‘for reasons that are difficult to explain unless they be the normal, or, indeed abnormal exigencies.. that beset the homeless’. The ‘carefully oriented interiors’ (Mitchell 1991: 54-55) of the architectures of nomadic Traveller dwelling sought similarly to preserve ‘proper relationships between directions, forces and movements’, while attending to the homologous potentials and ‘unstable play of difference’ (ibid: 50) of the body itself.
Part One – The UK

Chapter One

‘gypsy’, site and house

“The earth hath bubbles, as the water has…”

Shakespeare, Macbeth

the raid

In late 2005, Marie, a lively, cheerful woman in her mid-forties, told me of an unannounced raid by police and council officers on the council-owned site in England where her extended family have lived for over fifteen years. Marie, an Irish Traveller, lives with her husband and four children, together with her sisters, their ‘own families’, and the women’s parents, each conjugal family occupying a separate yard in the site. The officials demanded access to chalets, trailers and sheds and inspected their contents, and, with pens poised, asked for precise details of who lived in each plot or yard. Such an enumeration of how people counted others as part of their ‘resident’ family was difficult, if not impossible to make. One woman’s daughter, recently married, had taken up the practice of ‘coming and going’ between her ‘own family’ and her husband’s people, and an unmarried man with a trailer in his mother’s yard also came and went within the dispersed patronymic group known as the ‘breed’. The aim of the questions was to check the levels of rent paid for each yard against the number of adult residents. Although the residents themselves provide all the dwelling

57 For an account of ‘coming and going’ see Chapter Four.
58 In this usage the ‘breed’ indicates to the collectivity of those sharing a name who count themselves related. A breed may occupy several sites across Ireland and/or the UK, each consisting of the families of a group of adult brothers, or sometimes, brothers, sisters and cousins, together with surviving parents. The extensive implications of (the) ‘breed’ among Irish Travellers are described more fully in subsequent chapters.
structures in their small, equally-sized yards, the council rent was set according to the number of ‘adults’ ‘living’ in each.\(^{59}\)

Neither the idea of an adult nor that of ‘living’ as a fixed relation to place can easily be pinned down from a Traveller’s perspective: both are matters of meaningful action rather than objective states of being. Once a young man can drive and tow his own trailer, if he owns one, he can move between different sites or camps occupied by coalitions of his bilateral family for weeks or months at a time, eliciting through independent movement recognition as an adult, if not yet fully a man. The animating force of dwelling is a choreography of proximities, separations and fluctuating distances which mediate interdependence and autonomy both within and beyond the site, so that, to count absent others as permanent residents of a site is to make unjustified claims on their freedom or intentions. ‘Coming and going’, movements between yards, and enactments of change within a yard emulate the fluid autonomies of camping through which relations with others are constantly modified. Frequent, visible adjustments include the way people occupy the yard itself: yards and dwelling structures undergo frequent renewal, addition and redecoration in bursts of creative enthusiasm. The addition of a fourteen foot trailer, forming a separate dwelling and an intimation of movement, publicly signals a son’s readiness for marriage.

Transforming spaces and structures make publicly visible the productive concentration of individual marriages, and are viewed with approval. Family life is a matter of demonstrating the transformative capacities set in motion by a man and woman in marriage. ‘Travellers’, people sometimes say about themselves, ‘have a lot of going in them’. Flying visits, sudden departures and empty trailers awaiting re-occupation: the meaningful absences and temporary presences of the site elude enumeration, while the proliferation of the material dwelling as a multiplicity of ideas, efforts and structures materialises a conjugal family’s vision of its sexual, social and economic capacities. Making visible social distances that emerge from multiplicity, the conjugal family continually produces spatial-material forms that signal, as part of its expansion, new boundaries capable of being extended or breached.

Sometimes the site’s generalised mobility assumes collective forms. Once, the men hit on a way of ‘moving’ the whole site.\(^{60}\) They took down an array of road signs which randomly decorated lamp posts and telegraph poles around the site - accumulated mementoes of many trips to Ireland - which read, for example, ‘Tralee 10 miles’; ‘Mullingar 36 miles’ and so

\(^{59}\) This is how rent is set for a local authority council house. Some local authorities charge a flat rate rent per yard on Traveller sites.

\(^{60}\) This incident evokes the official convention among Travellers that moving to or from a camp is always ‘the man’s decision’.
forth. Dissatisfied with their previous, merely decorative effect, they studied them carefully, assessing directions, angles and distances, and rearranged the signs so that each now pointed in a particular direction in logical relation (as far as possible) to all the others. The site itself was thus relocated by reference to the signposts to a new, notionally Irish setting. Such topological productivity might be seen as recombining the site’s material and spatial, generational and gendered aspects, enclosing them in flexible ‘skins’ of performance, encompassing ritual, labour or object relations.

Less visibly, the site remains mobile and unfinished in the routine interactions of adult brothers and sisters, their spouses, children and parents. In numerous small interactions which are also half-avoidances - sending a child to make a request; in the flow of mobile phone calls between chalets and trailers, or the unannounced entrance and immediate exit of a brother from his married sister’s chalet on a silent mission of observation - tacit comments, implied questions and concealed instructions are issued. In tiny interventions that seek to weave autonomy through the web of interdependent relations that criss-cross the boundaries of conjugal families, mutual interests, expectations of co-operation and privacy are carefully negotiated between one family and another, (delineated by marriage and yard,) and between members of the dominant adult sibling group. Through ordinary spatial enactments of dwelling Travellers orchestrate the delicate task of materialising the dual reality of ‘the one family and the many’ which constitutes the affective relations and shared representation of the ‘family site’. Marie said once, “It’s like living in a goldfish bowl. But the thing is, I don't know what I'd give up…”

As Marie described the raid I reflected on the incommensurable difficulties raised by the apparently simple question, ‘How many adults live here?’ and how qualified, ambiguous answers respecting the principle that another ‘have his own life’ would readily have been seen by the officials as evasive.

They inspected vans and cars and demanded to see all sorts of official papers - TV and driving licences, MOT’s and insurance documents - and the presence and participation of the police effectively enforced the Travellers’ submission to inspections for which there was neither any explanation nor clear legal basis. The families were ordered to remove dog kennels from their yards, and to reconstruct a perimeter fence in its original position that they had recently shifted neatly outwards a couple of yards into the empty field surrounding the site. This was especially galling. Several families had hit upon this as a way to squeeze extra trailers into the crowded yards for soon to be married children. The raid alone was alarming and humiliating, but then each family (delineated by yard) was handed a document, and told that unless they signed it within three weeks they would be evicted. It was presented as a
tenancy agreement, something they had never had. It stated, among other things, that they
must undertake not to deal in drugs or carry out prostitution, and warned that any breach of
the conditions would result in eviction. These documents were ‘Acceptable Behaviour
Contracts’, (ABCs,) a preliminary step that paves the legal way for issuing an Antisocial
Behaviour Order or ASBO. This is a banning order issued by the court on application by the
police or a local authority, without any law necessarily having been broken, in response to a
purported breach of the conditions of an ABC.

As soon as the officials left, the residents made phone calls and discovered that
identical raids had been carried out on all council-owned sites across the county
simultaneously. They formed a concerted action whose aim, implied in the attempt to force
residents to accept ABC’s in lieu of tenancy agreements, was to reduce the security of their
possession of the site, by seeking justifications and setting up an easy mechanism for getting
rid of them. Everyone had been told that unless they signed the ‘agreements’ they would be
evicted. Over the following year I heard similar stories of what people described as
unprecedented actions by police and council officials against Travellers in different parts of
the country. Although varied, they were similarly systematic and intimidating.

As the raid assumes a wider significance, I shall depart temporarily from Marie’s site in
order to begin to consider Traveller dwelling as a field, in Bourdieus sense (2000:111-114),
where agonism and antagonism, recognition and suppression, compete for dominance.

the Traveller site as a field

Traveller sites in the UK - like the ‘gray space’ of delegitimized Bedouin settlements in
Israel (Yiftachel 2009) and Neumann’s (1996) ‘anomalous zones’ - use the legal-material
forms of architecture, settlement and spatial governance to enforce conditionality and
unequal status at the body’s intersection with articulations of personhood, suspending norms
observed outside the anomalous zone. Neumann (1996) (whose paper61 is prefaced by the
quotations from Macbeth, cited above,) argues that such earthly ‘bubbles’ possess a
‘subversive potential’ to contest ‘the polity’s fundamental values’ (1233), and that, as the raid
demonstrates, ‘disrespect for one fundamental value may breed disrespect for others’
(1234). The simultaneous violence and productivity of what Oren Yiftachel terms ‘gray space’

61 Neumann’s examples include Guantánamo Bay, nineteenth century Storyville, New Orleans, and the
District of Columbia.
(after Primo Levi), heralds resistant transformations of sociality, where legal insecurity, active neglect and distinctive oppressions invade intimate sites of human embodiment and reproduction, as Butler (2000) writes of Antigone. Anomalous, excluded sites, institutionalised under the guise of barely tolerated difference or threatened public protection may become springs of ‘insurgent citizenship’ (Holsten 2008, 2009), challenging ‘species’ of normative citizenship which enfold interdependent formations of family, dwelling, private property, and ‘autological’ subjects (Povinelli 2011: 75).

Like other ‘gray’ instruments, Traveller sites have become resistantly productive participants in the technologies that construct them as fields, with all the paradoxes of ‘simultaneous refusal and assimilation’ (Butler 2000: 11) that this entails. As Mitchell argues (1991) in his seminal rethinking of the state as an ‘entity’, it is the ‘real appearance’ of a boundary that constitutes the resources of power. The material, discursive and juridical fields in which pluralisms are constituted are thus ‘riddled with contradictions and tensions’ (Yiftachel 2009: 248). Shared commitment to the symbolic, material and social resources generated within the political field of Traveller dwelling thus shapes the terms of opposition, ‘where surplus … meaning[s] of ‘the social’ cannot be fixed ‘as moments of a stable articulatory structure’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 96).

The rest of the chapter considers official Traveller dwelling as a ‘regime of rationality’ organized around ‘transcendent’ objects whose ‘autonomy [is] closely linked to that of the field’ (Bourdieu 2000: 113-4). Questions that extend beyond the present chapter include how political configurations of legal, spatial and material forms in the UK and Ireland constitute unequal Traveller citizenship as enduring, self-evident and necessary; what kind of unresolved ‘margins of the state’ (Das and Poole 2004) pluralist fields of dwelling disclose; and, for Travellers, what logics of practice, techniques of the body, and objectifications of persons and relations arise across official and unofficial fields of dwelling. These questions inform ethnographic accounts of Traveller sites, ‘designated’ estate houses, camps, and the counter-sites of funerary monuments and gifts in which intentionalities of dwelling are made visible.

A comparison of the official Traveller site with fields such as fashion, art or science seems, at first sight, unpromising: sites resemble ‘apparatuses’ at the ‘pathological’ extremes of fields where history and conflict are nullified (Bourdieu 1993:88). Among Irish Travellers, as for other dominated minorities, practices of family formation, livelihoods and modes of dwelling are lived and worked at the intersections of unequal opportunities, divergent concepts of personhood, parallel as well as partly integrated fields, and increasingly, both national and transnational systems of law. This raises the question as to
whether ‘fields’ – which describe the dynamics of semi-autonomous circulations of capital - are relevant here. Can Bourdieu’s thinking take account of ‘spaces of positions’, which collapse in contradiction and open-endedness as they exceed the historical necessities of circulations of capital? Or the intersection of incommensurable ‘fields’ where notions of value are irreducibly antagonistic? If ‘belief’, the precondition of entry to a field, is a way of taking the world for granted that is also a ‘state of the body’ (Bourdieu 1990: 68), what kind of symbolic goods might circulate in ‘fields’ structured by disbelief and suspicion? And what expressive potential motivates the habitus of such a field? Bourdieu states that to ‘understand the social genesis of a field, … the necessity of the belief that supports it … the language game which operates in it and…. the material and symbolic stakes which are engendered in it, is to account for … the producers’ actions and the works they produce from the absurdity of arbitrariness’ (1985:20). The notion of the field thus transcends the ‘artificial opposition… between structures and representations’ (1989: 15). I suggest that the Traveller site does form a space of symbolic, material and political struggle with its own ‘specific logic’ (1989: 21), characterised by performative collusion and conflict over ‘symbolic capital’, the possession of which constitutes the power ‘to impose… a vision of divisions’ (1989: 23) of the social world. To consider post-nomadic architecture as a field necessitates bringing into a single frame the rules, collusion and structured misrecognition that constitute its internal and external limits, its mechanisms of admission and evaluation, and the forms of symbolic capital contested in its modes of representation. It is to these that I turn next, beginning with a frenzy of activity between 2004 and 2006, as the state endeavoured to secure its dominance over Traveller dwelling in the face of competing domestic and international challenges which threatened the Labour government’s chances of retaining power in the 2005 general election.

the site’s ‘space of positions’

The raid on Marie’s site occurred amid what looked like a sea-change in the attitude of central government towards Travellers, reflected in the 2004 Housing Act, which followed a lengthy House of Commons Select Committee Inquiry on ‘Gypsy and Traveller Sites’. The
Act talked about ‘mainstreaming the accommodation needs of Gypsies\textsuperscript{62} and Travellers alongside those of the settled community’. For the first time, local authorities would be required to include Travellers along with the rest of the population in regular assessments of local housing needs. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister\textsuperscript{63} promptly issued ‘\textit{Diversity and Equality in Planning: A Good Practice Guide}’ (ODPM 2005), which, using liberal capitalism’s codes of ‘social inclusion’ and ‘sustainable communities’, also referred directly to the needs of Travellers. These paved the way, early in 2006, for statutory ODPM Planning Circular (1/06), ‘\textit{Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites}’\textsuperscript{64} which gave an important, modified definition of the legal category of the ‘gypsy’\textsuperscript{65} and, in principle, held out the prospect of making it easier for Travellers to obtain planning consent for sites on their own land. Circular 1/06 held that ‘nomadism’, the long-standing definitional criterion of the ‘gypsy’ category in planning law, could in, special circumstances be suspended or relinquished altogether, and that someone who had ‘ceased to travel temporarily or permanently’ (ODPM 2006:6) might still be regarded in law as a ‘gypsy’, with a right - in principle, if not in fact - to a \textit{particular form of dwelling}.

The new rules took two important steps: first, towards embracing post-nomadic architectures in law (already an established fact on the ground), and second, towards including Traveller dwelling (whose material forms the Housing Act did not determine,) within the administration of public housing, thus representing it as an equal alternative to housing for ‘gypsies’. This enfolding of post-nomadic Traveller citizenship in an \textit{extension of the house}, was neither fully acknowledged nor embraced: the ‘right’ to relinquish ‘nomadism’ was conditional upon illness, old age, or children’s educational needs, and the material forms Traveller dwelling might take within mainstream housing policy were never broached, being described merely as the ‘accommodation needs of Gypsies’. However, a new proximity and mooted equality was emerging between the house and the site: formal, material, social, and, in the case of Traveller-owned sites, with the status of private property\textsuperscript{66}. The delineation of the field of Traveller dwelling was simultaneously rendered more complex, determined, on the one hand, by the political technologies of its own transcendent necessities, and on the other, by symbolic admission to the paradigm of the house.

\textsuperscript{62} Both capitalised and uncapitalised forms of ‘Gypsy’ used here reflect the legislation and the meaning in Race Equality (capitalised) and Planning Law (uncapitalised). This important, inaudible distinction will become clear.
\textsuperscript{63} Since renamed the Department for Communities and Local Government.
\textsuperscript{64} Hereafter referred to as Circular 1/06.
\textsuperscript{65} Circular 1/06, Para. 12a.
\textsuperscript{66} Traveller-owned sites had begun to appear in small numbers following Circular 1/94 (1994), as discussed further below.
These measures dipped their toes into the deep water of conspicuous social and legal inequalities between Travellers and the settled population. The forces behind them seemed to be threefold: the normative influence of the European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into national law as the Human Rights Act in 1998; the omission of Travellers from previous government policies aimed at under-represented minorities, and the growing frequency of highly public conflicts between Travellers and local government over privately owned, ‘illegal’ sites, for which local planning authorities refused to grant planning permission. These conflicts were dramatically exploited in the 2005 General Election when a campaign ran in sections of the press under the slogan “Stamp on the camps!” which backed a Conservative Party pledge to abolish the Human Rights Act because it could be ‘abused’ by Travellers. The general direction of the new legal measures introduced by the Labour government was unmistakeable, but how far they would go remained unclear.

Criticisms, warnings, and a raft of government-commissioned research had urged the need for reform, and advised that Travellers’ rights under both the European Convention of Human Rights and Race Relations Acts (1976 and 2000) were being breached by council practices under the existing laws (Commission for Racial Equality 2006; House of Commons Select Committee 13th Report 2003-4; JUSTICE 2004; Ellery 2004; Power 2004). Since 1994, when the largely neglected duty of County Councils to provide Traveller sites was abolished, Travellers had officially been encouraged to obtain land on their own behalf. However, a basic contradiction confronted Travellers who sought planning permission to station caravans on their own land: councils consistently rejected applications for ‘gypsy sites’ on the basis that the applicants, by virtue of the application itself, were no longer ‘nomads’. From the perspectives of national and international law this situation had become untenable.

Circular 1/06 and the reforms of the 2004 Housing Act came hard on the heels of an important judgment at Strasbourg, that of Connors v. United Kingdom, in which Traveller

68 A full page advertisement in broad sheet newspapers was taken out by the Conservative Party making this pledge, citing Travellers as the justification for abolishing the Human Rights Act.
69 The July 2005 London bombings apparently executed by British-born perpetrators subsequently affected government policies towards perceived ‘minorities’, including those outlined here. A fear of what was now described as ‘separate development’ among ‘minority communities’ stalled moves to facilitate Travellers’ distinctive land use and settlement forms through the planning system, in accordance with the unfulfilled aims of Circular 1/94, which, on paper, supported the establishment of privately-owned Traveller sites. Following the bombings, the severance of funding to minority community agencies was justified by the argument that citizens should access services through mainstream agencies: the phrase ‘social cohesion’ described the new political aim.
70 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 removed the duty of local councils to provide sites. In its place Circular 1/94 set out planning guidelines for a policy based on private site ownership.
sites were held to be ‘homes’ under Article Eight of the European Convention on Human Rights. Rejecting the UK government’s argument - that denying nomads security against unfair eviction from legal sites was a way of ‘protecting nomadism’ -the European court perceptively described Britain’s ‘gypsies’ (sic) as ‘nomadic in spirit if not in actual or constant practice’ (ECtHR 267 Press Release of the Registrar: 4), and pointed to the history of state policy in contributing to what we might call the practical logic of post-nomadism. This meant in practice that nominally ‘temporary’ sites, (defined by ‘nomadism’,) had been occupied for decades by largely sedentary Traveller groups, seeking the minimal legal security of the scarce resource of an official site.

Connors was thus a catalyst for the new definition of a not quite post-nomadic ‘gypsy’, and for the extension of rights of tenure and access to private property of the 2004-2006 reforms. Being a ‘gypsy’ in law was perceptibly moving towards qualified forms of ‘permanence’ that, until now, had been inscribed in the house as property and bricks and mortar: the economic privileges and material investments of normative ‘families’.

However, in contrast to the legal and political reforms emerging from the centre, influenced by Connors, around the country an unofficial backlash was taking place. Certain local authorities, supported by the police, appeared to be trying to erode local Travellers’ still-tenuous security, using a range of legal, technical and barely-legal means. The aim, borne out by the raid on Marie’s family site, seemed to be to shrink if not eliminate stable, local populations of Travellers, whether on private or council-owned sites, before new measures took effect, which would inevitably increase the rights of Travellers, and the obligations of councils towards them.

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To summarise in Bourdieuse, a ‘space of positions’ thus appears in which the Traveller site’s symbolic power ‘to impose… a vision of divisions’ (Bourdieu 1989: 23) of the social world assumes a transformative potential. The ‘field’ positions government (in the locus of the state) as the conduit of international honour or dishonour, and determines a structural distribution of power between central and local government, in which each is sustained by the appearance of separation. Local authorities typically resist complying with planning and equality laws vis à vis Travellers, secure in the knowledge that central government intervention would incur the sacrifice of local party political interests. ‘Planning’s’ structure of determinations includes the dominant role of the ‘local’, excludes the ‘interference’ of international law, and relegates central government to the subordinate

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71 Connors v. the United Kingdom (Application No. 66746/01), Council of Europe 2004.  
72 Central government can order a local authority to build a site, but there are very few examples.
function of managing technocratic innovations that secure the field’s distribution of capital, linked to the mystique of its sacralised objects. Still shaping the field’s ‘regime of rationality’ is the illusio of the law’s ‘gypsy’, a nomad in all possible worlds, from whose nomadism the ‘temporary’ site arises ‘naturally’ as the material justification of ‘gypsy policy’, thus drawing a protective zone around the ‘permanent’ house.

The European Court’s (2004) finding that sites were ‘homes’ dramatically altered this situation by introducing the ‘gypsy’ as a ‘natural’ person in the idiom of human rights law. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 states:

‘Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.’

(HRA 1998 c.42, Schedule1, Part1, Article 8.)

The European Convention’s undefined concept of ‘home’ in Article Eight might thus be understood as the embodied individual’s extension into habitual acts, objects, sites and relations of dwelling, so that, exceeding their materiality, they become referents of personhood. ‘Home’ in this sense objectifies Mauss’s (1985 [1938]) historically naturalized category of the person by virtue of his or her embodiment, the attachments which speak of personal interiority, and here, their expression in the materiality of dwelling. ‘Home’, a dialectical object defying legal definition (Fox 2005), now reinforced as pure affect or intensity at the centre of the Traveller site, performs something resembling the ‘miraculous’ feat of the work of art, of which Bourdieu writes that ‘the encounter between a trajectory and a field, between an expressive impulse and a space of expressive possibilities… causes the [object] to transcend the two histories of which it is a product, while simultaneously fulfilling them both’ (1985: 21). In Connors, the material site, now with the transcendent mystique and political resistance of ‘home’ transformed the field of the house, and was formally recognized to have done so.

The European Court’s judgment simultaneously brought the fetishised determination of the nomadic ‘gypsy’ reflexively constituted by the site under attack, further magnifying the resisted autonomy of Traveller dwelling that came paradoxically, from increasing incorporation into the rights of citizenship. If sites were homes, what further claims might follow? Central government’s hurried attempts to reconfigure the field by the reforms of the Housing Act (2004) and Circular 1/06, in a twin bid to regain honour and limit the power of this new symbolic capital, now encountered strong local resistance.
The raid on Marie’s site reflects this resistance. It was a formal ‘desecration’ whose aim was to reassert the old structure of capital of the house, which, operating negatively as the ‘officialising structure’ of the site’s legal and material form, transcends the ‘artificial opposition between structures and representations’ (Bourdieu 1989: 21). Let us look at how this took place.

looking ‘below the surface’

Like many sites in the UK, with the exception of brick ‘sheds’ which house freezers, washing machines and laundry, all the structures on Marie’s family’s site were laid out, constructed or provided by the families themselves: the tarmac surfaces of the yards, brick dividing walls, trailers and the large mobile homes Travellers picturesquely call chalets. Most yards with families with four or five children contained a combination of trailers and chalets. Sometimes two chalets, bought over ten or more years, are joined together and resemble a small house. Alternatively and if space permits, chalets are dispersed around the yard, forming separate elements of the dwelling, and designating degrees of privacy and separation between parents and children. One may be used as a large kitchen and reception space, and another as a parlour, bathroom and bedrooms. In addition, separate trailers may provide bedrooms for teenage girls or boys. Owning chalets represents a significant achievement for a couple, and they are often decorated, furnished and maintained in great style.

When a new chalet has been delivered on a low loader, it is carefully manoeuvred and set in place, and its corners supported with blockwork piers around two feet high. Then, the usual practice is to construct a curtain wall of several rows of concrete blockwork between the ground and the base of the chalet all the way round. To finish it in keeping with the chalet it is often painted white. The wall adds to the chalet’s stability, keeps out drafts and damp, and lends a secure feeling that “nothing can get underneath”, meaning rats. Marie recounted how the officials, having exhausted all their other inspections, stood pensively in front of one of the chalets studying these walls, watched by the Travellers. They demanded to know whether there was a concrete footing underneath, and if there was mortar between the blocks. With a good working knowledge of the implications of these questions, explained to me as “We’re not allowed to do anything which goes below the surface of the ground”, the Travellers declared emphatically that there were no foundations, and neither was there was mortar between the blocks. As the inspectors peered uncertainly at the painted blockwork base of what looked to them like houses, the Travellers assured them that they could
dismantle everything, and “have the whole lot moved in two hours”. This aspect of the raid was amusing, absurd, but also, as Marie recounted it, deeply unnerving. Would the inspectors demand proof of the mobility of dwellings that had stood there for over ten years, with plumbed-in kitchens and bathrooms and mains electricity?

On what may be ‘between the blocks’ and ‘below the surface of the ground’, hinges the legal status of the site, its reflexive realisation of legal ‘gypsies’, and a precarious proximity to the house which calls all into question. No matter how long Marie, her parents and the families of her siblings remain on the site allocated to them many years ago, it remains a ‘long-term’ or ‘static’ site by official designation. It is never permitted to be ‘permanent’.

gypsy status

For over forty years Travellers, ‘gypsies’ in planning law have been defined as ‘nomadic’ (Caravan Sites Act 1968), and as legal persons made visible by the official Traveller site, their dwellings are required to be impermanent. Impermanence - assumed as self-evident rather than defined by statute - has become increasingly difficult to pinpoint. Any indication that Travellers on sites might be living in ‘houses’ would render the Traveller site meaningless or chaotic. If you move from a site into a conventional (‘bricks and mortar’) house, you are no longer, in law, a ‘gypsy’, and you ‘lose’, Travellers say, your ‘gypsy status’. Since 1994, this legal status has carried with it the possibility of living legally on your own land as a Traveller, that is, in a ‘temporary dwelling’. ‘Gypsy status’ came into being in 1994 as a result of Circular 1/94, which urged local authorities to consider zoning appropriate land for private Traveller sites, for applicants who had ‘gypsy status’. ‘Gypsy status’ is a legal artefact whose complex role has become more significant as more Travellers have bought land and begun legal moves to establish private sites. It is the foundational fiction that upholds gypsy policy, but as Travellers innovate with the spatial, temporal and material possibilities of post-nomadic architectures, its principal assemblage - the nomad and temporary site - is increasingly unstable. The push towards sites as private property that Circular 1/94 accelerated has thrown up the phenomenon of permanent temporariness. The term ‘static’ - once reserved for the mobile homes of non-Traveller residential sites, (known as ‘park homes’) - is now used to describe the status of Traveller sites. ‘Static’ is

73 At the time of writing, the ‘Gypsy and Traveller Unit’ was a special administrative and policy section of the Department for Communities and Local Government.
74 See f/n 70 above.
neither temporary nor permanent, mobile nor fixed, but hovers in between. As the European Court suggested in Connors V UK (2004), sites have taken over from camps to become the distinctive settlement form of Travellers who are ‘nomadic in spirit but not in …practice’, with emerging consequences for the productive roles of sites, yards, caravans and ‘chalets’ as they make Traveller relations visible. The official mobility of Traveller dwelling is tested not by actual movement, but, as in the raid, by demonstrations of its inherent ability to be got rid of, which constitutes its essential unlikeness to the house. The Traveller site’s ‘co-currence of meanings’ (Agha 2004:25) has come to settle in a reflexive principle: that the ‘real’ house be defended against presumptions of permanent temporariness, and that the ‘gypsy’ remain firmly outside.

government through the house

I turn here to the ideology of ‘permanence’ that informs the house-site relation. A concealed relation, whereby the house established an apparent separation from something implicit in itself - was already in play in the ‘temporary’ intention built into the fabric and locations of Traveller sites from the early 1970s.75 The Traveller site, contrasting the makeshift and worthless to the criteria introduced by the post-war planning system, deferred and sublimated planning’s three central principles: (1) the new idealism of the house - objectified in the concept of ‘building standards’ – as a commodity in a new kind of housing market76; (2) land values created or underwritten by statutory zoning (the commodity of ‘location’); and (3) the house as the basis of Abercrombie’s ‘ideal communities’ 77 possessing ‘physical definition and unmistakeable separateness’ (1945: 112).78 The spatial, architectural and politico-legal entailments of citizenship were thus instantiated in the

75 The 1968 Caravan Sites Act made the first provisions for legal, state owned ‘gypsy’ sites.
76 Individual house owners were rare in the early 20th century. In 1909 there were fourteen thousand in the County of London from a population of four and half million. But across the country two and half million people were owners and landlords of an average seven or eight houses each. These small capitalist house owners were shopkeepers, publicans, manufacturers, traders and artisans, for whom bricks and mortar were ‘a repository of value and a storehouse of expectations’ (Offer 1981: 271).
77 ‘Communities’ made visible local political accountability and the rights of voters and ‘rate-payers’ to ‘public’ facilities, schools, health services etc. An accountable ‘local’ planning system defended property values dependent upon ‘location’ and encouraged the voluntary policing of green belt.
78 Abercrombie’s nostalgia for ‘organic’ rural settlements is reflected in his fabrication of the ‘organic’ in Greater London, in the form of a ‘balanced arrangement of neighbourhood units within a town, and towns or communities within a region’. In what he saw as a ‘socially stable’ organization of urban administrative units, infrastructure and population, order and containment form simultaneous principles of spatial organization and techniques of government.
material and social relations of the house. The interagency of permanence, community and politico-architectural stability were the core of a vision of planned society whose template was the 1945 *Greater London Plan* (GLP).

‘Planning’, at base, was government through the house, the vanishing point of an endeaveur to reconcile private property with nationalised land use, and to secure literal ‘built-in’ government of the commodity form of houses. The aims were twofold: to reduce the inequalities of urban house capitalism that had created urban desolation and poverty over the previous century (Offer 1981), and to limit the uncontrolled spread of building and dwelling that had dominated the decade before the war. This continued in wartime as people sought escape from cities, living in caravans and makeshift dwellings on ‘plot lands’ whose ‘sprawling growths’ sprang up on the margins of rural settlements (GLP: 131-2). What was traded in parcels of cheap, former farmland along unmade roads was freedom from urban dereliction and the servitude of rent, in the face of the state’s failure to confront radical land reform or to meet the needs of mass housing.\(^{79}\) This democratic expansion of dwelling and property beyond the reach of the state spoke of dwelling as a ‘chain of equivalence’, an underdetermined ‘house’, caravan or makeshift hut, ‘as a horizon [which] is expanded at the same time as its necessary attachment to any particular content is broken’ (Laclau 1996: 34).

It is important to recognize the tensions of the alliance that planning brought into effect at the end of the Second World War. Political accommodation between the dramatically unequal interests of élite land owners, urban house capitalists (landlords) and individual house owner-occupiers was forged around new property relations, involving state-manufactured land values and policing of the commodity status of the house. At the precise moment when the ‘private house’ became a semi-autonomous actor in the new system of government, it sacralised the appearance of a boundary between ‘public’ and ‘private’ that was internal to the house itself, as well as other versions of this interiorised opposition such as the state and the family, society and the individual, etc. Three terms, ‘house’, ‘home’ and ‘property’, although seldom interchangeable, cannot in practice be disentangled; they express ideas about what is, or *ought* to be ‘private’, and what is, or *ought* to be ‘public’. Rather than marking definite ‘perimeters’ around the materiality of the dwelling, family relations, and the rights of marketised householders, these three terms constitute an interdependent ‘network of institutional mechanisms’ (Mitchell 1991: 90) concentrated in the house. The undefined and connected notions of ‘home’ and ‘private life’ of Article Eight of the

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\(^{79}\) The growth of inter-war house ownership is documented by Crisp (1998). Offer (1981) gives a compelling account of the politics of property inequalities. See also Short (1982), Swenarton 1981, & Swenarton & Taylor (1985) for 20\(^{th}\) century housing policies and their limited effects.
European Convention for Human Rights recognize desires for security, dignity and autonomy which reflect a particular alignment between agency, dependency and resistance in subjectivities formed by particular kinds of houses. Citizenship’s freedom and dependency, the normative relations and specific legal force of ‘family’, are harnessed to the house as a site of bodily extension, kinship, commodity value and legal permission and constraint. In the material, social and legal forms of ‘house’/ ‘home’ / ‘property’, those who are ‘householders’ and ‘home-owners’ simultaneously forge and resist an interdependent nexus of decommodified values, ‘natural’ relations, social status and imaginary productivity.

The site’s permanent temporariness is thus an architectural fact of increasing complexity, materializing a crucial inter-relation between the Traveller, the house, and the conditional ontology of planning law’s ‘gypsy’. Spatial, material, and social surfaces that might otherwise have remained fluid are brought into being as the boundaries of persons and objects: ‘structures of feeling’ (Williams 1977:132), which remain beyond the reach of language, eliciting powerful, hybrid resistances. Traveller dwellings scarcely fulfil their official role of staging ‘gypsy’ life as temporary, and makeshift. Between improvised strands of policy and incremental fragments of law over the past forty years, the proximity to the house of the ‘static’ caravan has become as slender as the space between rows of blocks. The chalet’s spectral foundations and suspected mortar hint at a kind of architectural body-snatching in the minds of inspectors, of the idealist real house of the planning system crumbling away, undermined by rickety, illegal extensions with presumptuous claims to permanence. Circular 1/06, which allows Travellers to relinquish nomadic life and (under strictly defined circumstances) still be considered ‘gypsies’, has re-affirmed the post-nomadic site as officially ‘temporary’, notionally scraping away at the mortar between the blocks while leaving them firmly in place beneath the chalet.

In joints between blocks, where the agency of ‘house’ begins to align itself with the resistance of ‘home’, we might equally perceive both the tensions of surfaces between local and national government, and the state and the European Court, and the creative practices of those defined as ‘gypsies’, ‘nomadic in spirit but not in … practice’.

**the site as a parallax**

What is it that remains invisible to the inspectors in the raid – the elusive ‘substance’ of the site that is not-a-house? In thinking about something between what is seen and unseen, and disappears in the action of looking (“It is there but I/ you can’t see it”), I draw on Žižek’s (2009) account of the parallax as he finds it in Kant. The concept of a ‘parallax gap’
describes the effect of distances between two perspectives and a distant object, which result in a partial-object seen differently from each position, or in two seen-objects in apparently different locations. Something remains unseen from each position. In astronomy the remote object (a star, for example,) undergoes an apparent shift of location, and nothing is visible between two seen-objects. The parallax thus denotes the problem of non-identity or unwholeness introduced to something (a Kantian phenomenon) by the fact of perceiving it. There is no notional third point of view from which the object in its ‘all’ (a Kantian noumenon) could be seen: the problem of the ‘gap’ is merely multiplied. Something is always missing, and this absence can be understood as the inclusion of the point of view in the seen object. This is its aspect, which is at once something different from its appearance. The fundamental antinomy between perceiving positions, Žižek writes, can be seen as ‘a kind of Kantian revenge on Hegel’ (2009: 4) in which the noumenal thing-in-itself eludes us.

In the question of what ‘goes below the surface of the ground’ resides the noumenal materiality of official gypsy dwelling. What the inspectors look for in the assemblage of the human and material always eludes them. Licences and documents can be pored over, boundaries measured, and names listed and counted, but the inspectors can never see the site in its ‘all’, and the closer they get to chalets, blockwork, and mortar, the more the ‘gypsy site’ recedes from view. This is because the ‘all’ of the site is constituted as a parallax, where its form is that of a noumenal unhouse. Instead, a second perspective, the inaccessible knowledge of the Travellers themselves, tied to the demands of the first, offers assurances that the site conceals no hidden houseness. Voiced by Travellers the second perspective is that of official ‘gypsies’, the reflexive subjects of the site who attest to the absence of mortar and footings that makes it a real site: “From here we can see, and you can take it from us, it’s definitely not there.” In at least two senses, then, a parallax gap appears: between officials and ‘gypsies’, and between the site and the house.

But let us look more closely at this ‘second’ perspective. For the Travellers, the site materializes a fictive conciliation between themselves and the council. They attach no significance to mortar and footings, nor to their absence. The fiction of the site in its ‘all’ discloses a gap between Traveller and ‘gypsy’ that reiterates the parallax of invisible mortar and footings. In the raid, the site is elicited fittingly in a space between perspective and performance with ‘no ontological consistency of its own’, between-blocks and under-ground, recalling the Lacanian ‘Real’ as that which cannot be subsumed by the symbolic, but constitutes its ‘inaccessible traumatic core’ (Žižek 2009: 390).

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80 This relates to Žižek’s interest in the Lacanian objet a and the sense in which objects ‘look back’ in the concept of the gaze, for the object we ‘see’ is always one in which we are included.
The scene recalls how, in a play, a transcendental image of reality is made thinkable by emotions—those of the actors as well as the audience—that depend upon a shared suspension of disbelief. Drama's reality effect arises in a parallax gap between audience, performance, character and play, filled by the truth conviction of emotion. At the culmination of the raid, amid the heightened emotion of a final act in which the site is seemingly about to be 'revealed', the Travellers' dramatic enactments of the site's noumenal mobility suddenly overwhelm the inspectors' mystified suspicion: 'It can all be gone in two hours'. The watchful intensity of a crowd scene—with men poised to put their words into action—deters the officials from peeping behind the scenery, where, after all, no 'secret' will be found. The site teeters between excess and absence of an inaccessible something that would make it what it must not be: either an agent endowed with its own point of view, or a mere simulation, a pretend 'Gypsy site'.

**the thinkable unhouse**

Žižek argues that Kant's 'radical insight' is that the transcendental subject is a parallax: 'a pure formal-structural function beyond the opposition of the noumenal and the phenomenal' (2009: 23). Kant's 'categories of understanding' fabricate the 'transcendental' as the thinkability of the noumenal *ding an sich*. How then does the site's 'space between the phenomenal and the noumenal' (ibid), attain such 'formal-structural' thinkability? What categories make it possible? We must first decide what the site is not.

If, as Laclau suggests (1996:34), democracy's 'universalism' has 'no concrete content of its own', but is an endless chain of equivalence—this portends the equality of dwelling where every innovation is afforded equal dignity. The caravan or chalet legitimised by the site would be the post-nomadic *equivalent of a house*, in an ever–receding horizon of possibilities of houseness. But what motivates the raid, of course, is a perceived need to suppress such hybrid transformations of the site-becoming-house, so that a 'real' house can be seen to mark the limit of democracy. Neither is the chalet or static trailer a *nomadic anti-house*, a status whose 'positive' alterity would preclude the paradox of permanent temporariness that the 'static site' simultaneously imposes and makes possible. What then remains? The diacritical materiality of official 'gypsy' dwelling – of blocks without mortar and

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81 Zizek (2009: 24-25) argues that Kant withdraws from this 'radical insight' to posit the transcendental as man's finite perception of the noumenal.
‘houses’ without foundations – is that of an ‘unhouse’, a category beyond the opposition of the phenomenal and the noumenal, which forms a transcendental ‘unwholeness’ all of its own.

This problem of the unhouse, unassimilable to either ‘positive’ alterity or ‘negative’ difference, leads the inspectors to hesitate, for an unhouse throws up the question of what houseness- the ‘permanence’ that the law never defines - actually is. The real house is not simply consummate with its material, commodity, and legal forms, but is a supplemental and elusive material personhood. In this moment of fear and hesitation those who speak are not Travellers but ‘gypsies’, the site’s transcendental subjects who fulfil a ‘formal-structural function’ between the phenomenal and the noumenal: they know the rules - they too can make themselves disappear. Just as the ‘compositional principle [of music] is not of the nature of sound, [and] is not “audible” by itself or for itself’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 293), the inspectors cannot see what everyone else knows, nor answer a question no one else needs to ask; for them, what lies below the surface of the ground, between rows of blocks, and behind the speech of ‘gypsies’ can only be guessed at.
Chapter Two

The genealogy of the ‘G/gypsy’

‘What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.’

Foucault: ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’ (1977)

The ‘gypsy’ as a legal category of person comes to the fore within the evolving political career of the house in Britain in the mid-twentieth century. In a case heard by the Divisional Court in 1967, that of Mills v. Cooper, the judges were tasked with defining the meaning of ‘gypsy’. The case involved an appeal against the dismissal of a charge against Mr Cooper, who claimed he was not a ‘gypsy’. He had successfully fought a previous case a few months earlier using the same defence, but this time his prosecutor would not be deflected, and the case went forward to the higher court. On both occasions the offence he was charged with was that:

‘he, being a gipsy [sic], did without lawful authority or excuse, encamp on a highway, contrary to s 127a of the Highways Act, 1959.’ (Mills v. Cooper (1967) 2 All ER 100)

His successful defence in the first case was that, ‘being not of the Romany race’, he was not a gypsy, and therefore he had no case to answer.

For almost four hundred years, laws to penalise ‘gypsies’ had not found it necessary, and certainly not useful, to engage in definitions. Frequently, a scatter-gun use of terms rounded up all those legislation sought to condemn: gypsies, vagrants and masterless men, as well as those ‘pretending’ to be gypsies (Fraser 1995; Mayall 1988). ‘Gypsies' were ‘our Middle Ages preserved’ (Becker-Ho 1990, cited in Agamben 2000: 65), or, as Agamben puts
it, ‘not a people but the last descendants of a class of outlaws from another era’ (ibid).

Nineteenth century gypsylorists who claimed to have discovered an Indian ‘origin’ for gypsies changed all this, and ‘Gypsy’ (or ‘gypsy’) acquired the mixed tonality of industrial society’s yearning and contempt for ‘natural life’, together with organic nationalist notions of ‘peoples’. For gypsylorists such as John Sampson (see fn 83), the Romani language was central to the discovery that Gypsies were ‘a people’. As Agamben argues, the construction of grammars from speech as the ‘pure experience of language’, performed a move directly parallel to the ‘recodification of peoples into state identities’ (2000: 70).

Sure enough, when the judges consulted the 1933 Oxford English Dictionary (OED) for the meaning of ‘gypsy’, they found the account of a diasporic ‘Gypsy race’ popularised by Sampson and novelist George Borrow, which had recently been rehearsed in Vesey-Fitzgerald’s 1944 work: ‘Gypsies of Britain: an Introduction to their History’. According to the OED, the gypsy was ‘[a] member of a wandering race (by themselves called Romany), of Hindu origin, formerly believed to have come from Egypt’ (OED 1933) (Sandland 1996: 386). Lord Justice Diplock, pondering possible accommodation between the OED definition and the 1959 Highways Act, stated:

‘The section is a penal section and should, I suppose, be strictly construed as requiring pure Romany descent… [but as] members of this race first appeared in England not later than the beginning of the sixteenth century… it would be impossible to prove Romany origin as far back as the sixteenth century, let alone through the earlier centuries of their peripatetic history from India to the shores of this island…’ (All E.R.100 at 103H, cited in Sandland: 388.)

Besides the difficulty of proving ‘pure Romany descent’, a further problem was that, if being a ‘gypsy’ meant being a member of a ‘Romany race’, then the 1959 Highways Act, Section 127a - which made it illegal for a ‘gypsy’ to encamp on the highway, but not for any other person - was incompatible with the 1965 Race Relations Act. The solution lay in re-

82 See Willems 1998; Sandland 1996; and Belton 2005.
83 Sampson contributed numerous articles to the Journal of the Gypsy Lore society between 1890 and 1930, including a rich collection of folk tales, notes on Romany language and Irish ‘Shelta’. ‘Gypsy studies’, which Willems (1998: 33) describes as a ‘field that revels in …splendid isolation’, continues to place a high premium on the study of language as well as on institutions such as the kris, which some regard as the legal system of a diasporic nation. Recent studies in Gypsy law include: Acton, Caffrey and Mundy 1997; Carmichael 1997; Fraser 1997; Lee 1997; Weyrauch and Bell 1993.
84 See also Barth 1969.
85 No ruling had yet been made on whether ‘gypsies’ were a ‘racial group’.

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interpreting the intention of the Highways Act and formalising a legal definition of the ‘gypsy’.  

Before looking at how the judges decided the case, we must briefly consider the 1959 Highways Act itself, a late example of explicit anti-‘gypsy’ law. The date offers a clue to its connection with the planning system. Abercrombie’s 1945 Greater London Plan envisaged ‘green wedges’ of open space between built-up areas from the centre to the outskirts, which, together with the large south London commons would form the green lungs of the renewed urban body. But something stood in the way: for at least two hundred years the commons at Mitcham, Wimbledon, Wandsworth, Epping Forest and Putney Heath formed bases for camps in the seasonal movements of a mobile population throughout Kent, Essex, the London counties and the south of England (Evans 2004). The residents at Erith marshes whom Abercrombie visited, for example, bought, sold and sub-let properties, which were laid out in orderly rows of ‘yards’. The number of people living on the commons had increased during wartime, as discharged soldiers and people made homeless by bombing joined such settlements. Many people migrated between the farms of Kent and the commons, harvesting and fruit-picking, and using the resources of the commons for brush, stick and basket making, regularly taking loaded carts into built-up areas of London to trade with house dwellers (Evans 2004; Orwell 1935). A 1959 report entitled *Caravans as Homes* (Wilson 1959) estimated that ‘vagrants apart’, one in three hundred of the population was living permanently in a caravan, or around 150,000 people (Mann 1961: 151), and an industry that had produced 1,000 caravans per year in 1938 was turning out 86,500 twenty years later (Jackson 1965: 216-7).

A few years before Mr Cooper’s prosecution, the 1960 Caravans Sites and Control of Development Act sought to ‘restore’ the commons to the pristine state desired by Abercrombie, and to end easy movement between farms, camps and informal settlements across the south of England. The 1960 Act involved two mechanisms; first, it brought the commons into the formal sphere of planning in the guise of protected green belt, extending local councils’ control over what was now statutory ‘public space’; second, it imposed a licensing requirement on all land where caravans would be sited, including the farms where

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86 See Riles (2004) on the notion of legal ‘doctrine’, where the ‘social world’ is the ‘the end, and the law is the means’ (783).
87 I am indebted to the archivists at Erith Public Library for their assistance in making available a remarkable body of records of the community known locally as the ‘Marsh Men’ and to Peter Hickson, former Erith Public Health Officer for generously sharing his memories, images and records of the community at the Belvedere Marshes, and their encounter with Abercrombie.
people were seasonally employed. By 1961, as numerous camps were broken up and their residents displaced, long lines of caravans began to appear alongside the A2, the main road leading south from London (Evans 2004: 94-99). The aim of Section 127a of the 1959 Highways Act, as the judges in Mills v. Cooper clearly perceived, was to prohibit the use of highways as a form of commons, specifically by those who were now compelled to do so: ‘gypsies’, a handy collective term for those principally affected by the Caravans Sites Act and Highways Act. For anyone else, stopping beside the road overnight was a matter of no legal consequence.

Thus, with the aims of public policy in mind, and the intervening 1965 Race Relations Act to overcome, which made the Highways Act discriminatory, the judges reached their conclusions. Lord Parker CJ observed:

‘[t]hat a man is of the Romany race is, as it seems to me, something which really is too vague of ascertainment, and impossible to prove:…I think that, in this context, ‘gypsy’ means no more than a person leading a nomadic life with no, or no fixed employment and with no fixed abode. In saying that, I am hoping that those words will not be considered as the words of a statute, but merely as conveying the general idea of a gypsy’. (All E.R. 100 at 103H, cited in Sandland: 388)

Lord Diplock endorsed this ‘general idea’: ‘the word ‘gipsy’ [sic] as used in S127(c) of the Highways Act, 1959, cannot bear its dictionary meaning of a member of a wandering race (by themselves called Romany) of Hindu origin’ (ibid). Instead, it should be understood as having

‘[a] popular meaning, which I would define as a person without fixed abode who leads a nomadic life, dwelling in tents or other shelters, or in caravans or vehicles. If this meaning is adopted, it follows that being a gipsy is not an unalterable status. It cannot be said “once a gipsy always a gipsy”. By changing his way of life a modern Borrow may be a gipsy at one time and not a gipsy at another.’

In spite of the judges’ cautions regarding the authority of their statements ‘as the words of a statute’, the meaning established by Mills v. Cooper – ‘merely as conveying the general colloquial idea of a gipsy’ (ibid) - formed the precise definition a year later, when the 1968 Caravan Sites Act sought reluctantly to formalise Traveller dwelling within the planning system, through provisions for council-owned sites. This definition continues to form the basis of ‘gypsy’- related law in England and Wales, and Circular 1/06 sought to modify, but not fundamentally to change, this definition.
To summarise, the critical elements of the meaning of ‘gypsy’ from the perspective of its working legal role, as derived from *Mills v Cooper*, are:-

- ‘a person without fixed abode who leads a nomadic life, dwelling in tents or other shelters, or in caravans or vehicles’;
- ‘being a gipsy [sic] is not an unalterable status. By changing his way of life [a person] may be a gipsy at one time and not … at another’;
- ‘no fixed employment’.

‘gypsies’ and ‘Gypsies’

It is important to emphasise distinction and concurrence between ‘gypsy’ and ‘Gypsy’. Lower case ‘g’ in ‘gypsy status’ in planning law determines legal personhood in relation to ‘nomadic life’, defined since *Mills v. Cooper* as a mode of dwelling ‘with no fixed abode’, living in ‘tents or other shelters, or … caravans or vehicles’. In Race Relations law, a proper noun, ‘Gypsy’, reifies a minority ethnic identity. It follows that someone can be a ‘Gypsy’ without being a ‘gypsy’, and vice versa, and that ‘gypsy’ is ‘not an unalterable status’, but ‘Gypsy’, a racialised category, is.

Policy documents, including Circular 1/06, sometimes contain both forms to differentiate legal rights pertaining to the same notional individual, attempting to negotiate the thin ice between national policies and international law, where (as in *Connors*) ‘gypsies’, regardless of orthography, are deemed ‘natural’ persons. 88 Activist lawyers and most scholars in Gypsy studies assert there is only one correct orthography: ‘Gypsy’, any other being seen as a denial of Gypsy ethnicity. In court proceedings the distinction is inaudible of course, rendering opaque to most non-legal participants the field in which personhood is elicited. 90 For adherents to ‘real Gypsies’ (including activists, scholars and lawyers,) who foster the core essentialisms of Race Relations, ‘only’ English Romanies, Scottish and Irish Travellers, and Roma are counted ‘ethnic Gypsies’. In liberal discourse Travellers’ rights to the site arise from their ethnicity, as self-determining agents in a voluntary beyond of the

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88 In the European Court’s judgment in *Connors v. United Kingdom* the court makes no acknowledgment of the United Kingdom’s distinction between the two legal persons of the G/gypsy. Its published texts use ‘gypsy’ throughout, as a ‘natural’ person protected under international law by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM), the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the European Convention for Human Rights.

89 Personal communication with Chris Johnson.

90 A Traveller activist stated that, although technical definitions were familiar, the idea of the legal person, and the existence of two spellings and meanings of ‘G/gypsy’ was unknown.
house arising from culture. The interdependence between ‘genealogical subjects’, who are ‘bound by various kinds of inheritances’, and ‘autological’ subjects - ‘autonomous and self-determining’ (Povinelli 2011: 26-7) - is thus epitomised in relations of dwelling made visible as the ‘freedom and constraint’ of the alliance between ‘Gypsies’ and the ‘gypsy site’.

Following Mills v. Cooper, both the bond of inheritance and the autonomous subject are simultaneously recognized and denied in the ‘gypsy’, whose relation to the site is as a ward of the state whose deviant impulses call for special control. Thus, Mr Cooper was convicted.

legal persons and transcendental subjects

It is curious how legal personality turns the mobile surfaces of self-relations between memory, speech, material objects, knowledge and the body inside out and externalises them in the artefactual agent of the legal person. Legal personhood, both subject and object, fixes a particular conjunction of history, embodiment, and material relations, and makes them visible as the mystique of ‘personality’. Pottage (2004:11) observes that although ‘the legal person has no necessary correspondence to social, psychological, or biological individuality’, its construction ‘reinforces… expectations’ that ‘legal personality is… an attribute of ‘real’ individuals’ (ibid; Saunders 1992). Mauss (1985:14) describes the law’s most fundamental project as determining relationships among persons, actions and objects (‘personaee, res and actioneees’) as ‘legal constructs’. However, rather than effecting their ontological separation, legal personality extends like a skin across complex organisms, personifying their interagency. The author, stretched across the writer and her productions, illustrates this formation of an organism whose interagency is brought outside and ‘recognized’ as co-extensive. As Strathern (1999: 177) writes of ownership, which ‘gathers things momentarily to a point by locating them in the owner, halting endless dissemination, effecting an identity’, the topology of legal personhood fuses material forms, perceived capacities, tendencies and relations, exerting the pull of a ‘self-object’ and awarding the ambivalent exteriority of legal recognition. Thus, legal personification and its converse, reification, frequently ‘do not express a more fundamental division of the world into two registers of persons and things’, but carry out the ‘radically creative operation’ of ‘actualising undifferentiated potentialities’ (Pottage 2004: 10) in a medium in which ‘nothing…has an essential ontological vocation to be person or thing’ (ibid).

Mauss’s example of the persona of Roman law illustrates the classical topology of personhood as a particular conjunction of material and embodied objects and their mode of
display. The simulacra (or *imagenes*), the wax death masks of ancestors ‘kept in the wings of the *aula* of the family house’ (Mauss 1985: 16), authenticate by means of resemblance the rights of a ‘citizen’ to his or her names: the *nomen*, *praenomen* and *cognomen*. The three names of a Roman citizen - the ‘sacred’ name (*nomen*/*numen*) of the gens; the personal name of the individual (*praenomen*); and the family name (*cognomen*) - form links of a chain that connect political agency with innate entitlement. The *nomen* authenticates connection to the ancestors; the *cognomen*, a political link between Rome’s founding fathers and the citizen-subject; and the personal *praenomen* compresses personal embodiment and ancestral verisimilitude (resemblance to the wax masks). The *aula* (hall), a passage between outside and inside, forms the legitimate site of display of this compression of ancestral time, bodily substance and entitlement, actualised as the political rights of the citizen.

The classical invocation of temporal, spatial, and embodied orders of (internal) continuity and (external) recognition91 persists in determinations of indigenous personhood in settler Australia, where, ‘To satisfy the criteria of native title, indigenous applicants must not merely produce text artefacts (objects, bodily habitus, songs) that resemble those documented in history books, they must also produce them on the basis of the same normative protocols of their pre-contact ancestors’ (Povinelli 2006: 154).

For subjects negotiating passage across the borders of citizenship to retrieve freedoms recast as gifts, fear of what may flow from disjunctive performances is never absent from the ignominies, perplexity and humour of entextualised knowledge and selfhood. For the Travellers on Marie’s site, the dubious legality of the raid, the ABC ‘tenancy’ agreements, and the comic solemnity of ‘mortar between the blocks’ constitute protocols of subjectification that echo those Povinelli describes. The wax masks of Traveller legitimation are the simulacra of ‘gypsy caravans’ that chalets must resemble, reproducing the ‘pre-contact ancestry’ of authentic nomadic dwelling, or rather, of a ‘colloquial idea’ of nomadic dwelling.

The generative effects of legal landscapes extend as institutions, materialities, subjects and subjectivities: Povinelli states ‘land claims do not accidentally run into radical difference. They produce it as the authentic field of indigenous culture’ (2002: 265). Indigeneity, like other forms of legal subjectification, produces the structural-function of the parallax in ‘transcendental subjects’, between the phenomenal and the noumenal, reinforcing expectations that ‘legal personality is... an attribute of ‘real’ individuals’ (Pottage op.cit.).

Mauss’s discussion of the ‘semantic confusion’ between the *cognomen* and the *imago*, the death mask, becomes relevant here. The two terms came to be used interchangeably

91 Mauss (1985:15) notes that the Roman legal concept of the person ‘has become our own’.
(Mauss op. cit.: 16-17), confusing ‘real’ individuals and their ancestral representations or ‘traces’. The imagines themselves - hollow impressions of real faces and thus physical traces of embodied persons – reinforce the unending circular signposting between objects and subjects, persons and things (cf. Thomas 2004: 50-53). Unintended compression and substitution thus creep into the indexical field of objects, names, social recognition, face and bodily inheritance, and signposts are obscured by slight shifts of position - ‘gypsy’ for ‘Gypsy’ for example - confusing representation, authenticity, evidence and self-evidence. Thus, persona came to convey two opposing meanings in Roman society: first, the legally recognized citizen, and second, the ‘usurpation’ and ‘fictitiousness’ of the person, and an ‘artificial “character” (personnage), the mask and role of comedy and tragedy, of trickery and hypocrisy – a stranger to the self (moi) – continued on its way’ (Mauss: 17).

How do these accounts of personification illuminate the ‘gypsy’ in Mills v. Cooper? First, the Highways Act recalls Riles’ (2004: 779) caution that the law as ‘doctrine’ cannot simply be ‘taken as evidence of cultural currents’, but is an act of making and re-imagining the social world which indexes its ‘contexts of production and use’ (ibid: 783) in transformative intent. Like Mianmin ritual, where the ‘aim of … ritual action is to change states and create effects’, ‘[a] successful outcome may be judged in the display itself, but this is only then to be judged by subsequent effects, in the long-term affairs of the community’ (Strathern 1988: 174). In the conjunction of convention and invention (Pottage 2004: 3) - of that which is held to exist ‘in itself’, and that which can be elicited as ‘innate… capacities’ - what is important is how ‘one concept contextualises the other’ (Strathern 1988: 175): the performativity of the law thus grounds its validity in a scene held to have taken place somewhere else.

The judges in Mills v. Cooper could decide that Mr Cooper was ‘not a gypsy’ and therefore not guilty: the OED’s ‘literal’ definition could not be proved either for or against him. Instead, combining convention and invention, the judges accepted the contextualising ‘literal’ meaning - that of the Gypsy determined by ancestry - but held genealogy unverifiable: ‘How pure-blooded a Romany must one be to fall into the [literal] definition?’ The Highways Act must mean something else- something that could be proved. The Mills judgment, re-enacting the two meanings of the Roman persona, reiterated its long-established dualism: the ‘gypsy’ as both ‘real’ person and ‘fictitious character’ - a ‘modern Borrow’ - or someone ‘pretending to be a gypsy’.

Mills v. Cooper’s still-extant ‘colloquial idea of a gipsy’ remains within the determination of the court based on an appeal to ‘popular meaning’ – the realm of prior authority in relation to which the law is contextualised. The law’s intention - which is judged ‘in the long-term
affairs of the community’ – is that ‘people know a gypsy when they see one’. The ‘innate capacity’ of the ‘gypsy’ can be readily construed from appearances; the camp beside the road ‘contextualises’ the real existence of a gypsy whatever he might tell you. Mr Cooper’s defence could not be allowed to stand in face of the ‘transformative intent’ of the Highways Act’s anti-gypsy provision; just as the resemblance of the Roman citizen to his imagines is dignified and rendered undeniable by their proper display in the aula, the ‘proper’ order of the ‘gypsy’ caravan is beside the road and, therefore, outside the law.

The Race Relations Act subsequently endorsed (upper case ‘G’) ‘Gypsies’ as a ‘racial’ group, in a definition that has no practical force in planning law. The two versions, ‘gypsy’ and ‘Gypsy’, in which ‘the one concept contextualises the other’, establish a detachable interagency between the law’s ‘effect’ of the gypsy and the Gypsy-in-herself. Bolstered by ‘popular meaning’, this dual legal character (persona and personnage) replays the nineteenth century account of a lost life-in-nature, in which the G/gypsy’s ambivalent authenticity is measured against a past, unknowable ‘self’. The dualism of real-absent and fictitious-present indexes a welter of ambivalences towards industrialism and pre-industrial life, commodity capitalism and a life on the land that never was (cf Sandland 1996: 385). Like Park’s ‘marginal man’, racialised by the political economy of citizenship and ‘condemned to remain among us an abstraction, a symbol’ (1928: 892), the G/gypsy category formalises the shifting parallax.

In spite of the judges’ cautions, the legal artefact of the gypsy subject of Mills v. Cooper was carried forward to the 1968 Caravan Sites Act which licensed official sites. An ‘innate capacity’ for ‘nomadic life’ configured by the simulacrum of the caravan evinces g/Gypsy personhood ‘in itself’. In this sense, the official site still functions as a formal metaphor of the illegal camp at the side of the road: the defining space to which ‘gypsies’ can properly be returned, because of an undiminished capacity for nomadic life. This was the state’s defence in Connors v. The United Kingdom, rejected by the European Court’s ruling that sites were ‘homes’.

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92 Kenrick & Clark (1999) are among many authors who subscribe to the idea that ‘North-west India formed the cradle of the Romany nation’, and who regard European Roma and British Romany ‘Gypsies’ as a single, diasporic ‘nation’.
Chapter Three

The Inquiry

The following account of a Planning Inquiry elicits the forms of speech and language ideologies through which witnesses and court officials seek to realise the embedded relations of material forms of life. Different registers and distinct tropes distinguish the courtroom speech of settled residents, Travellers and court officials. These are, respectively: the theft of value from the house; embodied life as the law of necessity, and (drawing on the previous chapter) the ‘inner capacities’ of legal persons and objects elicited through formalised acts of ‘recognition’.

The relative force of the house, the body, and the interagency of things-in-themselves is constrained by an objectified figure of law itself in the context of the planning application: the greenbelt. It is to this I turn first, since the case revolves around whether the site in question- a privately owned but illegal site - should be granted retrospective planning permission, or whether its location on land classified as ‘greenbelt’ should preclude legalisation.

the fetish of greenbelt

In arguments between expert planning witnesses and the two opposing barristers (representing the Travellers and the council,) the curious object called ‘greenbelt’ is frequently thrown into doubt. Greenbelt is a solid, material thing: land designated as ‘greenbelt’, and an objectification of law as prohibition, and a gap frequently appears between the two that sows confusion among lawyers and expert witnesses. Although sacrosanct in its force as a category to uphold a planning decision, greenbelt- whether category or material thing - has no particular content. It reflects neither the inherent qualities of designated land, nor rules out its use for ‘appropriate’ development. Furthermore, what is
classified as greenbelt one year may not be the next. The notion of ‘harm to the greenbelt’, which forms the central plank of the council’s case, is therefore problematic.\textsuperscript{93} If land has neither inherent qualities nor topological characteristics, what is that can be ‘harmed’? It can only be the sanctity of law conventionalised as land. In this case, the fact that the land owned and occupied by the Travellers is a former working scrap yard and tyre dump is beyond dispute. No one can remember when it was last ‘green’. Nevertheless, the barrister’s repeated condemnation of ‘inappropriate development in the greenbelt’ insists that something in the landscape has been harmed, and he talks of ‘returning the land to a green field site’.

Greenbelt makes landscape visible as a relation between law and monolithic nature in which each elicits the other as an innate capacity. The innate capacity of greenbelt is to embody a latent law of nature, ‘green fields’, the order of things which implicitly precedes all ‘development’, and which is delegated to the rule of law. Greenbelt thus naturalises the rule of law as intrinsic to land itself, underwriting planning’s claim to disinterestedness as a form of law which concerns land use but not people. The simultaneity between a non-material object (noumenal ‘green fields’), law objectified as landscape, and the quite different manifestation of a real piece of land lead to frequent confusion regarding the status of the object elicited in speech by each group of participants.

**the theft of value**

The Inquiry\textsuperscript{94} opened with the Inspector’s comments on what she ‘expects to hear’ from ‘both sides’: whether ‘special circumstances’ outweigh the ‘inappropriate development in the greenbelt’, such as the ‘personal circumstances’ of the appellants (the Travellers), or their ‘gypsy status’. She expects also, she says, to hear of ‘highway considerations’ and of the ‘living circumstances of the settled community’.

This formal construction of two ‘sides’ with equal interests in the case lends encouragement to the settled witnesses whose testimony occupies the first part of the proceedings. Mirroring this construction, seating arrangements have divided the room into two sections, with settled residents, councillors and politicians on one side as ‘opponents’,

\textsuperscript{93} The ultimate judgment against the Travellers, was that the ‘harm to the greenbelt’ outweighed the Appellants’ rights. They were later evicted.

\textsuperscript{94} Two weeks were allocated to the Inquiry, which took around eight days.
Travellers and Travellers on the other, joined from time to time by supporters from their church, Traveller activists and academic observers or participants. The settled witnesses and their supporters clap enthusiastically unchecked by the court officials after each of ‘their’ witnesses has spoken. They describe a ‘huge influx’ of ‘Irish Travellers who seek to flout our laws’, and as no curbs are placed on what witnesses may say, an air of tension spreads among the Travellers, so far silent. The local Member of Parliament contrasts ‘a long and proud history of living peacefully with English Gypsies’ with the ‘recent influx of Travellers’. Several witnesses preface their statements with scandalized rejections of racism, one man asking the Inspector to ‘firmly silence anyone who dares to accuse anyone present of any kind of racism’. This mock outrage precedes and sanctions portrayals of the Irish as invasive foreigners, and a unique blight on the countryside by comparison with ‘English gypsies’. But while Irishness inflames the witnesses’ sense of justified outrage, the principle provocations are architecture and settlement – to which Travellers have no right.

One witness says, ‘They are not Travellers, they are homesteaders. They build walls and roads and have the affront to name them.’ Another claims that the value of houses in the nearby village has fallen by twenty-five percent since the Travellers came. No one, seemingly, has actually tried to sell a house and failed, but the residents have brought experts to value their houses who have confirmed the loss they have suffered, and angry witnesses demand compensation from the government, which has failed to protect their houses. They speak of betrayal, of painstaking labour and expense through which their houses had become stores of value, now lost or stolen. Although the witnesses sense of loss is palpable, its gaping absence eludes speech; the theft of their material world can be made visible only by ‘experts’. The presence of the Traveller site has revealed that, all along, their houses were exposed to a fragile ‘outside’ that was part of their substance, and now its loss is like an object violently thrust into the house itself. Their houses are worthless shells; their lives destroyed; nothing could exceed this theft which is consummate with the destruction of the house itself. One man says ‘the Travellers killed my father’.

The impossibility of demonstrating these violent, physical truths seems to push witnesses toward ever more extreme claims: the site conceals terrible secrets and hidden violence; human waste leaches out, poisoning the surrounding land. The police have raided the site and seized guns. Roadside ditches overflow with sewage coming from the site. Maybe they do have septic tanks, but they won’t pay for them to be emptied. A witness brandishes a report from the water authority as proof of his claim. On asking to see it, the

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95 A convention of the Public Inquiry is that non-expert witnesses are not subjected to cross-examination by the barristers, although other members of the public or witnesses may question them.
barrister reads aloud that water tested in roadside ditches was clean, cleaner than average, in fact, and the Inspector looks incredulously at the witness, who rapidly moves on to his next dramatic assertion. Every claim crumbles on examination: no raids were carried out; no guns were seized; no toxic effluent was found; there has been no outbreak of killer disease.

A woman says, ‘We don’t mind Travellers as long as they *keep* travelling, but they have betrayed their culture’, adding that the ‘site should be culled’.

**excitable speech and resistant silence**

Judith Butler, exploring what ‘violence’ in speech might mean and its particular agency, reflects that a theory of discursive performativity is imbedded in political discourse. Speech takes on a detemporalised existence, unanchored from the moment of its production, changing what might have been a ‘discrete series of speech acts’ into a ‘ritual chain of resignifications whose origin and end remain unfixed and unfixable’ (Butler 1997:14):

‘Understanding performativity as a renewable action without clear origin or end suggests that speech is finally constrained neither by its specific speaker nor its originating context.’ (ibid: 40)

What Butler calls ‘excitable’ speech ‘founds an alternative notion of agency and, ultimately, of responsibility’, which ‘more fully acknowledges the way in which the subject is constituted in language, how what it creates is also what it derives from elsewhere’ (ibid: 15-16).

My interest in Butler’s discussion focuses on two of its implications: first, in the interagency between the political ontology of the subject and the discursive productivity of a ‘field’, and second, in how a continuity of ‘sense’ radiates between the social, material and political, so that they constitute the dense texture of a unified reality to which speech merely refers. I turn first to the latter, and reserve the former until the end of the chapter, when I reconsider Bourdieu’s relational ‘homology’ between habitus and field.

Butler’s ‘ritual chain’ of speech, detached from an individual speaker yet connecting one to another, has a parallel structure internal to individual acts of excitable speech. In the use of metaphor, allusion and analogy, a confluence of meanings (or senses) generates similarities and connections between things and ideas that were formerly unrelated. Benjamin (1979 [1933]: 68) comes to mind, when he describes language as the ‘medium in
which objects meet and enter into relationship with each other… in their most volatile and
delicate substances’. This internal enchainment of things and ideas instils speech with a
momentum that emerges as the emotive force of ‘truth’.

For several days, witnesses enacted loss of control in mimetic tropes which connected
houses, bodies, flows of investment, bodily waste and irrecoverable loss, each object or idea
‘resignified’ as a recursive link in the chain of ‘meaning’. Sanctioned by the force of emotion,
the loss of control of speakers’ responsibility for language (‘let no one here dare to accuse
anyone of racism’,) contained a defensive threat linked to what had been ‘stolen’ from the
house, so that the latter was made the ‘cause’ of the former. Speech had broken the
boundaries of individual speakers and assumed a ritual momentum. Finding themselves
unchallenged, settled witnesses and their supporters spurred each other on, slyly eying their
opponents. The founding act, from which all injuries of excitable speech could follow with
gleeful impunity, was the travesty of a bold, unwarranted comparison, and the outrage of
fake similarity in which the Travellers dared to assert through material acts and forms of
dwelling a kind of equality - building ‘walls and roads and [having] the affront to name them’.

Settled witnesses restaged affronts against the house in language that merged flows of
waste and the effluence of value; dangerous bodies, outbreaks of disease and hidden
weapons; betrayals of houses, travesties of architectural presumption, and the betrayed
destiny of their ‘culture’. An original violence, that had released meaning from constraints
that limited similarities and differences between things and people, had to be made visible,
the ‘agency [of speech beginning] where sovereignty ends’ (Butler 1997: 16).

Butler argues that decontextualised speech, ‘without clear origin or end,’
‘accumulate[s] the force of authority through the …citation of a prior and authoritative set of
practices’ (ibid: 51). This authority had been achieved through a multiplicity of arenas that
combined to ‘exist’ the site and the Travellers in an amplified public realm of language,
feeding the perception of something known by all, so that no particular speaker need
substantiate the capital that underwrote speech’s currency. Newspaper columns, council
debates, radio phone-ins and meetings in private houses both shielded and extended the
‘ritual chain’ of speech, with many speakers rhetorically positioning themselves as the
surrogates of others. Neighbourhood spokesmen and local politicians generously offered
themselves in place of ‘others’, who, they claimed, were ‘too afraid to speak out’. Nourishing
conviction and community, this unfixed speech firmed up a definite edge beyond which the
Travellers, figures of the meaning towards which speech irrevocably ‘arcs’ (in Morrison’s
phrase), remained silent and unadmitted. Meetings to which they were not invited;
newspaper advertisements pledging to repeal human rights law; a press campaign to ‘Stamp
on the Camps!’ afforded legitimacy to a swollen tide of excitable speech that the Public Inquiry now further endorsed.

Distinct asymmetries marked the first and second parts of the Inquiry. Unlike the settled witnesses whose testimony went unchallenged, the Travellers who gave evidence faced formal cross-examination. In contrast to what had preceded, a controlled opacity marked their speech which the court could not penetrate. Gaps and invisibilities, perplexing both to lawyers and settled onlookers, defended points of vulnerability from the injuries of interrogation in a setting where Travellers had no power. Techniques of simultaneously rendering invisible that which speech seeks to disclose can be understood as extending the semiotic of dwelling itself. People ‘come and go’ between camps and sites; self-absences, sometimes materialised in empty trailers, contain intimations of future presence. They also come and go in speech. This comparison is not fortuitous. The gaps of deflective or euphemistic speech, which are an ordinary feature of conversation among Travellers, perform positive demonstrations of the autonomy of others, the privacy of their motives, and enact public consent to such autonomy. Personhood is visible as a negative space on the site and a negative space in the speech of others (cf Blust 1997; Levinson 1996; Senft 1997). That the positive social value of negative space in the social relations of the camp or site should be reproduced in the court, where settled speech commands the place Travellers find themselves unwillingly occupying, can easily be understood. The witnesses’ refusal of speech as a means of rendering persons and relationships transparent, or open to inspection, took the form of strategies for deflecting questions that the witnesses, almost all women, would not answer. When younger women were asked whether ‘Is there a Mr – on the scene?’ they consistently answered ‘No’, thereby evading questions about their husbands, the fathers of their children. The easiest way to avoid unacceptable public discussion about someone, even a husband, was to deny his or her existence, and when a witness was asked about someone believed to be living in the same yard, such as a brother, uncle or sister-in-law, her typical answer was: ‘I don’t know. You’d better ask him,’ or ‘She have her own life. I don’t go into thing like that’. Threatened by intrusion the ‘one family’ atomises into multiplicity, where each pursues his or her own ends, unseen by others.

These acts of absenting self or others from speech recall Patrick Williams’ description of Manus acts of ‘abstention’ from the self-insistence of the Gadzo spatial and linguistic world by ‘a withdrawal that is an actual taking possession of oneself’ (2003: 46-7). Filling ‘empty’
space and emptying what is full sustains the ‘equivocal character’ of a relation that is oppressive, unavoidable and necessary, and where ‘the capacity to nullify the Gadzos makes it possible to maintain all sorts of relationships with them’ (ibid: 47). For Manus and Irish Travellers, withdrawal and ambiguity remove the claim of language of a shared, disinterested social space. Simmel’s description of power as the inhabiting of an ‘inbetween’ that constitutes social space illuminates what is nullified by such techniques of erasure:

‘At the moment two persons begin to interact, the space between them appears to be filled and inhabited. This appearance of course rests on the ambiguity of the concept “between”: that a relation between two elements which actually consists only of a certain movement or modification between the one and the other takes place between them in the sense of a spatial interposition…The “Inbetween” as a purely functional reciprocity, whose contents stay within each of the parties to a transaction, also takes the form of a claim on the space which exists between these parties’.

(Simmel: Soziologie, 1908, cited in Levine, Carter & Gorman 1976: 839)

In refusing the ‘purely functional reciprocity’ of the ‘inbetween’ of speech, Irish Travellers might be understood simultaneously to nullify the reification of ‘society’ that Strathern (1985) argues is the corollary of capitalism.66 ‘Society’ reifies the mediality of the ‘Inbetween’, a seemingly transparent space of entities and relations in which the autonomous value of things-in-themselves, and persons as discrete wholes are constructed. Implicit in Strathern’s discussion of how degrees of attachment and detachment between persons, and aspects of persons, are enacted through objects, is the question of how (discursive, regulatory, affective and material) social spaces are divided, regulated and transacted, and how persons and objects are imagined to ‘inhabit’ them. Following Simmel, objects transacted (and persons interacting,) acquire ‘shadow bodies’: forms and degrees of instrumental detachment from an ‘ultimate reference to persons’ (Strathern 1985: 200). In contrast to these ‘shadow bodies’ of the claimed ‘Inbetween’ of social space qua Society, what Simmel calls ‘social forms’ engage contents that are fragile, underdetermined, and ‘ruptured by some sort of stress’ (Levine 1971: xvi; cf Murphy 1964). They engage in equivocation, modify distances and offer implicit resistance to the weight of ‘objective culture’

66 ‘Western commodity logic’ is co-dependent with a meaning of family, in which production is the work of ‘society’, and consumption that of the family (Strathern 1985:194). Kinship and economy thereby emerge under capitalism as distinct orders of relations between persons, and between persons and things.
that dominates what Simmel calls ‘our concrete immediate life’ (1971: 355). In the ‘social forms’ of Traveller speech and dwelling, where the latter is described as ‘coming and going’, individuals are neither fully separable from the ‘shadow body’ of the breed and its modalities of interaction between Travellers, nor synecdochal of the breed as a ‘totality’. People move back and forth between camps and sites to which they ‘belong’ even in absence. There is, in short, no space of ‘transaction’ between Traveller and Traveller or Traveller and settled comparable to that of ‘commodity logic’, in which persons can be made to appear as discrete wholes. By making persons ‘disappear’ from the scrutiny of the court, the space of political economy is, in effect, erased.

a form of life

In turning to the evidence of the Travellers (the appellants in the case,) the council’s barrister outlines his case: it is for them to prove their ‘gypsy status’, and to show what factors ‘outweigh the harm caused to the greenbelt’ that must amount to ‘very special circumstances’ in each individual case. ‘Personal circumstances are relevant,’ he acknowledges, ‘but what is their significance in land use terms?’ Each ‘crumb of comfort’ that Circular 1/06 might appear to offer, he says, is in fact not that at all. A curious reversal has taken place; the terms of the post-2004 legal process now constitute significant barriers that the appellants must surmount by proofs and demonstrations which must be ‘weighed’ in the ultimate balance of ‘land use’. In the following accounts of testimony the elicitation of the nomadic ‘gypsy’ of Mills v. Cooper as a relation to ‘personal circumstances’ pits the ‘failure’ of nomadic life against the noumenal interiority of the ‘gypsy-in-herself’.

Theresa, the mother of several adult children with families who all live on the site, is less intimidated by the barrister’s questioning than others. When asked how her life has led to her being on the site, after more than sixty years on the road, she speaks of her husband who is now dead: ‘We wasn’t able to travel because he was very ill the Lord have mercy on his poor soul. Travellers have to buy their land first and then put in for planning permission because if they go to the council and say “There’s a bit o’ land and I want to get planning permission,” the answer’s “No” because we’re Travellers.’ Watching Travellers murmur assent she adds, ‘Travelling life has finished since 1994.’ All there is is a car park here and

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97 In 1994 the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPO) imposed new sanctions criminalising camping and removed the long-neglected duty of local authorities to make provisions for Travellers.
a field there.' Asked whether her unmarried daughter intends to take up nomadic life, she says 'Well, she's part of the community so she would like to travel, but there's no life for the young people beside the road.'

The mid-1990s marked a systematic closure of law and landscape that previously held survivable gaps for Travellers. Lay-bys were systematically closed off with heaps of rubble; along main roads, kerbs were raised to prevent trailers from being towed onto wide verges; local councils advertised 'help-lines' for the public to report sightings of Travellers, so that they could quickly be driven out. The function of newly-formed 'gypsy and traveller units' was to procure rapid evictions using the new law (CJPO 1994). Travellers who had used camps year in and year out as they passed through an area were now forced to stop in supermarket car parks or even public parks, and their increased visibility, fuelling public anger, was used to justify further measures. Travellers who had moved around largely unnoticed for decades were suddenly perceived as recent interlopers who would stop at nothing to set up a camp.

Theresa portrays the lived reality of a world where 'Travelling life is finished', although Travellers themselves remain. It is the double bind that means 'ethnic' Travellers or 'Gypsies' are no longer 'gypsies' in law, and embodies the irony of the state’s claim to protect nomadism in a country where no one can be a nomad. The cross-examination performs the rhetorical possibility that these Travellers could be 'real' nomads or 'gypsies', while aiming to prove that they are not. And if they are not, they will be evicted back onto the road to live as 'gypsies'. This imbedding of possibility into a process that precludes its realization is what Žižek calls the empty 'gesture of self-censorship' (1997: 27), bridging 'the gap between the formal symbolic frame of choices and social reality' (ibid: 29).

As witnesses give their testimony it becomes clear that the land offered a chance of survival when things had become increasingly desperate. Catherine, a young mother, tells how her uncle, suffering from cancer, brought her to the site: 'That's why he brought me this plot, because he knew he was going to die.' As a child she had been shot in the face by a stranger in an attack on a camp, and ever since has suffered from depression. Once, she tried living in a house but it made things worse. The Inspector asks, 'What was it like living in a house?' and she answers, 'I was smothered in. It was like I was in prison for something I didn't do...I was smothered'.

One after another, the women respond to the barrister’s litany of questions.

'Do you work?'

'No.'

'Have you ever worked?'

'No.'
‘Do you travel?’
‘I go to fairs, visiting family, and meet up with other Travellers.’
‘But that’s social travelling?’
‘Yes.’
‘When did you last do any proper travelling?’
‘I don’t know what you mean.’
‘Can you drive?’
‘No.’

The barrister seeks to knot together the strands of an argument to prove they do not travel for the right reasons – the ‘economic’ reasons for which proper ‘nomads’ travel.98

The barrister then cross-examines Maggie, in her forties, who has explained that her own and her husband’s health needs and her children’s need for education prevent them from travelling ‘at the moment’, but, she adds, ‘travelling is our culture and nobody can take that from us. Whenever there’s an opportunity to travel we’ll take it – to fairs, marriages in the community...’ The barrister interrupts, with irritation in his voice. ‘Why not for work? I understand your cultural point.’ She replies, ‘I don’t have any skills.’ The barrister challenges, ‘When was the last time you travelled properly as a working family?’ Maggie responds, ‘I don’t understand that question.’

She hesitates, as if trying to find a way to explain her life in a way he might understand, and then, without irony or resentment, says slowly, ‘We never asked to be Travellers or to be born into a Traveller community, but we’re here, and we’ve got to accept who we are.’ She might explain the fact she was a woman or that she was Irish in the same way. After a pause she continues, ‘I had a sister died of kidney failure on the road. And my father, fifty-two years of age, died on the road, and we never knew what his complaint was.... And I had a baby of five month old who died on the road.... It’s no good - running round from one doctor to another, and we don’t want to see this happen to any other member of the Traveller community.’

The court room has fallen silent, and rows of Travellers are leaning forward, motionless and with absolute attention. No one seems to breathe until Maggie has stopped speaking. In performing the labour of laying out her dead in the courtroom, she has transformed this work into the manifestation of a simple purpose: that the preservation of life and care of the dead are one and the same as the fact of existence of a ‘Traveller community’ – something ‘we

98 See Sandland (op.cit) for a discussion of the ‘gypsy’ as homo economicus, an additional element of the legal person introduced in 1994 in an attempt to differentiate ‘real’ (ie ‘ethnic’) ‘Gypsies’ from New Age Travellers (NATs)- who were also legal ‘gypsies’. 
never asked to be born into’ - whose form of life tips over into the ethical imperative of life itself. Among the Travellers present everyone owns parts of her story.

Veena Das has written of the anguished reconciliations, and failures to reconcile, the ruptured links between ‘life itself’ and ‘a life’. She states:

‘how one lives in relation to one’s own and others’ deaths turns out to be a project of how one protects not only a form of life over disputations, criticisms, and recognition in the fact of change – but also how one protects the institution of life as lived in the singular.’ (Das 2006: 92)

In Maggie’s invocation of the burdens and losses of lives and deaths on the road, accident and inevitability emerge into language as the singularity of shared history and common purpose, where ‘The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from accidents and external life, that is from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens’ (Deleuze 2001:28. cited in Das). She describes her experience is that of a ‘Traveller’, ‘an impersonal and yet singular life’ that transcends the atomised particularity of ‘special circumstances’ for which the barrister cajoles her to plead. The ‘pure event’ of death has no ‘special circumstances’. Maggie’s insight into what ‘we never asked to be born into’, but nevertheless ‘must accept’ is, in a profound sense, humanity’s ethical condition: the limitations, possibilities, and distinctive pleasures and commitments of a ‘form of life’.

Maggie reminds the court of law’s other meaning: the imposition of necessity. The inevitability of death is the law that pulls into its orbit all those with who find themselves charged with sustaining life, and with burying and mourning the dead. Her desire on behalf of Travellers, ‘we don’t want to see this happen to any other member of the Traveller community’, cuts across the separation of law and politics from the law of life and death, in order to confront the ‘stability of a conceptual distinction’ (Butler 2000: 12) between kinship and the state. 99

99 Butler opposes those for whom Antigone ‘articulates a pre-political opposition to politics’ and ‘kinship [is] the sphere that conditions the possibility of politics without ever entering into it’ (2000: 2)
personal circumstances

“When the state confronts intimate sites of human embodiment and reproduction, including the rituals of the dead, turning them into representations and instruments of power, what kind of deformation of sovereignty occurs?”

Judith Butler (2000)

As the barrister renews his challenge to each witness’s ‘circumstances’, he suddenly switches from ‘personal’ to ‘special’ - a term whose ‘special’ meaning is known to him alone. The phrase ‘special circumstances’ appears nowhere in Circular 1/06, but is, however, reminiscent of the state’s duty (referred to in Connors,) to give ‘special consideration’ to the ‘needs and lifestyle’ of Travellers. A reversal of duties has taken place which now imposes on the Travellers the burden of proving that the frailties of the body and the dependencies of children and the old are ‘special’ in some indefinable way. The duty of the state to give ‘special’ consideration to the ‘personal circumstances’ of Traveller applicants has disappeared, and the barrister now argues that the frailties of the body are not ‘special’, but ‘ordinary’.

One witness, whose asthma requires her to use a nebuliser, explains that she needs a power source, to which the barrister counters, ‘you realize that it’s perfectly possible to use a [portable] generator for power in order to use a nebuliser?’ The Inspector visibly winces at this line of argument, unnoticed by him. With thinning patience, witnesses with chronic illnesses repeatedly explain that in order to get a hospital appointment for diagnosis or treatment, you need to be registered with a General Practitioner, which you cannot if you are beside the road. The barrister tries a new tack, arguing that these particular local hospitals are ‘not the only ones’ able to treat the conditions the witnesses describe: heart disease, psychiatric illness, diabetes and paediatric conditions can be treated anywhere, he challenges them.

Julia cares for her father who has a heart condition, and she is diabetic and injects insulin three times a day, ‘and if my fridge defrosts I can’t keep the insulin cold’, she adds. ‘And it’s fair to say’, the barrister cajoles, ‘that any hospital could treat you and your father for these conditions?’

‘Yes, sir,’ she replies, her temper sharpened, ‘that’s quite fair. Any hospital that could give me a plot of ground to put my caravan on.’ She has ‘bested’ him, and approving laughter rises from the rows of Travellers.
Without referring to ‘gypsy status’, the barrister seeks to discredit each witness’s legal status through the construal of aims and motives. They, in turn, express confusion at his inability to understand them. In response to his question ‘Did you travel for work?’ a young woman named Sarah answers ‘I don’t understand what you mean.’

‘Well… was the reason for travelling in order to work?’

She replies, ‘Travelling is my way of life; it’s the way I grew up, just like you grew up in a house. That’s your way of life.’

Others, who acknowledge having lived for a time in a house with relatives explain that they went back to the road, ‘because I like my caravan. I’m a Traveller’; ‘I don’t like bricks and mortar. It’s my culture.’

The Inspector, perhaps with rising distaste at the nature of the cross-examinations, intervenes directly and asks Julia, a mother of two young children, about her future. When her children are older will she ever travel again? Julia answers with intense emotion, ‘I love to travel. It’s my culture. It’s my nature. I dream about travelling; I was brung up to it. I would love to travel…’ But adult life has cast a net of fears and dangers around those whose lives are intertwined with her own: ‘…You’ve got children and old people…’ She tries to explain.

There was nowhere legal left to camp. You could pull in and often there wasn’t time to feed the children before you’d get moved on again. A garage would refuse you water and then they would phone round to tip off all the other garages in the area so they’d all refuse you, and you’d be forced to keep moving, unable to stop. Nights were spent fearfully in black lay-bys, without water or electricity, while lorry drivers threw beer cans around outside the trailers.

The next witness, Josie, is a woman of about thirty. She explains that she looks after her father-in-law who is waiting for a hip operation and whose cataracts prevent him from driving. Their plot cost two thousand pounds and a horse, she says, and if they were evicted she doesn’t know how they would manage. All the men of her ‘own family’ live in yards on the site, and she needs the support of her extended family. The Inspector asks her about the brief time she spent living in a bungalow. ‘It was too confined…I don’t like bricks and mortar’, Josie answers. The Inspector continues: will she ever ‘go back to travelling someday?’

‘Well, that would be my dream, yes, but my children need their education. I want them to have the chances I never had.’

The Inspector asks, ‘So you’re willing to give up your dream because of them?’

‘Yes, there’s nothing more important than their needs. They have to come first.’

‘And when they’re grown up one day, do you think that you’ll go back to travelling?’

‘I don’t know. It’s so hard now… You don’t know how hard it is until you stop doing it.’
‘So… your dream might remain just a dream that will never be realized?’

‘Yes. That's right’.

One witness after another affirms: ‘I never spent one day happy in a house’; ‘I felt like a prisoner’; ‘I was smothered.’ The Inspector’s interventions have focused repeatedly on this aversion to the house,100 and she stares at the witnesses, seemingly fascinated at having summoned forth the real ‘G/gypsy’. ‘I have heard of this,’ she tells one woman, watching her intently, ‘but I wanted to hear you say it.’

the materiality of the dream

In 2001 the European Court urged member states to uphold the right of the ‘gypsy’ to caravan dwelling, observing that ‘the occupation of caravans was an integral part of the ethnic identity of gypsies’.101 This formulation, intended to defend the autonomy of Traveller dwelling, has the potential to lend itself to extraordinary abuse. By linking the ‘natural’ person of human rights to the UK’s material evidence of legal personhood (recalling Mauss), the European Court colluded with the symbolic order of the house in gypsy policy, where houses and caravans (however defined) amount to ‘species’ of dwelling from which the mystique of personality arises. The UK’s construal that house-dwelling removes by default the ‘status’ of the gypsy - the converse face of the realpolitik of ‘gypsy status’ - was underscored by Strasbourg’s suggestion that ‘real G/gypsies’ live in caravans. Lawyers contesting planning applications by Travellers now probe an interior relation between personhood and dwelling in order to elicit desire and aversion, thereby either exposing the ‘gypsy’ as a self-denying house-dweller, or alternatively, uncovering a true nomad who can be turned out onto the road without compunction.

The Inspector’s probing of the histories, desires and dreams of Traveller witnesses elicits the natural/ ‘ethnic’ G/gypsy of international law in order to reconcile it with Circular 1/06, where the suspension of nomadic life is, in practice, envisaged as merely temporary, like the site itself. The durability of ‘the dream’ sustains the fiction of ‘temporary dwelling’. If the witnesses are found to be ‘real G/gypsies’ with an authentic ‘aversion to bricks mortar’, but nevertheless state that ‘travelling life is finished’, they will forfeit the possibility of a legal

100 The ‘cultural aversion to conventional housing’ first appeared in Clarke v. Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and Regions, 2002. (JPL 552). See also discussion by Johnson 2009.

site. Post-nomadism in practice merely contemplates a ‘suspension’ \(^{102}\) of ‘the gypsy way of life’ (see f/n 103).

In the hearing’s choreography of ‘technical’ and ‘natural’ legal persons, and ‘personal’ and ‘special circumstances’, and its elicitation of the mystique of personality as an interior relation to dwelling, uncertainty surrounds the quasi-magical processes concealed in inaudible distinctions and ‘special’ definitions. Witnesses’ testimony may be influenced by understandings of ‘gypsy status’ as a legal value that, for mysterious reasons, can be removed from them. For some, ‘gypsy status’ means personal authenticity recognized by the court. For others it arises from an ‘aversion’ to bricks and mortar. Some are uncertain whether ‘g/Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’ ‘mean the same thing’; ‘G/gypsy’, the term used by the court officials, perhaps confers some special mark of validity, and one Irish Traveller introduces herself confidently to the court as a ‘Romany Gypsy’, saying afterwards, ‘Well, it’s exactly the same, isn’t it?’

The misrecognition necessary to support this choreography (strengthened by the European Court’s connection between ‘natural’ personhood and material forms of dwelling,) is that the spontaneous production of ‘the gypsy way of life’,\(^{103}\) lies in a realm beyond legal definition and institutional control, where the caravan - rather than being already constituted in law as a ‘gypsy caravan’ - a relation to the house \textit{from the inside} as its contained excess - is simply an unmarked alternative to the house, where personal freedom and choice are exercised by real G/gypsies. The caravan, the metonym of a noumenal ‘gypsy way of life’ lived in dreams, is the trope of autonomous agency paradoxically encysted within the legal, material and discursive controls of the ‘gypsy site’ - the kernel of \textit{jouissance} in the official pathology of the G/gypsy. In this sense, it precisely mirrors the \textit{illusio} that underpins the symbolic structure of the house, whose kernel of \textit{jouissance} is ‘home’.

Bearing witness to this symbolic structure, courts in the UK have accepted the testimony of psychiatrists to the ‘cultural aversion’ of ‘G/gypsies’ to bricks and mortar, and, if necessary, the witnesses in this case might also be persuaded to submit to examinations by psychiatrists who, no doubt, would draw similar conclusions.\(^{104}\) Circular 1/06, which allows the ‘nomadic’ gypsy to suspend travelling life in order to care for dependants, or for the health or educational needs of herself or members of her family, has added performative

\(^{102}\) Circular 1/06 states that nomadic life can be given up permanently, but since this entails a radical reimagining of the ‘temporary site’ as ‘permanent’, planning decisions appear unable to countenance permanent temporariness, or post-nomadism.

\(^{103}\) The phrase, found in Connors, arises from Chapman and later Newman \textit{J in R v. Carmarthenshire County Council ex parte Price} (2003) which confirmed the state’s obligation ‘to facilitate the gypsy way of life’.

\(^{104}\) Personal communication with the witnesses’ barrister.
sophistication to the G/gypsy by eliciting a transcendental G/gypsy whose deepest desires and pathological aversion are shown, with remarkable consistency, to confirm the rationality of the law itself. While holding out the possibility of a legal, privately owned, permanently temporary site, Circular 1/06 systematically conjures a symbolic narrative of inescapable hardship, exclusion from, and ultimate dependence on what are implicitly the institutions of settled society. The artefact of G/gypsy ‘consciousness’ elicited by the court is, in each case, an unfulfilled desire for a life she cannot sustain, knows to be finished, or else, has never truly known: ‘a dream that will never be realized’.

This ‘dream’ and the ‘aversion to bricks and mortar’ confer legal solidity on the noumenal nomadism of the real G/gypsy. The legal rationality of the state’s denial of lawful accommodation, healthcare and education to Travellers can be blamed on a recalcitrant desire for a life outside the state metonymically constituted in the house. Justifying the eviction of the Traveller from her land, the real existence of ‘the gypsy way of life’ shields the state from international censure. ‘If they can live in houses’, the logic goes, ‘it proves they were never real g/Gypsies in the first place, and if not they can go back on the road where they really want to be’. The permanent, temporary site, as the private property of ‘G/gypsies’ who are ‘nomadic in spirit but not in actual … practice’ exists as a legal possibility that is almost never conceded.

**fragility, freedom and the boundaries of the house**

Beneath the ideology of the ‘gypsy’ as *homo economicus*, whose life on the road is directed by the ‘proper’ aim of nomadic subsistence, lies another aim: the elicitation of a real G/gypsy characterised by the *jouissance*\(^{105}\) of an imagined life on the road which ‘remains the same in all possible (symbolic) universes’ (Žižek 1997:50), together with a forced admission of its unattainability. The proof of her real ‘way of life’, made visible before the court, is a pathology of self-exclusion from the house, diagnosed by experts as the ‘cultural aversion to bricks and mortar’. The legal artefact of G/gypsy desire and pathology elicited by Circular 1/06 as the mystique of personality is the excess that protects the boundaries of the normative house, the horizon of meaning against which the case is played out, imminently threatened by permanent, post-nomadic architectures. The legal theatre of G/gypsy personhood thus balances the authority of the house to a resistance within it, creating the

\(^{105}\) ‘[W]here the subject encounters a ‘density of being’ which cannot be ‘integrated’. Alternatively, ‘the non-historical kernel of the process of historicization’ (Žižek 1997: 48-49).
appearance of a choice which the ‘g/Gypsy’ is not allowed, but compelled, to exercise, in a perfect example of ideology’s ‘gesture of self-censorship’ (Žižek 1997: 27). The rules that impose the necessity ‘to treat the forced choice as a true choice’ (ibid: 29), so that eviction to the side of the road is the G/gypsy’s ‘true choice’, underpin the ‘phantasmic frame’ of house/home/property. The house here is an ‘autological subject’, an independent actor in the commodity market and agent of citizenship. The gypsy site, tethered to the dependent status of the G/gypsy and incapable of exchange value, epitomises managed instability: the permanent temporariness of being in time and outside history.

However, it is important not to forget the despair of the settled witnesses as they declared the loss their houses had suffered with the ardency of rejected lovers, some threatening to ‘sue the government’ who must be responsible for their betrayal. Inhabiting the space of agency of the commodity market, the core of the house is (to borrow from Simmel) the ‘shadow body’ of value, and owes its fragile existence to the shared estimation of house-dwellers of the supplemental and elusive space beyond the house.

‘habitus’ and ‘field’: the subject of the Traveller site

‘The gesture is the exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such. It allows the emergence of being-in-a-medium of human beings and thus it opens the ethical dimension for them.’

Giorgio Agamben 2000

‘We have lit upon the gentle, sensitive mind and lost the old nonchalance of the hand’

W.B. Yeats 1919

The final section of Part One revisits Bourdieu’s relational dualism of habitus and field107, and draws on Traveller dwelling as an exemplary, challenging context for re-
addressing the question of the subject. The official Traveller site distils a problem that Bourdieu does not address: that fields - as dynamic systems of discourse, 'magical' objects, and distributions of capital - are constituted against the unresolved multiplicity of other 'fields' to which they are both permeable and resistant. The slow autonomisation of a field implies simultaneous operations of interagency and antagonism- a division of labour in the face of resistant similarity and undifferentiation, which, I suggest, remains necessarily incomplete. This understanding represents a radical departure from Bourdieu's account of fields as homologous structures.

If we take 'housing' itself in the early post-war years, Abercrombie's plan to elicit permanence from the temporary involved licensing thousands of dwellings that had sprung up on 'cheap sites upon which those with lower incomes can have their own homes, many of which they have built or erected themselves' (GLP: 131). Licensing existing dwellings, including caravans, on owner-occupied land was a bold incursion into property and the 'privacy' of dwelling – hitherto unqualified rights that, in principle, did not differentiate between rich and poor. The Greater London Plan anticipated an 'enormous rush immediately the war is over to find sites upon which housing of a temporary nature, erected by private individuals and to which the by-laws do not apply, can be placed' (ibid). Licensing was to be executed with a deceptively casual, permissive air, which sought to soften the hard fact that licensing the dwellings of the poor in the name of a 'universal standard' was about guarding an elusive notion of 'value' marking the separation between 'house' and 'home'. The first was now to become an object – and system- of governance; the second remained decommodified, undefined, and of no political account. Abercrombie wrote:

'It is not considered desirable to place a total prohibition on the erection of temporary buildings provided that a reasonable standard is maintained. The buildings would be licensed by the local authority from year to year and a proper surveillance carried out.' (GLP: 131-2)

'Surveillance' of the temporary, under threat of compulsory purchase, was intended to force the transformation of the 'jumble of shacks and bungalows' (ibid: 98) that covered the 'plot lands' of South East Essex into districts of well-ordered, 'permanent' houses. Moreover, under new planning controls, new dwellings would no longer be able to proliferate. In summary, each of the pairings: privacy and surveillance, property and permission, the house space’ of the house inculcate embodied dispositions and practical logics which are assimilated to the symbolic structures of ‘the male world, the place of assembly, the fields, and the market’ (90-91), each of which enjoys the appearance of a separate sphere.
and the ‘shack’, are inseparably inter-linked in the autonomisation of ‘housing’, a field whose internal force depends on the interagency of what is gradually - but never finally - pulled apart, and the underlying undifferentiation of what is to be differentiated. Material structures, legal status, capital, ‘kinds’ of people, ‘houses’ and ‘homes’, and ‘communities’ are all involved; new objectifications and resistances to them reflect both official and practical logics of fields whose autonomisation never results in autonomy. This central complexity of fields as irreducibly inter-related through tension, opposition and inter-agency throws the concept of habitus into newly-problematic relief, and suggests that Bourdieu’s account of the inter-production of social and material worlds and embodied subjectivities in habitus and field demands rethinking.


Balibar (1994: 8-9) elegantly describes how, through a ‘play on words’, the fundamentally ‘ontopolitical’ concept of the subject frames an historical evolution of ideas encompassing ‘subjection’ and ‘sovereignty’. Bourdieu deals with a similar contradictory duality by combining the phenomenological subject’s ‘ontological complicity’ (1985:14) with the world with ‘misrecognition’ (140-141), the masking of historical structures of everyday domination by means of the distribution of objectified and embodied ‘capital’. Furthermore, fields are not simply marketplaces where ‘socialized’ agents compete for symbolic goods against unevenly stacked odds, but scenes of conflict where categories which afford recognition (of persons and objects) and notions of value are not, finally, fixed or fixable. Symbolic capital’s power ‘to make things with words’ (1985: 23) is conditional upon their adequacy to situations, and the ‘fetishised’ objects of a field which are irreducible to those of other fields remain underdetermined, like the human- material worlds which they substantiate. These generative instabilities of fields point to an endless capacity for resignification, so that sociality is always emergent. This seems to anticipate the transformational potential of the social-material relations fields make possible:
‘[T]he objects of the social world can be perceived and expressed in a variety of ways, since they always include a degree of indeterminacy and vagueness, and, thereby, a degree of semantic elasticity…

‘This objective element of uncertainty - which is often reinforced by the effect of categorization … provides a basis for the plurality of visions of the world which is itself linked to the plurality of points of view. At the same time, it provides a base for symbolic struggles to produce and impose the legitimate vision of the world.

‘These symbolic struggles, both the individual struggles of everyday life and the collective, organized struggles of political life, have a specific logic which endows them with real autonomy from the structures in which they are in fact rooted'. (Bourdieu 1989: 20-21)

However, since social conflict remains harnessed, in Bourdieu’s account, to the ontology of existing ‘spaces of positions', ‘symbolic struggles’ can only ever be ‘partial revolutions … [which] do not call into question … the bedrock of belief on which the whole game is based’ (1993: 74). The contradiction between autonomy and dependency and the underlying functionalism of Bourdieu’s formulation of the subject remain weaknesses of his endeavour to ground consciousness (and the unconscious) in the imbedded political order and ‘illusio’ of material worlds. I shall suggest a way to rethink these questions, but first, I take the example of the field of Traveller dwelling in a way that broadly accords with Bourdieu’s terms.

Following Bourdieu, we might take the emergence of ‘home’ as symbolic capital within Traveller dwelling, following Connors – a ‘[sign] capable of producing social things’ (1985: 741) - in order to map the course of a reactionary effort by the state to foreclose the transformational potential of ‘objective … uncertainty’ by activating and refining prevailing official logics of houseness. From 2005, esoteric legal knowledge of ‘special’ categories and proliferating definitions of ‘G/gypsies’ characterise the political struggle to enclose and seal off the symbolic world of the G/gypsy from that of the real house. Experts police newly imagined and threatened boundaries of the materiality of the Traveller site. For one official, (invisible) mortar and footings threaten the site’s proper legibility; another requires that a small gap be left in the blockwork of the chalet’s walls, so that if he lies flat upon the ground he can see the tiny wheels beneath the static chalet.108 In these wheels, which resemble

108 Personal communication with an English Traveller regarding conditions attached to dwellings on his privately-owned site.
nothing so much as the vestigial wings of large flightless birds, resides the ‘properly magical logic of the producer’s production and of the product as fetishes’ (Bourdieu 1985: 18). In a further bid to limit a possible redistribution of capital, the state’s use of extra-legal powers, such as raids and enforced ‘Agreements’, enforces the old ‘space of positions’ as an urgent matter of public protection or state of emergency. The ‘semantic elasticity’ of sites that are ‘homes’, post-Connors, melted down the tenuous securities of old, post-war structures, including the state’s monopoly over a legal-material world conditional upon ‘gypsy status’.

By exerting a new capacity to ‘impose [a] legitimate vision’ of divisions of the social world, post-nomadic architecture may aptly be described as a ‘partial revolution’ of the system of government through the house. This revolution consists simultaneously of, first, an unintended partition - the un-gypsyiness of G/gypsies - and second, a resisted assimilation - the ‘houseness’ of the site. In short, I attribute the productive instability and incremental autonomisation of fields, not to the _innate_ indeterminacy of the objects of the social world, but to a necessary permeability and resistance between fields, in which the _production of indeterminacy_ is an essential instrument of social struggle. This is what is demonstrated by the seemingly contradictory tendencies of Traveller dwelling’s relation to the dominant field of the ‘real’ house. If fields are always imbricated in, and constituted in resistance to other fields, then a concept of habitus (‘history made nature and … denied as such’) clearly becomes problematic. Subjectivity is neither in thrall to the ‘bedrock of belief’ on which a field is based, nor is it idealism’s transcendent consciousness.

The problem of subjectivity that Bourdieu does not resolve is how a complex, transforming field such as that of the Traveller site, characterised by indeterminacy and conflicting interpretations, can be reconciled with the ‘embodied dispositions’ of ‘habitus’, in which ‘the objective universe is made up of objects which are the product of objectifying operations’ (1977: 91). In Bourdieu’s portrait of Kabylia, the sublimated conditions of power are reproduced in the guise of the natural necessities of production and reproduction that extend through Kabyle society. Time and space, knowledge and discourse, material objects and techniques of the body enter into symbolic relations that disclose performative fields as objectively self-affirming distributions of capital. Marriage, domesticity, farming and the public realm dominated by men, exist by mutual agreement. The Kabylian subject is immersed in a social-material world in which ‘history’ assumes an active role as the agent of

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109 ‘Symbolic- that is, _conventional_ and _conditional_’ (Bourdieu 1977: 76).
110 The concept of field appears in _The Logic of Practice_, after Bourdieu’s first accounts of Kabyla. Agriculture, marriage and dwelling/ the house appear in _Outline_ as prototypical fields in the sense that develops in Bourdieu’s later writing on social space and cultural production.
structure, a sedimented force, according to Bourdieu, that ‘one never goes beyond’ (1985: 21). But beyond this idealised world of Kabylia, can such functionalist ‘complicity between history in bodies and history in things’ (2000: 150-151) be transposed to the complex societies in which Bourdieu seeks to expand the theory of fields (1993; 1989; 1985)? And can the concept of ‘habitus’ survive beyond the academic and (professional) creative fields to which his analyses are notably confined?

To rephrase our central question: how might subjects inhabit and actively produce the transforming, contradictory field of Traveller dwelling, without the ‘belief’ which is also a state of the body (1990: 66-79) – short of returning to Sartre’s self-transparent consciousness, or Kant’s transcendental subject, against which the theory of ‘habitus’ is positioned? The answer lies in a need to critically rethink Bourdieu’s concepts of fields, habitus, and ‘history’. Rather than being a sedimented, cumulative force ‘one never goes beyond’, history is precisely the symbolic delineation of a field: a magical object or fetish whose existence actors must continually seek to make visible.

We can connect our discussion of fields of subjectivity to Butler’s description of how ‘the subject is constituted in language, how what it creates is also what it derives from elsewhere’ (1997: 15-16). For house-dwellers cast in the Public Inquiry as ‘the settled community’, the ‘ritual chain’ of performative speech reflects the poetics of subjectivation as an ontopolitical relation to a field; the enchainment of objects, sentiments and ideas constructs the density of ‘sense’ that instantiates the field’s given ‘logic’ - its unified, internal reality underpinned by the fetish of history. In place of Bourdieu’s teleology, Butler (1997) and Balibar (1994) introduce reflexivity and performativity to the relation between subject and field. I have sought to demonstrate that fields are performatively delineated in agonistic relations with other fields: ‘excitable speech’ endeavours to seal the permeable boundaries between fields at points where they threaten to merge; to ritually connect the subjects of speech through a shared, exaggerated conviction of the authority of the field, and to enchain objects and emotions to the force of its externalised agency. In excitable speech the ‘real’ house is a house already given in ‘history’, which history will not deny.

Let us turn next to the relation between Traveller subjects and the Traveller site. The argument centres on two areas: first, on the resistance and interagency of fields, already referred to; and second, on the embodied ‘self’ of the subject. Here I would assert that the body in ‘really lived space’ (Bourdieu 2000: 131) is never either wholly present or subsumed

111 The concept of the ‘self’ is not discussed by Bourdieu.
in the ‘political mythology’ (1990: 69) of hexis - or ‘history in bodies’ - but is distributed, as Bachelard\textsuperscript{112} describes, beyond its immediate corporeality and present moment across multiple registers of time and space. The Traveller site, in all its multiplicity and contradictions, partakes in the fluid social-material materialities in which self-relations appear, constituting in architecture the ‘mediality’ of dwelling: the ‘being-in-a-medium… [that] opens the ethical dimension for [human beings]’ (Agamben 2000: 58).

Agamben describes the communication of mediality as ‘gesture’: ‘what is relayed… in gestures is not the sphere of an end in itself but rather the sphere of a pure and endless mediality’ (58-9). ‘Gesture’, by ‘[breaking] with the false alternative between means and ends’ (56-7), makes visible the intersection between what negate or cancel each other out - spontaneity and performance, or life and art. Objects such as masks or gags, which draw attention to the formal manifestation of drama or speech, are thus understood as gestures. Gesture, rather than habitus, discloses the site’s functioning in the raid and the Inquiry as the ‘gag’ to ‘G/gypsy’ witnesses. The site, the raid, the planning appeal and the courtroom are simultaneously the ethical media and instruments of constraint of the material, social and political lives of Traveller subjects.

It is in terms of gesture towards the site’s mediality that we should understand the performance of Travellers as official g/Gypsies during the raid. The ‘cultural aversion to bricks and mortar’ is the point where the site’s possibility of freedom and its irremovable political compulsion intersect. This account of subjectivity resembles neither the practical logic of a ‘feel for the game’, nor a reconfigured transcendental subject. Let us look at how mediality might reconfigure Bourdieu’s concept of field, and how a notion of ‘self’ undermines habitus as the reproductive agent of ‘history’.

The first point to note is that, while Travellers are committed to the practical and symbolic resources of the Traveller site, including its capacity to impose a ‘vision of divisions’ of the social world, the fetishization of the ‘temporary’ chalet is privately ridiculed as arbitrary and oppressive. Travellers succinctly describe the site’s ‘officialising structure’ as what ‘we’re not allowed’ to do.\textsuperscript{113} Straightforwardly, mobility is a capacity of people, and the ‘static’ Traveller site is the scene of multiple forms of mobility, irrespective of whether dwellings themselves move, or can move. However, from another perspective, the site’s legality intimates rights to citizenship, family and private life (conventionalised in the triad of house/home/property,) where autonomy, intimacy, status and dependency uneasily cohabit. For

\textsuperscript{112} The Poetics of Space (1958) 1994.

\textsuperscript{113} In a meeting at the Gypsy and Traveller Unit in 2006 some participants expressed approval for group housing on ‘Traveller sites’, as found in Ireland, i.e. ‘bricks and mortar’.
Travellers, legality means freedom from official harassment and eviction, access to schools, doctors, hospitals and services, welfare entitlements and voting rights. The legal Traveller site embodies the explicit contradiction of being officially an unhouse, and effectively an ‘extension’ of the house - a symbolic addition or virtual deformation. Besides this paradox, the legal boundaries of planning which surround the official site are now definitively breached by human rights law. To sum up, the field of official Traveller dwelling is fraught with contradictions and uncertainties, and Travellers’ commitment to the site involves its unadmitted status, rather than any ‘bedrock of belief on which the whole game is based’ (Bourdieu 1993: 74).

The point to emphasise here is that the concept of ‘habitus’ founders, not merely in the peculiarities of a field constituted as a state of exception, in Agamben’s sense, but that the dynamics of fields in general constitute spheres of ‘endless mediality’ in which intersecting binds of power, obligation, constraint and aspiration are made visible in gesture. Both the legal site and its correlative house/home/property are, to use Haraway’s phrase, ‘condensed maps of contestable domains’ (1997: 11). Subjectivity’s multiple configurations of gender, generation, economic obligation and dependency, sexuality and kinship are foregrounded - each with particular gains and losses - in relation to co-dependencies between the legal, material, social, spatio-temporal, and embodied aspects of dwelling. It is precisely these configurations and co-dependencies that Travellers weigh up in seeking ownership of a yard and legal status for a site. Witnesses explain, ‘You’ve got children and old people’; ‘There’s nowhere legal left to park’; ‘You can’t register with a doctor unless you’ve got an address’; and, ‘My uncle was dying; that’s why he brought me here’. In these and countless similar statements, the obligations, limited choices and necessities of ‘being-in-a-medium’ make visible the subjective self as a field of relations whose communicability is subsumed in arbitrary confluences and contradictions: ‘gypsy status’, the site’s ‘compulsory’ architecture, arbitrary prohibitions and ‘special’ circumstances, and in the possibilities it represents for relations with others.

The ‘real autonomy’ of symbolic conflict - and of subjectivity - from the ‘structures in which [it is] in fact rooted’ (Bourdieu 1989:21) arises, then, in the permeability of fields and the contradictions or conflicts they fail to suppress as fields continually elicit other fields. The

114 As borne out by the raid, however, privacy and security are not widely upheld, and property rights are curtailed.
115 Subsequent chapters will elaborate this argument ethnographically in relation to camps and permanent sites in Ireland.
objective uncertainties of dwelling arise in this interagency where different stakes and interests are held in tension. The Traveller site magnifies and mirrors what is implicit in settled dwelling, whose primary trope is unreconciled resistance and dependency between house, home and property. The indeterminacy of the ‘objects of the social world’ accords with this continuing resistance between fields unable or unwilling to sustain separation between their divisions of labour.

‘field effects’

Finally, how is the site’s mediality made visible as ‘gesture’? We have understood in principle that the ‘houseness’ of the legal site and its symbolic deformation of the ‘real’ house intersect in how persons, commitments and relations can be made visible. This simultaneity inflects the Traveller site’s expressive, contradictory logic. After listening to Marie’s account of the raid (see Chapter One) I asked her whether, if it became possible, she would ever want to live in permanent group housing (i.e., ‘bricks and mortar’) with her extended family. After some moments she replied, ‘I don’t think I could ever feel safe without wheels underneath me’. Wheels, which materialise the practical logic of the legal insecurity of the unhouse, where arbitrary raids are used to justify the invasion of the home, should not be mistaken for the ‘habitus’ of the permanent, temporary site. These wheels (like the mask of theatre) gesture to the mediality of architecture; they intersect formal submission to the ‘rule’ of the site and renunciation of its partial incorporation of partial citizens.

Architecture, here a ‘gag’ that blocks speech, and the medium of ‘improvisation meant to compensate … [an] inability to speak’ (Agamben 2000: 59), performs the gesture of ‘not being able to figure something out in language’ (ibid: 59). It is the material trope and ethical dimension of contemporary Traveller life, suspended simultaneously inside and outside the symbolic frame of the house. Elicited by the court, the ‘sacralised objects’ of a g/Gypsy ‘way of life’ that contrive to appear as its habitus are, in reality, the resistant complicities of ‘field effects’ (Bourdieu 1993: 75). Bourdieu uses this concept to describe a situation in which ‘it is no longer possible to understand a work (and the value, i.e. the belief that it is granted) without knowing the history of the field of production’. He argues that anomalous objects, introduced by ‘naïve producers in the field of production’, take on consecrated meanings

116 Haraway observes that tropes ‘always bring with them some temporal modality that organizes interpretive practice’ (1997: 11).
117 To date permanent Traveller- specific housing has not yet been officially constructed in the UK.
through the ‘transmuting power of the field’ (1993: 75). The preference for the caravan or chalet (on which the possibility of the ‘temporary’ site depends) undergoes exegesis to become a ‘cultural aversion to the house’ and a trope of bio-power. In ‘field effects’, Travellers are ‘objective revolutionaries’ (ibid) whose status as architects of an unimagined form of the house is ‘thrust upon them in the name of a problematic of which they were quite unaware’ (ibid).

Invisible mortar and the dream of the road, the cultural aversion to the house and the safety of wheels elicit fields where one might perhaps discover unfamiliar ways of living, speaking and thinking. They hover between being objectifications, in which ‘the potentiality of one actual entity is realized by another’ (Whitehead 1979: 23), and shadow-bodies of objectifications that arise from elsewhere. Here we discover a more problematic and enriched notion of fields, in which mutual resistance and transformative interagency compete with centripetal spheres of ‘endless mediality’.

Must we jettison the subject’s ‘ontological complicity’ with the social-material world? No, but the rethinking of fields requires a separation between ‘structuralist constructivism’s’ (Bourdieu 1989:14) posited ‘sociogenesis’ of dispositions and the political ontology of the subject, which, like history itself, is emergent rather than cumulative. Furthermore, the question of ‘embodiment’ that is central to Bourdieu’s notion of subjectivity cannot be contained in the sociogenetic present of ‘habitus’, where it is for ever caught up in the reproductive impetus he terms ‘history’, sedimented in material worlds. Bourdieu’s account forecloses an understanding of the body as an indexical field of capacities and sources of difference, and as an extended field in time and space which is always in play across other, non-synchronous fields.

In the ‘really lived space’ (Bourdieu 2000: 131) of the site, positive absences, transformative subdivisions, and dwellings that multiply and divide foreground symbiosis, provisionality, and continual re-division. Traveller dwelling repeatedly re-materialises the potentialities of embodied self in practices, objects and spatial adjustments, modifying the social intensities they make visible. In an inversion of Bourdieu’s account of embodiment, the body itself is seen as a field of practice that extends its capacities through dwelling.

In the following chapter I turn from the agonistic intersections between the site, the house, the Traveller and the G/gypsy, to the camp, where the field of embodied personhood and its relation to dwelling are brought into sharper focus.
Part One: Post Script

Since the 2007 Inquiry that forms the subject of Chapter Three, a change of government following the 2012 UK general election has seen new planning policy guidance. The duty of local authorities to include Travellers’ accommodation needs in local housing needs assessments has been revoked, & (CLG) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) was issued in 2012, to replace ODPM Circular 1/06. In August 2015 the definition of ‘gypsy’ was altered again to exclude those who had stopped travelling ‘permanently’, returning to the criterion of ‘nomadic life’ as determining ‘gypsy status’.

Following Connors, the provisions of the Mobile Homes Act 1983 which gave ‘protected site’ status to non-Traveller sites were extended to local authority Traveller sites in April 2011. The ‘caravan’ must ‘retain the element of mobility’ and cannot ‘be fixed to the ground’. The possible legal, material and social transformations that may ensue from this can be seen in the 2008 Communities and Local Government consultation paper ‘Implementing the Mobile Homes Act 1983 on Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller sites’. If anything, these changes accentuate and augment the paradoxes that Chapters One, Two and Three describe, rather than signalling any substantive changes.

118 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments required under Labour were scrapped together with Regional Spatial Assessments, and replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Localism Act. These changes appear to reinstate the earlier balance of power between local and central government.
119 The definition of PPTS 2015 is ‘Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.’ (PPTS 2015: 9)
120 ODPM: ‘Amending The Definition of a Caravan’ August 2005
The camp expands at Rineanna, County Clare, summer 2007.
Part Two – Ireland.

Chapter Four

The breed; ‘coming and going’

‘The idea then we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist \textit{sine re substante}, without something to support them, we call that support \textit{substantia}; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, \textit{standing under or upholding}.........

…..An obscure and relative \textit{idea} of substance in general being thus made, we come to have the \textit{ideas of particular sorts of substances} by collecting such combinations of simple \textit{ideas}, as are…. taken notice of to exist together, and are therefore supposed to flow from the particular internal constitution or unknown essence of that substance.........

…[O]ur complex \textit{ideas} of substances, besides all these simple \textit{ideas} they are made up of, have always the confused \textit{idea of something} to which they belong, and in which they subsist; and therefore when we speak of any sort of substance, we say it is a \textit{thing} having such and such qualities: as a body is a \textit{thing} that is extended, figured, and capable of motion….. These and the like fashions of speaking intimate that the substance is supposed always \textit{something} besides the extension, figure, solidity, motion, thinking or other observable \textit{ideas}, though we know not what it is.’


‘Young an’ ould would mix, oh they would. Sure they were reared on the roads. Ya see they were all together. Do you know what I mayne? An’ the families was all close. They were very close people not like today I mean……
...An' if I had a choice ag'in I would never have settled, I would never go into a tīgeen or a house or a hut, if I had any...... I don't think they should ever have settled down. If they were on the road there was, they were different people when they were on the road.'


'There is nothing self-evident about body substance. On the contrary, it is the very possibility of substitution that creates separately conceptualised body “substance”…'

Marilyn Strathern (2001b: 234)

In Ireland in early summer, as the end of the school year approaches, some Traveller families who spend the rest of the year in houses take off in caravans for several months to renew the life of their earlier years, the real life of camps. Similarly, families living in sites seek out camps to pass long afternoons and evenings in the company of cousins, huddled inside trailers on wet days, and at night around fires of scrap timber scavenged from skips on industrial estates, leaving reluctantly in the early hours only to return again next day. Camps are sources of intensity for many Travellers in ways that other forms of dwelling are not. In order to understand how camps and sites are meaningful, what parts they play in social life and how these might differ, it is necessary first to discuss how human substance, the metaphysical material underpinning (in Locke’s sense) of the socialized Traveller body is conceptualized, and the engagement of substance in sociality as a whole.

For Travellers, an idea of substance expressed in the ‘breed’ suggests that people\textsuperscript{121} can be seen as connected to or different from each other according to the genealogical substances they inherit. Sameness and difference are properties immersed in the body that give rise to immanent and emergent forms of personhood, and from the particularities of substance flow relations and the possibilities of relations. Although initially ‘given’ in the bodily contributions of a man and woman to the creation of an offspring, the substances of

\textsuperscript{121} In the specifically Traveller conception of personhood, in which settled people – who neither understand nor organize their lives in terms of ‘breeds’ - do not partake.
the breeds do not form a genealogical route-map from which fixed orders of relations are produced. Rather, different intensities of one’s ‘breeds’ and ‘back-breeds’ signal distinctive social and biological capacities through which aspects of personhood can be intensified, muted or eclipsed by the strategic and affective actions of social life. In sum, both the physical body and its social capacities are combined in the concept of the breed, which Travellers gloss both as ‘blood’ and ‘the name’, encompassing ideas about parental inheritance and individual physical substance, complex ancestry (back-breeds), and collective social recognition. When ‘the breed’ is spoken of, bodily substance is reified as superordinate to those who share it as ‘blood’: a ‘thing’, as Locke writes, ‘though we know not what is’. ‘The breed’ objectifies a bounded continuity within particular human relations and becomes a trope of collective embodiment as well as a self-relation.

A man peering at an old photograph of a camp tries to make out faces, half-concealed by tilt-brimmed hats, of men striding down a lane with dogs at their heels and remarks, ‘It’s definitely some o’ the breed, but I can’t tell who’. This is a characteristic way of referring to those whose name one shares, or alternatively to ‘strange breeds’. Public recognition is shaped by the collective relations of the reified patronymic breed, which form in the minds of Travellers an extensive map of distributed personhood concentrated in, although not exclusive to, men, since women are known by their breeds throughout their lives, and breeds, as substances, pass through both women and men to children.

A young male Traveller, finding himself a stranger in a group of Travellers, quickly invites the question, ‘Who are you?’ He answers, ‘Johnny Wood of Galway’. The reference to place denotes a ‘spring’ of the breed’s imagined jumping-off points: it identifies his father and brothers, and their relation to ascendant sets of brothers now dispersed, those of his father or grandfather. Until the later twentieth century, such ‘sets’ of brothers, their wives and young children and aged parents typically composed the long winter camps between November and March, regrouping in a familiar location after the ‘coming and going’ of summer. Stable camping coalitions of the breed, from which arose the ‘closeness’ between siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts, parents and children ‘reared on the roads’, endured for two or three decades of early life, until, having become very numerous, they were gradually displaced by similar coalitions of the younger families of now grown-up brothers, forming the ‘springs’ of their middle-aged fathers. The event which marked a new, regular coalition headed by a middle-aged man, recognized as a family head, was the increase of grandchildren which made public the status of his sons as ‘men of the breed’.

122 Elsewhere I have described the process of dispersal of a group of brothers around middle age, when their own children begin to marry and sons emerge as new adult representatives of the breed (Hoare 2005).
Nods of recognition mark Johnny Wood’s interlocutors’ silent mapping of his parents, brothers, uncles, grandfathers and patrilateral parallel cousins, and they search their memories for outstanding grievances or blood connections between their breeds and his, these two possibilities being by no means mutually exclusive. Such an incident, whose open-ended consequences must be weighed up, is invariably reported by a young man to his father with some anxiety, who repeats the mapping exercise in reverse. The adult Traveller is a significant social agent in Traveller society because he or she is, in this sense, a ‘member’ of a breed, (which settled people are not,) through which s/he exercises and develops a singular, Traveller personhood. While breeds flow through and between people as varying intensities of ‘blood’, they also subsist as the divisions and stoppages of ‘names’. ‘The name’, personifying the breed as a person writ large, is thus a unique embodiment of substance whose bounded singularity is undiminished by the mixing of blood. I once asked the father of a group of adult sons (and thus a principle representative of a breed,) why it was such a good thing to have ‘so many children’. He was one of about twelve siblings and a father of ten. His answer was: “The only way I can explain it is, it makes the name big”.

The breed can be understood in terms of Wagner’s concept as a fractal trope of the person that subsumes singular and plural: ‘an entity whose (external) relationships with others are integral (internal) to it’ (1991: 159). As well as being names, breeds have names: reputations, biographies, personalities, collective relations and a palette of forenames that pass from grandparents to grandchildren. There are ‘fighting’ breeds, ‘quiet’ breeds and ‘very close’ breeds, and the characteristics of personified breeds are deemed to be reflected to some extent in individual members. Forenames such as Cornelius (‘Connie’) and Hanora (‘Hannie’) that have all but disappeared among the settled continue to interleaf new generations of Traveller families. As Nellie Collins explains, ‘It was their belief to keep the generation up. They never wanted the gination to run out’, so ‘[e]veryone the names is follyin’, follyin’ aan’ (Pavee Point 1992: 126). Names, like children, trace the footsteps of parents and grandparents along the same endless road of ‘generation’ where the living and the dead exchange, merge and separate substance and embodiment in repeating circular motions,123 and although the breed as ‘the name’ (patronym) divides and separates from blood when women marry into different breeds and produce children, forenames keep ‘follyin’ aan’ along the straight paths of ‘blood’ itself, recognizing, through turn-taking, the equal contribution and continuity of both women and men. The first son is named ‘for he’s

123 See Breen’s (1982) account of ‘Irish naming practices’ that resemble those described here.
father’, the second son for hers, the first daughter ‘for he’s mother’, the second for hers, and so on.

Breeds, one might say, follow roads and may divide taking different routes at the crossroads of marriage, but forenames obediently retrace the sensory footfall of people themselves. Nadia Seremetakis (1994: 40-41) describes a similar naming practice in rural Greece which ‘recuperates the difference between the young and the old, the living and the dead, the past and the present’ as ‘the shifting of emotions, identity, substance and memory from one form of vessel to another, also [carrying] with it an aesthetic sensibility for variety and multiplicity’. This is vividly brought to life in a camp or site when four or five children, being cousins, bear the same forename, that of their shared grandfather or grandmother. To distinguish between them chains of ‘authorship' and affective attachment are added to each child’s name, simultaneously extending and refining distributed personification, sometimes across two generations. Patrick becomes ‘Mary's Patrick’ or ‘Bridget’s Patrick’, linking sons to mothers, and if there are two Marys or Bridgets with Patricks (which is often the case) a third name is added, that of either a father or husband, such as ‘John’s Mary’s Patrick’ or ‘Michael's Bridget's Patrick’. Such formulations of extended, collective individuality excite amusement and pleasure as they enact ‘the cultivation of the distinct through transformative exchange, which preserves nothing that is not first altered by being exchanged’ (Seremetakis 1994: 41). The aesthetic sensibility of transformative exchange also takes pleasure in the paradox of fractalism itself, where multiplicity produces singularity, and ‘many’ make a singular ‘big’ appear.

In the idea of the breed as a fractal person certain tensions and complexities appear. Breeds as names personify collectivities as men writ large outside the flow of time; but as the substance (‘blood’) of complex persons, both male and female, breeds and back-breeds embody in individuals the social and physical continuities of reproductive relations between women and men, both living and dead, whose forenames, histories and futures, ‘follyin’ aan’, extend into a social and embodied world that, in Kroeber’s phrase, ‘shades out in all directions and integrates into innumerable others’ (1925: 21). Embodiment imagined as whole and unified is abstract, transcendent and masculine, and its closest image is a collectivity of brothers and their families perceived as a self-reproducing unity and described as ‘the breed’ or the ‘one family’. By contrast, the individual Traveller realises a kind of proximal unity only in relation to the fractal nature of procreation itself, by means of a form of dwelling that entails multiple forms of movement, fusion and redistribution, some of which are perceived as the inevitable consequences of embodied personhood, and others as its creative sources of agency.
What, then, are the consequences for post-nomadic dwelling of the imaginaries of embodiment, personhood and recognition elicited by breeds and back-breeds? This chapter and the one that follows show how the spatial-temporal forms of camps and sites elicit different forms of continuity and discontinuity, materialising in architectures the sociality of embodied relations.

Photograph courtesy of Pat Galvin

“Some o’ the breed.”
Roadside camp, Watery Road, Ennis, County Clare 1972.
Note shelter tent with two bed tents attached, and stones weighting down the pieces.
(Reproduced in Hoare 2002)
Architectures: making substance visible

In the term ‘architecture’ I include material forms, social and bodily arrangements, as well as practices that encode particular social relations that shape and are re-shaped by dwelling, in order to delineate and adjust position-taking in the field of personhood that Irish Travellers call the breed. The commonplace distinction between camps as ‘temporary’ and sites as ‘permanent’ reflects a non-Traveler perspective. The important difference for Travellers is that sites fix and simplify: they are metaphoric and static in their objectification of personhood and social relations, whereas camps are plural, metonymic, and repetitive, eliciting mobile relations and complex imageries of personhood. We shall see that other practical, affective and ideological distinctions appear. Sites concentrate and camps redistribute persons and aspects of persons, each camp seeking to intensify and extend the immanent social and physical substances of human relations in particular ways, so that no two camps are identical. Camps remake particular aspects of the multiplicities of immanent relations in individual human bodies. By foregrounding some while muting others people pursue recognition by particular others, frequently nurturing hopes of extending substances and names to further generations.

Temporal economies are evoked in different ways in order to mark stoppages or, alternatively, facilitate flows between women and men, and the living and the dead. Sites foreground male breed names and agnatic relations. The vertical and horizontal relations of patrilateral descent and breed siblingship typically described as ‘the one family’ are made visible in the site as a vehicle of the breed and its material embodiment, creating a fixed present-time of autogenic, masculine personhood, enclosed and complete within itself. The dominant breed name, extended to the site itself, edits out complex histories of female inheritance and forecloses the public role of memory. By contrast, camps elicit concealed relations that spring from cross-siblings in previous generations. Reaching back into ‘the one family’s’ memory of its former unity – ruptured through a sibling group’s marriages into different breeds - the camp foregrounds dead parents or grandparents now wrapped as memories and substances in the invisible relations and affections of men and women, (now of different breeds,) and extended, as ‘back-breeds’, through their children. The equivalent relations pursued in camps: cousinhood and second cousinhood traced through descent from siblings of both sexes of ascendant generations, renew the intensity of being ‘reared together’ with siblings and bilateral cousins across adjacent generations, and de-structure dominant breed relations made visible in men. The self-productive intensity of camps described by Johnny Collins, when people were ‘all together’ and ‘very close’, is underscored by the fact that, for many Travellers, the cousin groups descended from one’s parents’
breeds are the source of future marriage partners, since breeds reproduce themselves through both women and men. Unnamed variations of ‘the one family’ thus wind across the public boundaries of the breeds, binding together the living, the dead and the unborn in camps. The realizations of self and relatedness for both women and men in sites and camps are complex, invoking histories of breed inter-relations, life-long affections and devotion to parents of both sexes, as well as public enactments of unity and alliance. In architectures and practices of dwelling the multiple temporalities of embodiment’s surfaces are elicited, and in this sense Travellers were ‘different people when they were on the road’.

By 2005 the material controls built into official sites in Ireland had begun to include as standard features locked barriers, reinforced concrete perimeter walls, surveillance cameras, security guards’ huts and policed exclusion zones for caravans of a mile around the site. Designed to prevent any breaches of their official boundaries, they reflect official fears that sites could suddenly become camps – spontaneous, expansive, with no apparent logic (to the settled mind) or any form of social or spatial containment. These fears are well-founded. Camps are sources of pleasure and intensity, eliciting aspects of complex personhood through repetition and structured variation, and foregrounding changing imageries of relations between women and men, parents and children, the living and the dead. Memory, embodiment and self-making are distributed across several generations and ideally, across an endless series of camps. Camps foreground position-taking as a natural practice that resonates changing inter-relations- temporal, structural and hierarchical- between siblings and cousins, offspring, parents and seniors, in what Bourdieu calls the 'transformational schemes' through which mastery of ‘interchangeability’ is learned (Bourdieu 1977: 89). Amplified across numerous camps, performative speech and symbolic action direct refined understandings of symmetry, equivalence, continuity and open-endedness in particular ways between actors.

The breed

Unlike the anthropologist, Travellers do not expound the breed theoretically and in response to questions offer the sparsest empirical amplifications of a concept so encompassing that it looms over almost every aspect of life, from the constitution of individual bodies, their natural affections and sources of excitement, to the nurtured alliances and antagonisms between breeds as personified agents in Traveller society. Like the often-heard phrase, ‘We’re all the one here’, which strategically cuts across pertinent breed divisions in order to sanction a particular event or defuse its tensions, the ‘one family’ and the
breed negotiate the changing boundaries of delicate, internalised territories of personhood, biography, gender, sexual status and shared history, and properly resist exegesis. From the choice of men’s and women’s daily activities; the way different visitors are received (inside or outside the trailer or house, in which room, and what kind of food is offered); the children a woman feeds in the camp or site and those she never feeds; to the reporting of conversations between husband and wife; monitoring of unmarried girls, and solicitous observation of one’s married children - it is hard to think of anything that preoccupies adults or children in their lives as Travellers that is not importantly connected to the affections, obligations and insecurities associated with a person’s breed(s) and back-breeds.

During an exchange of banter with Noney, his matrilateral uncle’s wife, Mikey, a fourteen year old boy who has spent most of his life on a site among his father’s breed, asked Noney about her breed, uncertain whether her parents were patrilateral parallel cousins and therefore of the same breed. ‘You’re full Banks all through, aren’t you?’ Mikey inquired. Noney replied, ‘No, I’m half Banks and half Lane.’ Mikey pointed assertively at himself and declared, ‘I’m total Lake, me.’ Noney smiled at this and contradicted accurately, ‘No you’re not, you’re half Field.’ Mikey’s face darkened with irritation and he paused for a moment before defiantly countering, ‘Well I’ll marry a Lake!’ His satisfaction with this response showed that he believed he had trumped her. The exchange sheds light on some implications of the breed for personal ontology. Mikey’s claim to be ‘total Lake’ is synonymous with a premature claim to unmitigated masculinity and social maturity, epitomised by being totally his ‘father’s son’. This is the public persona of married brothers who take on the collective role of embodying the unity of the living breed: fathering children to “make the name big”, accepting challenges to fair fight, and, if necessary, pursuing vendettas in defence of the breed’s honour. Noney’s assertion that he is ‘half’ his mother’s breed reminds Mikey of his sexual immaturity and its implicit social significance: both his breeds point to potential marriages and he may yet marry a matrilateral cousin. Mikey understands marriage as a moment of definitive self-making, determining a material destination of the social and physical body which until then remains open to different possibilities. This seems to flash through his mind: by ‘marrying a Lake’ his mother’s breed will be occluded; he will be the father of children who are ‘total Lakes’, intensifying his own masculine substance in a physical as well as social sense.

Mikey’s comments illustrate how a breed gets ‘cut off’ or ‘wears itself out’ as someone expressed it. Through selective muting and diminution women’s breeds (in the form of blood) are said to have ‘thinned’, and unless marriages ‘both ways’ are consciously cultivated a breed name falls silent and after two or three generations is forgotten. This biological, social
and temporal distance is expressed in the idea of ‘back-breeds’, the latent, attenuated substances of one’s almost forgotten ancestors. At the moment of marriage a person’s public, adult identity is fixed in relation to the breed of his or her father, and it is the patrilateral breed of each spouse that is subsequently transmitted to children. Mikey’s mother’s breed, Field, is thus that of her father, and her mother’s name is already absent from her children’s social world. A woman is seen as an equal reproductive agent of her patrilateral breed, but unless some of her children marry into her breed its social and reproductive value diminishes and the breed ‘wears itself out’. Unlike men, women can only ‘make the name big’ on their own behalf by marrying patrilateral parallel cousins. The rare exceptions to this situation underscore how universal is the recognition of these norms, since they involve public acts of renunciation and realignment. Each instance also shows how the name of the agnatic breed is weighed strategically in relation to bilateral substance. In one case, unmarried members of a sibling group publicly broke their ties with their father’s breed, each offspring changing his or her name by deed-pole to ally themselves definitively to their mother’s breed. The standing and acceptance of young children abandoned by their father may be irreparably damaged unless his breed is prepared to sacrifice its connection to him in order to stand by his wife and children. This extremely rare situation is not unknown. Unless children alienated from their father’s breed can successfully reposition themselves as members of their mother’s breed, drawing around themselves the name and loyalties of a group of men, they may be forced to leave Traveller society altogether as they grow up. In one instance described to me, a group of children abandoned first by their father and later by their mother left Ireland altogether on becoming adults, and none married an Irish Traveller. The breed intensifies social recognition of the masculine contribution to and corollary of personhood, and loss of male support through a father or, in his absence, a grandfather, amounts to the absence of a crucial form of self-relation. Without this living source of the breed’s collective support, name and blood ultimately count for little. This helps to explain why sites, in spite of the profound limitations they exert on Traveller sociality, have come to play an important role as material instruments of the gendered ‘name’.

The body is thus engaged in the trajectory of personhood, reshaping both substance and its recognition through individual acts of self-making. Selective description, processes of muting and outright suppression occur gradually, punctuate stages of individual life, and redefine relations at moments of crisis. This field of the immanent potentials of substance constitutes the compelling elements of Traveller life: marriage, camping and ‘coming and going’.
‘Coming and going’

If you ask a man or woman who they travelled and camped with after they married, the reply is vague: ‘Well, we were coming and going…..you know.’ ‘Coming and going’ is distinct in meaning from being ‘on the road’ or ‘travelling’, which merely identify movement itself. ‘Coming and going’ describes the social activity of movement and camping as co-residence, a strategic system of dwelling that brings about the balance of autonomy and mutuality between a conjugal family and its wider, bilateral kin network. Until the 1960s and even ‘70s a young married couple might expect to take on responsibility for their own nomadic subsistence from the start of married life, heading off along the road with little more than a handcart, the wattles, rigging pole and piece of their tent, and the basic equipment of a kettle iron, kettle and cooking pot. ‘Coming and going’ was, for one thing, a practical matter of survival, spending time learning new skills among in-laws, uncles and cousins, as well as one’s own parents and married siblings, memorizing travelling routes and camp locations, and gradually gaining confidence and knowledge in the typical range of seasonally and geographically varied occupations: thinning and ‘pulling the beet’, trading ‘swag’ or begging at the cottage door, tinsmithing and dealing in asses or horses. To this general repertoire individuals added chimney-sweeping, ‘saving the hay’ for farmers, cart-making and smaller crafts, as their skills, routes and opportunities made possible. Breeds cultivated familiar regional travelling routes which are widely known among Irish Travellers, and the toponymy of camp names, unrecorded maps of Ireland’s nomadic geography, recall a period in which Travellers were makers of landscape in largely unconsidered ways, structuring multiple connectivities between towns and remote settlements, their seasonal appearances easing the burden of the land for many isolated small farmers who, never having married, had no one to carry on the farm.

‘Coming and going’ embedded a couple in the adult structures of dispersed and mobile camp relations, creating a network of voluntary coalitions which reduced the dependencies of childhood and established alliances which would lead, over many years, to marriages for

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124 This section draws on my MRes dissertation (Hoare 2005).
125 Wattles are the bent hazel rods that shape the curved sides of the tent; the rigging pole is the ridge into which they fit, and the ‘piece’ is the cover, made of waxy-coated sugar sacks, unpicked and re-stitched together.
126 The Annual Count of Travellers carried out in 1961 recorded that 38% of Traveller families counted (395 families) lived in tents alone; that is to say, without either flat carts or barrel-top wagons (Hoare 2002: 37). Tents continued to form elements of the dwelling until at least the late 1970s.
their own children. Willem Lake, in his late 70s, explained that families felt “safer” when children married first or second cousins: “they were keeping close to the one family”.

‘Coming and going’ enmeshed practical, economic, affective and political interests in a system of dwelling that maximized the rights and interests of belonging in diverse ways within the breeds of a husband and wife.

The phrase ‘coming and going’ should also be understood as a veil drawn over sensitivity surrounding real or suspected preferences attributable to co-residence. It signals the potential for the movements of married children to generate jealousy between two sets of grandparents who dearly wish to claim their grandchildren’s principal belonging to their breed, and to retain the primary loyalties of their own married children.129 A couple will commonly avoid mentioning the social aims of a planned movement by referring to it geographically, saying, ‘We’re going to Wexford’, rather than ‘We’re going to my wife’s cousins’. Husbands and wives present a united front on a decision to decamp, and Travellers maintain that a decision to move is always the man’s. However, what I take to be the strategic fiction of a wife’s submission to her husband on matters of movement is a useful way of veiling their joint interests in her kin, thereby protecting her from suspicions of influencing her husband in their favour. While long winter camps between October and March frequently reunited adult brothers and their families and parents, summer camps, involving more frequent moves and changes, might favour a woman’s kin group. While people described exceptions, particularly when married within their own breed, women who described their travelling routes between the 1950s and 1970s consistently recorded a geographical shift in the habitual location of their long winter camps following marriage, from those of their ‘own’ to those of their husband’s people.130 Trawick’s (1992: 152) description of Tamil kinship well describes Travellers, for whom kinship is similarly a ‘web maintained by unrelieved tensions, an architecture of conflicting desires, its symmetry a symmetry of imbalance’. For Travellers, the tensions of kinship are the source of frequent anxiety as well as compelling fascination. Movement, reproducing the web of kinship, constantly readjusts its tensions without ever removing them.

129 ‘[B]ilateral kinship simultaneously presents risks to the growth and strength of an individual breed, and the willingness of families ‘to blame each other’ speaks of the simmering competition potentially generated by the marriage of their offspring. A marriage ‘into’ a new breed, as opposed to one within the breed, multiplies the identities of future offspring and increases the chances of further marriages between one’s descendants and the other patronymic group. It involves the married son or daughter in obligations to in-laws of unknown temperament; and spatial separations between parents, children and sibling groups weaken the social and political cohesion and, potentially, the demographic increase of the “one family”, symbolised by its breed name.’ (Hoare 2005: 31)

130 Hoare 2002
The insecurity felt by grandparents contemplating the ‘loss’ of their children and grandchildren is often palpable but remains mostly repressed. A husband and wife worry over the unexpected return or sudden departure of a married son and his wife, wondering what it signifies, but questions are rarely asked. Sometimes prolonged absence becomes too much to bear, and in two cases I knew of letters were sent complaining of a married offspring’s unnatural behaviour and more or less insisting upon his or her return. When an absent son did return with his wife, repressed resentment, remorse and some loss of dignity on both sides meant that the letters and their contents were never mentioned.

The coming and going of childhood between two sets of grandparents and regular camps with cousins, aunts and uncles of both sides is thus replaced after marriage by coming and going between one’s ‘own people’ and those of one’s spouse, so that children know themselves to belong to both. Through observant coming and going between the breeds or segments of a single breed to which each spouse belongs, an expectation arises that some of the children from this alliance will eventually marry into each ‘side’, contributing to their continuity. For many people now living on sites or in houses very frequent flying visits have replaced the summer camps. On summer evenings and afternoons families pile into vans and fly along improved roads between one site and another. Married women visit each trailer in turn, taking care not to miss any, boys go off together to inspect the new season’s trotters and foals, and teenage girls cluster in trailers with their female cousins to share news of weddings and engagements.

Marriage

If kinship is a source of intense fascination among Irish Travellers, who live for the most part constantly surrounded by large kin groups, then marriage is the centre of this fascination: a singular, asymmetrical event for the couple and everyone around them that can never be repeated. Bilateral kinship envelops an unmarried girl or youth in an indeterminate palette of possibilities for adult life, which are sloughed off like layers of dried skin, marriage signifying maturity and a definitive act of self-making. Marriage to a first or second cousin determines a particular extension of personhood, and the effects of this modulation of substance reverberate outwards, reorienting in numerous ways the qualities of relations among the kin groups, as something of the fluid autonomy of nomadic life itself is enacted in marriage. As a result of cousin marriage, an aunt or uncle (sometimes a grand-

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131 As these letters were dictated to a literate family member in each case, their contents were known.
uncle) is translated into a mother- or father-in-law, cousins become affines and the future aunts and uncles of a further layer of cousins; a brother and sister or two brothers (each a parent of one of the couple,) become affines, destined to share a set of grandchildren. The social axis of the extensive kin group is subtly and irrevocably shifted, its relations reconfigured, and the emotional texture of obligations and commitments obtains greater density. New shared interests arise at every point around the newly-married couple through their creative act, the most dramatic occurring in their transformation of each other from indirect siblings to sources of erotic attraction. Marriage entails a singular re-invention and intensification of the social world, and its agency resides with the young. At this moment, partners take on the responsibilities of adult life, becoming a conduit of extended social relations between their principal agnatic breed(s) and the social world of Travellers.

Gates left open

‘You encountered them in broad daylight, going about their usual business, yet there was always a feeling that they were coming towards you out of storytime. …

… The stillness of the low tarpaulin tent as you approached and passed, the green wood in the fire spitting under a pot slung from a tripod. Every time they landed in the district, there was an extra-ness in the air, as if a gate had been left open in the usual life, as if something might get in or get out.’

‘Tall Dames’, Seamus Heaney

Scattered across Ireland in back lanes, on roadside verges, or lining main roads leading into towns are illegal camps, since there is no such thing as a legal camp any more. Caravans pull in endeavouring to make camp in half-sealed gaps in the law, or behind the gaping fences of official policies: the overspills of unfulfilled Traveller Accommodation Programmes; the unenumerated of official counts. Councils lag years behind on pledges to

\[132\] That relations between first cousins resemble something approaching siblingship is apparently born out by the prohibition against marriage of ‘double first cousins’ – the offspring of marriages between two sets of siblings. Their children (who sometimes strongly resemble each other,) are said to be ‘almost brother and sister’.
meet their legal duty to accommodate ‘indigenous Travellers’, secure in the knowledge that although public authorities incur no penalties for these failures, Travellers themselves can be moved on, brought to court, and in a dozen different ways, expelled. Camps grow in number and visibility in the summer. As soon as children can be liberated from school, Travellers from sites and houses who are prepared to face the risks get out their caravans and go back on the road for the summer. Young families come and go between parents, cousins and siblings, and older people head back to their childhood camps, escaping the unrelieved tensions of sites and houses where “you cannot breathe.” A long line of trailers precariously heaved up end to end onto a narrow pavement outside an old, over-crowded site on the edge of town lets you know that married children are back for the summer, hoping to stay a month or so before they are evicted. A gas bottle piped into the trailer, pairs of trainers on the roof, a small dog chained to the steps and a wire clothes rack with children’s clothes stands on the pavement. “They’re back!” Travellers say with satisfaction as they drive past the camp, heads craning from van windows to try to catch sight of the occupants of each trailer. As trailers and vans pull up and people come and go, the site starts to breathe in and out again at its own pace, like a man unbuttoning a tight shirt and throwing it off. The camp re-embodies the site in a new form.

But not all camps are seasonal. At least six hundred families live permanently ‘beside the road’, while more than three hundred are in so-called ‘temporary sites’, where conditions are usually much worse than unserviced camps.133 Those beside the road include young couples who have married from sites, and were never included in Accommodation Programmes. Once they establish their own trailer, they face possible eviction from their families’ bays for overcrowding. Almost every site that has been in existence for ten years or more displays this internal proliferation of mature, single and married off-spring with their own trailers, squeezed into over-crowded bays, and out onto approach lanes and pavements around the site.

Others beside the road have been declared ‘non-indigenous’. Having failed to be included in three or more successive ‘counts’, they do not qualify for inclusion in a programme for ‘Traveller-specific’ accommodation. Courts have ordered such families to leave the county on pain of imprisonment, failing to see the irony of telling them to “go back where you came from”, since they are usually not ‘indigenous’ anywhere else either. Some families have simply never stopped moving between camps and temporary sites, preoccupied by the exigencies of daily life, and unwilling to be sucked into the often fruitless

133 Annual Count Figures 2004, Dept. of Environment, Heritage & Local Government
endurance test of official ‘Traveller accommodation’. Since the Traveller Accommodation Act was passed in 1998, it has become ever clearer that many local authorities routinely pressurise families into accepting standard housing, often telling them that no more sites will be built, and they have no other choice. The choice, such as it is, is to remain ‘beside the road’. An expression that once spoke with warmth of Traveller life and nomadic subsistence, when an old woman says proudly ‘I rear’t sixteen childer beside the rawd’, now smacks of isolation, repeated eviction and prosecutions, and is almost synonymous with homelessness. In fact, the term ‘homeless Travellers’ is used increasingly frequently to describe Travellers without bays on sites.

The camp described in the following chapter shares many of these characteristics, combining voluntary commitments to nomadic Traveller life with the burdens of illegality. But its expansion over several weeks tells a quite different story of how shared memories and interwoven histories are relived and intensified in the camp, the seeds of their continuity resown among children, so that they in turn will grow up and yearn for the extra-ness of the life of camps.

134 Strictly speaking, this is illegal, since the Act specifies that Travellers can choose ‘Traveller-specific’ accommodation. In practice there are more families waiting for sites—many for seven or eight years (and some, as much as fifteen years,) than there are sites, and some councils use prosecution as a way of forcing Travellers off the road into temporary accommodation, against their will. Repeated prosecutions can induce such families to accept council houses. Since council officers often fill out application forms, some people are unaware that they could opt for ‘Traveller-specific’ accommodation (i.e., a site), as the option is never put to them.
Chapter Five

The Camp

The three trailers which made up the core camp coalition of those beside the road were connected through the Hedges, two brothers, Tom and Billy, and their elder sister, Annie. Tom and Annie were both married with children, and their unmarried brother, Billy, was Tom’s inseparable companion. Annie Hedge was married to Simon Copse for whom the county was ‘home’, the area he had grown up in camps and where all his brothers now lived in houses on a council estate ten miles away. But he and Annie, both in their mid-forties, deeply disliked the idea of living in a house and preferred to stay beside the road, in spite of its insecurity. From time to time they told themselves uncertainly that ‘one day’ they’d like a site of their own. Tom Hedge, Annie’s younger brother, was staunchly resistant to both sites and houses, wanting only to “be left alone” by police and council officials, and so the two families, Tom and Helen, and Annie and Simon, with about twelve children between them, together with Billy, had continued to travel and camp as they had when they were young, sometimes going separate ways and repeatedly coming back together to the area they had known as children. Had the Hedges’ parents and further siblings still been alive they would almost certainly have formed a single large coalition of three generations. In 2007 Annie and Simon Copse had eight children living with them, one or two married ones having left to go travelling, and an eighteen year old son with his own trailer was free to come and go independently between his siblings, parents and cousins.

The winter had been hard, and Annie’s trailer in particular was showing its age. A hole had appeared in the back wall, cupboard doors were falling off their hinges, and occasionally her despair and anxiety for the future became uncontainable: “Look at us! We’re living like red Indians – in third world conditions!” In these outbursts Annie framed her life through self-alienation, expressing the ambivalence and resentment Travellers feel in the face of poverty, hardships, persecution and lacks, conditions experienced as imposed, but seemingly inseparable from a life that is, in important respects, both chosen and inevitable. My presence added density and perhaps even provoked the self-abstracting rhetoric of these
moments, I thought, as I noticed Annie trying to detect my reactions. Later, I would come to see Annie’s ability to imaginatively proliferate perspectives that connected and distanced her in relation to others, reframing herself through their perceptions as remarkable, and that people around her recognized her exceptional abilities. These outbursts of frustration and injustice would subside as Annie and her sister-in-law, Helen, reflected on worse alternatives to their situation, such as the fences, cameras and security guards of an ‘emergency’ site from which Helen had fled, and years of watching their children grow up in what many Travellers describe as ‘a prison camp’ with no certainty of a desired end in sight. What, in any case, might the end turn out to be?

Through the winter, warnings from the Garda were followed by summonses and court cases, and the families desperately hunted around for somewhere out of the way where they might be left in peace. Throughout this time I visited their camps frequently, attended court with them, listened to talk of fines, imprisonment and possible confiscation of their caravans, and shared their feelings of despair and injustice.

As the weather began to lift, however, so did the mood of the families. The council officials seemed to tire of the constant pursuit. A new camp was found away from main roads and police patrols where the trailers could spread out, and for a while only close friends would find them. On one side of the new camp lay a marshy expanse of wind-blown sea grasses and the glittering water of the Shannon estuary, and on the other woods and fields extended into the distance. On the approach road to the camp, however, lay the danger of discovery: new houses, a mile away, whose residents would soon begin to recognize our vans and cars and realize their significance.

The children explored the wider area of the isolated camp, returning with finds. Rusty objects were proudly retrieved from hedgerows and muddy ditches and either recycled as scrap or put aside with a view to some ultimate reconstruction. On warm afternoons, when they had finished sorting the day’s haul of saleable scrap collected from the skips of local workshops, Tom and Billy brought the mares from their hiding places into the camp, rubbed engine oil into the long, silky fringes that hung from their legs, and trimmed and singed their manes. Hitching a mare to a sulky a (small, light-weight trap) Tom would take the older boys for dashes along the track at break-neck speed, and gradually, through the widening range of daily activities, the camp expanded into the vast space that encompassed it. Annie and Helen threw rubber mats out of cars onto the damp ground to sit in the sun, watching their children’s exploits with amusement and staring at the land around. Trailer doors and windows hung open, their few contents thrown out on the ground and the interiors painstakingly scrubbed and washed. Long lines of washed clothes and bedding decorated
hedgerows and fences, taking advantage of the sunny days, and more and more activities moved outside, beyond and between the trailers. The daily round of the boys’ activities conducted on foot or small bikes grew ever larger, until they regularly ranged a mile or two from the camp and were scarcely seen until evening.

This centrifugal energy was reciprocated by a centripetal force, as the camp became a magnet for other Travellers. Annie’s cousin, Mo, her husband Jack and their twelve children came and went in small posses all day long from a site two miles away, and every evening a fire of timber waste and pallets burned late into the night, and the darkened outlines of men, women and children in their separate groups stayed around the fire, talking and joking for as long as possible.

After a while new trailers began to pull in, and over the course of about two weeks the camp took on a new form, enlarged by the presence first of three new families, and then two more. This form of the camp persisted for several more weeks, as long as the camp itself remained. The new arrivals explained family links as the reason for joining the camp, always, however, identifying Annie as their relative rather than her brothers. Michael Gates, one of the newcomers, said to me, ‘Annie is my wife’s cousin’, and Michael’s wife, Tessa, gave the same explanation: she had come to join her cousin, Annie, and Annie’s children. The second new trailer to arrive was that of Tessa’s younger sister Nora, her husband, Joe, and their children. Nora introduced herself as Tessa’s sister and Annie’s cousin. The third trailer was that of Pat Gates, his wife and family, and Pat was introduced to me as Michael’s brother. Finally, the parents of Michael and Pat turned up, with a further unmarried daughter and grandchild. The camp’s extension was explained by both men and women as a means of reuniting the three women: Annie Hedge, Tessa Gates and Nora Gates135, as if these three were the only related members of the Gates and Hedge sibling groups. In fact, all the Hedges and the Gates were first cousins. Annie, Billy and Tom Hedge’s mother had been a Gates and the sister of Tessa’s and Nora’s father. Both were now deceased. The surviving member of this older sibling group was Bill Gates, Michael and Pat’s father, who now joined the camp. I began to consider the relationships that everyone consistently edited out: if Tessa and Nora Gates were Annie’s cousins, they were equally the cousins of Tom and Billy, Annie’s brothers, and the aunts of Tom’s children, yet these relations were never mentioned. Furthermore, I had learned that Tessa, a Gates by breed, was the parallel patrilateral cousin of her own husband Michael. To sum the matter up, Michael and Pat’s father and Tessa and Nora’s were two brothers and their sister was the mother of Annie, Tom and Billy.

135 All the married women here are named by their natal breed, as they characteristically name themselves.
Consequently, Michael and Pat Gates were the first cousins of Annie, Tom and Billy, in equivalent relations to those between their own first cousins Tessa and Nora and the original Hedge coalition.

In the company of the women one afternoon I sought to confirm this understanding of their relations. My question merely elicited wry smiles and terse agreement of the ‘facts’. The problem that could not be posed directly was why the camp coalition represented its relations in this way. What was the significance of what both men and women left out of their accounts?

I discounted antagonism between the two breeds. Camp life, which for the most part is strongly segregated between female and male activities and association, makes it hardly possible to share a camp in unfriendly circumstances, and nothing indicated personal tensions among the group. Some other realisation of internal division must be considered, which returns us to the entailments of substance: its dual nature as ‘blood’ and ‘name’, the tension between flows and stoppages, and how enactments of gender configure intensities and diffusions which foreground the body not as form principally, but as direction. First, the three principal adult sibling groups know themselves not only as cousins but as two breeds: Annie, Tom and Billy are Hedges through their father, while Tessa and Nora, and Michael and Pat are Gates. The public breeds of adults being agnatic, they reflect not only the dominance of male substance, but foreground the breed as a visible group of men, as discussed above. By suppressing their relatedness to Annie and her brothers the Gates men ‘made themselves small’\textsuperscript{136} in the camp, not asserting their breed as the source of everyone’s relatedness, and, therefore, not imposing their masculinity over men of another breed, in this case Tom and Billy Hedge whose breed was the source of the core coalition’s mutual loyalty. The more numerous Gates men appeared to defer to their male cousins, and by extension, to their masculinity. Such rhetorical understatement does not eclipse the male Gates’ relations as cousins through the Gates back-breed of Annie, Billy and Tom Hedge, but it does mute it in some sense, suggesting, for one thing, that the children of brothers share a greater intensity of substance than cross-cousins, and many instances elsewhere bear this out. If marrying-in intensifies one’s substance, as Mikey understands, then marrying-out dissipates it, particularly for a woman. Female substance as a contribution to another breed is weakened through time. The name, gradually detaching itself from the living will reduce to a mere trace and ultimately be lost. As names grow ‘big’, through male procreation, they also grow small in female procreation outside the breed. The Gatesness of

\textsuperscript{136} To ‘make yourself small’ means to be quiet, sit down, and not draw attention to yourself.
the Hedges is precisely in the throes of growing smaller, and this diminution is equivalent to a gradually widening social distance. Thus, the Gates men, Michael and Pat, feel themselves to be more distantly related to their cross-cousins the Hedges, than, for instance, Michael does to his wife, Tessa Gates, his parallel cousin. The Gates men downplay their undiminished embodiment, as it were. Deference shown in ‘making themselves small’ speaks of the gendered tension between bilateral blood and the breed’s masculine name, as well as its productivity.

Yet the camp presents a conundrum, its social aims apparently containing internal contradictions. The camp intentionally foregrounds equivalent relations (children of siblings) in a breed/ back-breed, while side-stepping those relations when they confront the social distance of different breeds. A simultaneous holding on and letting go of memory and relatedness seems to take place, and I suggest that the distinction between what is made performatively present in the camp and what is muted revolves around the opposing potentialities of male and female in configuring procreative continuities. As all the men are made smaller in everyone’s accounts of the camp as copresence, women correspondingly are made big. Annie is central to everyone’s description with the pervasive sense that she, rather than her brothers, is the direct inheritor of her mother’s substance, and that the link between the seven cousins resides in Annie, Tessa and Nora. Where extended forms of ‘the one family’ cross breed distinctions which diffuse its visibility, women rather than men become its embodiments, because in women the breed’s substance must be acknowledged as ‘blood’, a sign of ‘generation’, in Nellie Collins’ sense. ‘Generation’ implies both real people linked together in life and their transmissive perpetuity. Like ‘breed’ and ‘going’, ‘generation’ captures a conjunction of verb and noun, the facticity of human bodies, the mobility of substance and its sign: relations; in sum, human being(s) who, with care, ‘never run out’, as Nellie puts it. Annie’s mother, Ellie, is remembered as the sister of Tessa and Nora’s father, a mother of children who were ‘half Gates’, and no doubt she camped throughout her life among her siblings, her children and theirs being ‘reared together’. They remained her ‘own people’, just as Annie now describes them.

The ‘back-breed’, with its emotional resonance of living-and-diminishing substance and conceptual capacity to extend entwined histories, encapsulates the multiplicity of human substance as well as the inevitable diminution of one intensity in relation to another. Camps such as this endeavour to sustain continuities of substance whose names disappear, which stand apart from the breeds: relations ‘by nature but not by name’, as one woman put it.  

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137 Explaining her family’s need to attend the funeral of a valued relative, in spite of threats against them by the dead man’s breed, a woman said “He was ours by nature but not by name.”
The camp opens up sensory sites of memory of their dead parents and their own childhoods for Annie, Nora and Tessa, which inhabit their children and each other in names, gestures, voices and looks, as well as places in the vicinity of the camp that they look at and narrate to me, describing images of former camps, women cooking and men shoeing horses, where patches of hedgerow contain and unlock the materiality of memory.

Social life between the seven trailers was dominated by the daily interactions of Annie, Tessa and Marie and their children and Tom’s children, Annie filling the typical role of a grandmother to the children of the camp. After their daily labours the boys would fly to Annie’s trailer where she doled out bowls of cereal swimming in milk. Annie, with no daughters in the camp, only a trailer-full of boys, began to address Tessa’s and Nora’s girls as ‘Daarrter’, and this new form of address became pervasive between the women and girls.

On one occasion I heard Rose, a daughter of Tessa aged about eleven, address her own younger sister as ‘Daarrter’. For Tessa and Nora, Annie, about fifteen years their senior, appeared to connect them to their own deceased father, and the presence of the earlier sibling group seemed to hang over the camp, penetrating the relations of the living. One night after the group of women withdrew from the dying fire, we retreated to Annie’s trailer where we sat in the dark, and Annie, sitting in an uncharacteristically erect and formal posture, told a series of stories. Moving through one to the next without stopping, she delivered each in a serious, even tone, her eyes fixed on her audience, unperturbed by occasional wise-cracks and face-pulling between the women whose initial, nervous interventions were prompted by the tension the first story conveyed. Soon we fell quiet, exchanging only occasional glances.

The first narrative was Annie’s first-hand account of what happened as she sat in bed in her caravan late one night, comforting a restive infant, while her husband slept beside her. Suddenly she became aware of something in the air above her, and looked up to see the face of an old woman hanging in the air, in a black dress with a lace collar circling her face. The old woman stared fixedly into Annie’s eyes as if wanting to speak but she never spoke, and Annie clutched her child, terrified, for what seemed like hours, unable to move or avert her eyes. When the child began to cry once more she looked down, and when she raised her head the old woman had gone. Later, Annie said, she learned that the same apparition had appeared to members of her family on three occasions, and she consulted a holy woman who told her it was the ghost of an ancestor who had come back to warn the family of an impending death. Following each of these appearances, Annie said, someone in the family had in fact died.
The second story told of Annie’s experience when she had been staying in lodgings in England with her husband. She was left alone in the room nursing an infant, feeling angry because her husband was out getting drunk, leaving her alone and worried for his safety. Suddenly, the terrifying figure of a man with his arms stretched out in front of him came rushing towards her through the wall, just as if it wasn’t there. The most terrible thing about this ghost was that it had no face, just a black space where its face should have been. Just as the ghost came so close that Annie thought it was about to grab hold of her and kill her, the door fell open and in stumbled her husband, and in the same instant the ghost was gone.

In the third and final story Annie told of what happened to a Traveller man as he returned to a particular camp. He was walking along the road back to his camp lost in his own thoughts, but he became aware that a little girl was skipping along in the same direction, a few yards away from him. He glanced at her but he didn’t know the child and he did not speak to her. A few minutes later he was back in the camp among the caravans, and then he realized the girl had followed him. As she didn’t belong to the camp, he thought he should take her back to the houses where she must have come from, in case her parents were looking for her. So he spoke to her and she smiled and took hold of his hand, and they retraced their steps along the road until they came to the first house. The Traveller went and knocked at the door of the house and a woman opened it. Still holding the child’s hand, he asked the woman, "Does this child..." He was about to say “belong to you?” and he glanced down to his side and there was no child next to him. Just as he spoke to the woman she melted away. Confused, he backed away from the house and returned to the camp where he told people what had happened, and the Travellers said they had seen the little girl next to him, and seen them walk away up the road. There were other times, Annie said, when this little girl appeared to other Travellers in camps along that road, and the Travellers came to learn that she was the ghost of a settled child who had been murdered.

The stories describe the sensory embodiment of another world in this one, of ghosts intervening among the living, and the past confusedly replaying itself in the present. They resonate with the way women in the camp re-clothe the dead in self-descriptions which forge embodied personhood across time: “Tessa is my mother’s brother’s daughter”; “my father was Annie’s mother’s brother”. These acknowledgments of the co-present dead instantiate boundary-crossings for the passage of memory and shared substance. Names and faces, narratives and remembered sites encode the camp’s sensory passages between the living and the dead, and the common account of relations between the Hedge and Gates women and men delineates which of its members have privileged access to them. Annie’s stories affirm that the dead demand presence among the living, even if their visible presence is
fleeting, confused and unsettling. Those who have gone before have something to communicate and they make themselves known not in words, but, as in the camp, through presence and visibility. In the female ancestor who tries urgently but fruitlessly to deliver her warning, there is the layered ambiguity of a death to be made known before it occurs whose knowledge resides in a woman already lost to memory, still interested in those who no longer know her. The dead know more of us than we know of them. She is, Annie learns, one of her ‘own people’ but her name is long forgotten; unspoken, she cannot speak.

In each of the stories, where what is seen but not recognized, dead but substantial, communicated but not understood, the material space and time of dwelling that reflexively affirm the body’s ordinary wholeness and singularity to itself are ruptured and made unfamiliar. The intimacy of the bed, the ordinary lane and anonymous lodging assume disturbing alterity as scenes where the body is pulled from its presentness. Threads of substance, memory, gender, generation and dwelling form a close-textured fabric of repeating and varying patterns, so that the stories, like the camp itself, construct a ‘space of positions’ (Bourdieu 1985b: 724) between settled and Traveller, women and men, parent and child, the living and the dead, where no perspective is fully determined, each being linked to and constrained by that of another. The ghostly child seeks in the camps of Travellers a permeable boundary between death and life, but remains invisible among the settled. In her daughter-like compliance she seems to seek recognition from a Traveller ‘father’ in order to become visible. Camps, not houses, are where the dead might pass into the lives of the living, and female persistence beyond death is tied to the contingency of male recognition. The faceless ghost bursts through a wall from the unknown past of a settled (housed) world, not just unrecognized but unrecognizable. He stumbles blindly onto Travellers threatening destruction, but for the unwitting intervention of a Traveller man who forces apart the confused worlds of the living and the dead, settled and Traveller, the ‘solid’ house offering no protection from violence.

The stories echo the performed relations of the camp, oblique and euphemistic, signalling half-seen causes beyond the present, and relations that surge into view only to fade away again, where direct communication is impossible. They embody a panoply of mysteries: the disappearance of women from the social world of their descendants; the presence of the dead among Travellers and their absence among settled people; and the dependence of Traveller women on men to protect them from unseeing settled violence, and perhaps as well, from the excessive intrusion of death into life itself. Annie, at the centre of her stories as well as the camp, is approaching the condition of her ancestor. As two successive generations of women have married out of the breed, her mother’s name, Gates,
is muted and unless some of Annie’s children marry into their back-breed, the name of ‘her own people’ will fall silent among her descendants.
Quiet moment in the camp. Rineanna, County Clare, 2007.
Distributing and multiplying perspectives

Thus transformed, imageries of the camp’s temporal and gendered relations pose broader questions regarding dependencies between men and women, children and parents, and the living and the dead, as well as of definitive divisions between settled and Travellers, and point toward the role of the camp in mediating possible answers to such questions. However, a purely textual-ethnographic interpretation neglects the core of their illocutionary force, the performative interaction between Annie and her listeners. Precedents for this approach include Bauman, who rejects an established view of oral literature as remnants of ‘residual culture’ and advocates performative analysis of story-telling (1975: 306; 1990, 2002). Abrahams, without assuming that narratives are original or spontaneous inventions, argues that the ‘expressive habits’ of folklore constitute a ‘dynamic feature of everyday life… capable of being used by performers for their own purposes’ (1971: 28). For Abrahams, formal conventions and indexical references to shared values, self-conceptions and anxieties (‘the wisdom of the group’) prepare the audience for the framing of ‘a social misalignment that must be confronted and rectified’ (ibid: 29). Whether the story ends in resolution or dissonance depends, he suggests, ‘on where the performers stand in relation to the status quo and on the kind of realignments they are calling for’ (29). Kristeva’s (1980: 64-65) concept of intertextuality (based on Bakhtin) sees registers, styles and genres performing indexical roles through allusion, transposition and slippage. ‘Lamination’ affords expressive, critical or satirical nuances and embodies different kinds of truth or authority for particular listeners (Hanks 2000: 96; Briggs and Baumann 1992). In Annie’s story sequence, for example, laminating separate stories with their own beginnings and ends into a single structure produces a particular kind of intertextual semiosis. She also intersperses collateral details, authoritative interpretations, reference to after-events and indexical references from ‘outside’ the story frames, directing her audience towards different perspectives, which reinforce, amplify or modify each other.

Before assessing the role of non-verbal indexicality in Annie’s stories we must consider the pragmatics of deixis: how positions, relations and perspectives are constituted by means of (1) deictics - ‘indexical symbols’ which entail both denotation and indexicality, and (2) indexicality, operating through ‘pragmatic factors alone’ (Manning 2001: 55).138 Deictic fields,  

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138 The distinction indicates the role of language in face to face interaction (e.g. demonstratives and shifters) in deictics. Manning (2001: 55) notes: ‘all deictics are indexes, but not all indexes are deictics’. Deictics are ‘duplex signs’ (Jakobson 1971) with symbolic and indexical, semantic as well as pragmatic aspects, whereas indexes are pragmatic. Levinson (1983) similarly identifies deictics as grammatical (i.e.,
linking reference and construal, articulate connectivities between the time and space of relations and perspectives: of those between present participants, objects and surroundings in a speech event, and those distantly removed but indexed in the here and now of speech. Deixis, which gives pragmatic sense to all verbal utterance, becomes particularly rich in story-telling, where the world of the story intersects with the here and now, each reshaping the other. Deictic tropes give form to social worlds as deictic fields in themselves (Manning 2001), extending the relational denotation of grammatical systems to index analogy, contiguity, hierarchy, continuity, exclusion and opposition. Descriptives such as Johnny Collins' 'very close people' and Nelly Collins' ‘follyin’ aan' are classic examples of ‘social deixis’ (ibid).

In studies by Gell (1998) and Viveiros de Castro (1998) deixis and indexicality are centrally implicated in problems essentially similar to those of the camp. Although Gell maintains that art objects set in motion forms of semiotic inference that are ‘wholly distinct’ (14) from that brought to bear in language, indexicality and deictic fields are similarly prominent, first, in objectifying personhood as a spatio-temporal field of relations, and second, in pragmatic configurations of social relations as pre-eminently matters configured in time and space. Concepts of embodiment and personhood reconfigured in the camp as problems of space and time in the relations, substances and names of ‘breeds’ – and indexed by camp occupants as social boundaries, genealogical ruptures, continuity or temporal extension - are also implicated in Gell’s accounts of distributed personhood and extended mind, and in Viveiros de Castro’s (1998: 481) bodies and souls that are ‘phenomenological perspectives’ rather than ‘ontological provinces’. The camp, which establishes a ‘point of view’ of its pre- eminent relations to which everyone adheres, can be understood as a deictic field where the parameters of time and space are indicated through euphemism, symbolic action, naming and allegorical narrative. Through performative deixis relations in the present index a prior sibling set. However, it is essential to recognize that indexicality precisely draws attention to temporality, as opposed to eclipsing it.

Keane (1997: 113-114) notes that the absence of deixis in Anakalang ritual speech reflects an ideology of linguistic ‘permanence’: couplets ‘transcend the limits of the present context’ in order to restore an ancestral state. The contrast between ritual speech- as if

linguistic) as well as pragmatic. These descriptions of the relation and overlap between indexicality and deixis are useful, but the role of non-verbal gesture (as I discuss below) makes the picture more complex. It can also be argued that artworks entail non-verbal ‘indexical symbols’ which like deictics encompass denotation and indexicality. I therefore use the concept of the ‘deictic field’ as a more inclusive term that includes indexical fields where language is seemingly absent, and leave the question of ‘language’ to be determined.
outside interlocution- and its opposite, where perspective is configured as a central problem, highlights the question of intentionality in both cases, but from opposite positions. Travellers' camps, which ideally constitute an endless series of regenerative and transformative possibilities, index the body as the trope of dwelling's deictic field. But embodiment cannot be abstracted from its social, temporal and material trajectories, nor from the interdependency of bodies. For Travellers there is neither a unified ancestral state to which all will ultimately accede, freed from the uncertainty of time, nor a bodily abstraction which makes all bodies ultimately one. Desires, modes of existence, social capacities and continuities of substance are intimately constrained by interacting perspectives marked by distinctions of gender, age, sexual status, breed, and even by life and death, which never produce the symmetry of a 'shared social totality' (Seremetakis 1991:6) between women and men, the living and the dead, breed and back-breed, Traveller and settled.

Levinson (1996: 360) describes deixis as ‘the way parameters of the speech event enter into the interpretation of linguistic expressions’. This account gives weight to the concreteness of the speech event as interaction, in contrast to those who interpret the 'situation' of the utterance as the emergent variable of speech (Duranti 1997; Duranti and Goodwin 1992; Hanks 1990, 2005; Manning 2001). Minimally, deictic concepts139 prompt construals of spatial-temporal relations and their semantic resonances between a 'speaker, addressee, and object and the phenomenal context of utterance' (Hanks 2005a: 191), which 'undergird our sense of copresence, of the givenness of objects, and of the spatial-temporal world in which speech takes place' (ibid). But the way deictic 'shifters' 'constitute both subjects and objects' (ibid) is readily unanchored from dialogue, so that indexicality and deixis may be perceived as enacting analogous modes of intentional meaning and relations in externalised, 'shifting' worlds. Centres of perspective, reference and construal are dispersed through material objects, human and non-human Others, which thus constitute deictic fields that are 'out there'.140 Gell develops this insight in Art and Agency (1998:37), where the index of an artwork is both 'an extra limb… of the patron and/ or artist' and also 'the handle, attached to the patient/ recipient'.141 Here, spatial and temporal metaphor constitute the art object (or series) as a deictic field of reference and construal, which 'contains' the pragmatic intersubjectivity that is the precondition of deictic speech. In the

139 Demonstratives such as ‘this’; ‘here’; ‘then’; adverbs and pronouns including ‘on’; ‘behind’; your; him; verbs such as ‘come’, as well as gestures performing similar concepts.
140 Munn’s (1983; 1992) analysis of Gawan Kula is a pre-eminent example of a deictic field where points of perspective are constituted as relations whose values are assessed as expressions of time-space control.
141 Gell uses 'indexicality' (non-linguistic gesture) rather than deixis (grammatical/linguistic), although his examples might be described as deictic fields, as the art work constitutes an origo or point of temporal-spatial reference.
‘natural attitude’ of speech, when space and time are represented as the pre-existent scene and pervasive medium of events, an imaginative readiness appears to displace deixis (removing the origo) and replace it with ‘context’, autonomous artefactual frames of time and space waiting to be filled by autogenic realms of relations.

Hanks’ (2005; 2005a) rethinking of deictic theory’s ‘standard spatialist position’ links semantic and pragmatic fields with Bourdieu’s (1985; 1990) theory of practice in ways that evoke the relationship between position and the permeability of boundaries, with the problems of power and recognition that form the subject of Annie’s stories. Hanks’ ‘referential practice’, rather than indicating ‘given’ time and space positions relative to speech events, involves almost limitless ways in which language, gesture and expression, (through genre, indexicality, encoding, modes of encompassing and boundary-making) orient construal of the stability, interchangeability, and hierarchy of relations between objects and subjects, speakers and addressees. In both the performance of Annie’s stories and in their subject matter, everything is in play: from the conventional separation between imaginary and experienced events, to the solidity of bodies and material worlds, and the temporal limits of human desire and agency. Deictic fields and indexicality work together to unsettle the presumed fixity of each relation and state of being.

Viveiros de Castro (1998) abstracts deixis from utterance and externalises it as the cultural ontology of ‘perspectivism’. In Amerindian myth, having a perspective denotes intentional personhood whose paradigm is humanness, and using the concept of deixis Viveiros de Castro describes a cosmological intersubjectivity of multiple perceiving positions differently embodied: one culture and many natures, as he puts it. We do not learn about the critical question of dialogism- how Amerindian speakers communicate with or within this universe of persons- until the end of the paper, as Viveiros de Castro’s principal analytic concern is with the implications of equivalence between perspectives, all of which are ‘human’ in outlook, but not all enclosed in the same bodily ‘clothing’.

From our point of view several interesting problems are raised in Viveiros de Castro’s account; one is that perspectivism leaves the question of ‘humanness’ importantly moot. He states that, having ‘lost the qualities… retained by humans’ (472), animals assumed skins and feathers as clothing (or masks) which conceal subjectivities ‘identical to human consciousness’ (471), and consequently regard humans as ‘animal’ prey, blood as manioc beer, lairs as houses, etc. Bodies from the inside are experienced as ‘anatomically’ human (477), alterity being the outcome of physical exteriors that result from acts of making. In other 

142 Hanks (2005a: 217) writes: ‘the most basic problem with the spatialist view [of deixis] is not the privileging … but the reification of space’
words, humanness is dialogical: it depends on who is speaking to, or looking at whom. Implicit in the Amerindian myth of equivalence is the claim (to corrupt Orwell’s dictum) that some humans are more equal than others, and those that are less so do not know it. What is the origin of this illusion? Embodiment itself, or more particularly, the ‘affects, dispositions or capacities’ of ‘habitus’ (478). Viveiros de Castro writes:

‘The difference between bodies, however, is only apprehendable from an exterior viewpoint, by an other, since, for itself, every type of being has the same form (the generic form of a human being): bodies are the way in which alterity is apprehended as such’ (478).

‘Nature’ anthrocentrically renders ‘the form of the Other as body’ (478). A lurking doubt signals perspectivism’s deep insecurity: are ‘we’ humans possessed of bodies we believe ourselves to have, or, like ‘those’ animals, deceived? The roles of dialogic and referential speech and visual interaction that are central to performative deixis are present here. Amerindians formulate questions and ideas about humans and less-humans in a deictic field of subjectivity, where the substantive ‘it’ designates the status of a less than human – i.e., a killable, eatable body, but in isolated encounters between human and (perceived) non-human subjects, feared cosmological capture by an animal or spirit results from the lethal error of responding to its dialogic address ‘you’, in which case linguistic shifters instantly transform interlocutors into role-reversing shape-shifters. It is at precisely similar moments of embodied interlocution between the dead and the living in Annie’s stories - translated into a direct, insistent gaze, a grasped hand, or hands outstretched in imminent violence - that the certainty of belonging to one world and not another also breaks down.

**performed deixis and the camp**

In Annie’s stories intersubjective and cosmological deixis situate herself and her listeners in the interacting perspectives of known and unknown worlds, where the vivid sensory realism of the ordinary ‘misaligned’ suggests an analogy to what members of the camp express or make visible and what they suppress. The first point of ambiguity is Annie herself, reflected in registers indeterminately positioned between the decentred authority of traditional story-teller and that of personal experience, both first persons. What kind of connection links Annie the narrator to Annie the protagonist and where do they separate? In this ‘I-I’ relationship, where one ‘I’ is iconic and one an index of a relation to her listeners, in
Peirce’s (1998: 477-8) terms, interpretants are unstable, and this instability, taking the form of an intertextuality of register, creates ‘multiple modes of inserting [the speaker] into the discourse; and in building competing perspectives on what is taking place’ (Briggs and Bauman 1992: 147). Challenging her audience, with no indication as to how these two first person perspectives may be separated, the unresolved question of perspective gradually expands to encompass her listeners, drawing her listeners towards the experience of her characters, where what is seen cannot be recognized or understood. As listeners, unable to escape the pull of understanding, our initial glee at the prospect of a good story is soon replaced by unease.

Sensory and social alignments telescope the story-telling moment in Annie’s trailer late at night into the setting of the first story, and the familiar troubles she describes replicate those of her listeners. Routines of caring for children, worries about the sickness of family members: a confluence of cares, obligations and resignation that occupy the surface of women’s lives identify her listeners with Annie, indexing the larger unity of Traveller women’s lives which frame them. Annie mimes the things she describes, and the women, who sit knee to knee on opposite benches of the trailer in semi-darkness, arms folded and leaning forward in the characteristic mode of attention, smile sympathetically and nod recognition as she rocks an invisible infant in her arms, as she did that night. In these images parallel movements collapse the space of the trailer into that of the story and Annie’s world into those of her listeners. As distances of time and space seem to dissolve, performed Annie, the Annie of the night ‘when it happened’ and an index of Traveller women’s self-relation absorbs all our attention and her narrative creator recedes to insignificance.

Suddenly she looks up and grows stiff and wide-eyed with fear, appearing to see the apparition she describes. Next, she extends her body and becomes the old woman herself; staring down in the unflinching posture of the ghost, she seems to be suspended above us, her fingers drawing in the air the lace collar around her face. Through a series of deictic gestures we have changed positions and become Annie, and the narrator, who now embodies the ghost, refers to herself in the third person as ‘she’. Perspective and objective presence are instantiated then dislocated as Annie moves from first to third person, enactment and embodiment occupying the same moment, then splitting between the perspectives of the ghost and Annie, now deictically embodied in her listeners. Uncertain of our knowledge we, her listeners, recreate the space of failed speech and recognition that the encounter with the ghost relates.

Shifting forms of dependency and misrecognition encompass the living and the dead, women and men, father and daughter, settled and Traveller, and now, through the
performative instantiation of deictic fields, the narrator and her audience. Those cast as objective witnesses who see from ‘outside’ the story and interpret its ‘real’ events (the holy woman, Travellers in the same camp, and later, different camps) are disinterested actors who index the truth of Annie’s experiences and give insights into their meaning. These objective frames disengaged from, but enfolding the central events, stand between the ghostly encounters and Annie the narrator, underlining the solidity of the shared world that ghosts inhabit with us. The indexicality of the first story, intensely centred on the reversibility between Annie and her listeners, thus expands its scope from the trailer and the camp, to other dwelling sites, witnesses and moments, multiplying perspectives as it does so, and performatively realising an objective world experienced by others, and now, by her listeners-in other words, a real world. The agency of these external perspectives lend the two female ghosts- the old woman and the little girl - a new significance, inspiring compassion between the living and the dead. In the nameless ancestor’s silent warning and the child’s compliance (a literal ‘follyin’ aan’) death becomes an extension of life’s unfulfilled desires. The physical actions of the differently-embodied dead elicit emotions that transcend those of ordinary bodily sensation. The child’s skipping feet, the man’s hand falling empty, the old woman’s urgent gaze and the blind ghost’s outstretched arms are metonymic intensities extending away from the body towards others, across the division between life and death. The lives of Traveller and settled, women and men, children and parents, the dead and the living are enmeshed in misrecognized connections and half-seen desires, and embodied communications filled with melancholy, tenderness, concern, fear, violence and blindness are finally engulfed by silence separating the living from the dead.

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Lee and Li Puma (2002: 192-3) describe how performativity’s conjunction of first and third person perspectives creates ‘self-reflexive structure[s] of circulation built around some reciprocal social action’. In representing an aspect of a ‘totality’ the subject is reflexively self-enacted within it. In their example, capitalist markets objectify collective agency in a dynamic circulatory force, where fetishised forms (third person subjects) and ritual performances (first-second person enactments) reify a totality for ‘sociohistorically specific performative
subjects[s]’ (ibid: 199). They contrast this ‘view from nowhere’ (ibid: 201) with the absence of a transcendent surplus in non-capitalist circulation. Such an alternative account of performativity is given by Seremetakis (1991: 5), for whom Maniat women’s mourning rituals realize a ‘disruptive and disjunctive’ power circulating ‘at the margins of a social structure’ (cf. Bauman 1975). However, the author notes that neither a ‘narrow inversion’ of binary gendered domains nor their dialectical encompassment within a shared ‘social totality’ comprehends the character and import of these performances. The death rites and dreams shared and performed by Inner Maniat women constitute a site of ‘disengagement from the social order’ with ‘their own temporal rhythms, transformations, and levels of engagement and disengagement’; that is, an original perspective with its own ‘mechanisms of symbolic transformation’ (228). What the dreams and rituals of Inner Maniat women share with the more ephemeral performance space of ghost stories shared by Traveller women in the camp, besides an originality which cannot be subsumed either in binary opposition or shared totality, is what Serematakis calls ‘the inscription of heterogeneous time’ (63). But can we also conclude here that the deictic field of women’s performativity in the camp constitutes a similarly autonomous space of resistance and ‘disengagement’? I do not think so.

It is true that the stories were selectively restricted to an audience of women and children, and, in one sense, index a female perspective of the heterogeneous temporalities of embodied personhood. Yet we cannot regard men as excluded from the heterogeneous time instantiated in camps. As we have seen, the men of the camp participated in its performativity, placing Annie and her female cousins at its centre. Nor does the perspectivisim of the stories translate an immanently ritual context into an emergent political one, for the reason that women do not form a ‘class’ in relation to men. ‘Female’ perspective is neither singular, constant nor complete in time and space: the dead girl, the long-dead ancestor, and the wife and mother (Annie herself) instantiate partial trajectories of femaleness with different dependencies, desires, and perspectives.

Rather, the ‘reciprocal social action’ which forms the impetus of the particular circulatory system epitomised in camps, implies here a complex, repeating pattern of unequal, unfinished, and partially fulfilled trajectories, where dependencies, affections, and obligations engender multiple debts as well as possibilities, for both women and men. There is no ‘view from nowhere’. Although men and women equally belong to breeds, and both sexes spring from, and create springs of, original forms of ‘the one family’ to which their

143 ‘Marx creates a model of collective agency in which objectification and fetishism embed a third-person perspective on exchange relations within a first-person dialectical model of social totality.’ (Lee and LiPuma 2002: 198)
deepest loyalties are attached, they do so in non-synchronous social and embodied worlds. Breeds instantiate the present-time of human embodiment and collectivity epitomised in masculinity and the visible continuity of ‘the name’; but the miscibility and transience of breeds-becoming-back-breeds, which bind the living to the dead through memory alone and the endless ‘follyin aan’ of camps (implying both repetition and transposition), extend as ‘heterogeneous time’ through women and substance – ‘blood’ and ‘generation’, separated from ‘name’.

In Annie’s stories ghosts disappear when the living divert their attention, lose sight, or act in ignorance of their presence and intentions. These subjective protagonists in human worlds are shown as dependent on human perception, memory and insight. Death not only fails to materialise a ‘transcendent surplus’ lacking in life and, as such, to supply a ‘view from nowhere’, but the afterlife clings to the earth and to the living, peopled by ‘pour restless sowls’ who frequently seek communication with, or recognition from, the living in a bid to extend or satisfy unfulfilled yearnings.

144 See Viveiros de Castro’s (1992: 215-216) similar contrast between the anthropological account of death as a ‘world without others’, in which ‘differences interwoven in life become fixed and incommunicable’ or else ‘dissolve in an entropic chaos’, and Arawete ‘eternity’, where the ‘relationship between the living and the dead is not a speculative problem.. but a practical one’.

135
Fishing in the stream for scrap.
Camp at Rineanna, County Clare, 2007.
Chapter Six

Hiding the Evidence

“I know a lot of Travellers, Anna, they’re hidin’ in houses. They’re only denying theirselves.”

Ann-Marie, who lives in ‘Traveller-specific’ group housing.

“That’s Travellers living in there. I don’t know why they give those people houses. Those people don’t know how to live in houses.”

Taxi driver commenting on a Traveller group housing scheme.

“The group housing will be absorbed, so it appears there are no Travellers there. It’s time they joined the Settled people.”

Settled member of a Traveller Advisory Committee, commenting on the planned rehousing of Travellers onto a new estate.

The quotations above express ideas about what houses do, or might be thought to do. In Ireland, houses are commonly perceived as critical arbiters of Traveller-Settled relations, but their capacity is nonetheless ambiguous. Houses, people say, *ought to* make possible particular relations and ‘identities’ while excluding, transforming or suppressing others, yet doubts persist. Houses make things and people appear or else conceal them, but these effects are not altogether predictable. In the taxi driver’s off-the-cuff remark, houses are
vehicles through which knowledge or its absence is made evident: the knowledge of ‘how to live in houses’, which ‘Travellers’, he believes, do not possess. The hope expressed by the veteran member of a ‘Settlement Committee’, as he calls it - using the officially expunged language of the old ‘assimilationist’ days - is that houses, through their well-known art of concealment, might make something true: if it appears “there are no Travellers there”, then maybe they will have “joined the Settled people”.

Informants’ spontaneous propositions about the house reveal uncertainties regarding its authority, capacities and effects. This chapter concerns the intentions informants ascribe to the house, and why this taken-for-granted knowledge is hedged by doubt, resentment or fragile hope. How do the material forms of dwellings contrive to ‘expose’ Travellers as distinct, embodied persons, as many people in Ireland regard them? Families living in council housing estates in Ireland are often described as ‘known Travellers’ by settled people who gesture with their eyes towards a house across the street, so that those who, according to some, seek to ‘hide in houses’ find themselves visible in ways they are not free to reject, should they wish to. Asking how architecture performs this apparently necessary visibility is inseparable from asking why it should do so. Besides the role of the house in naturalising hierarchies of knowledge and personhood, I seek to explore the archaeology of the house itself.

The notion of ‘evidence’ (in the Chapter’s title) suggests that what is visible concedes irrefutable ‘meaning’ to knowing eyes, having been framed and given texture by the density of social knowledge in which the visible appears. Travellers are widely held to be self-evident in Ireland, and even if they sought to conceal themselves, many people (both Traveller and settled) claim, ‘I can always recognize a Traveller’. This ‘spontaneous’ visibility eclipses what remains unseen: the frame of dominant knowledge itself, which, here, epitomised by houses, remains elusive. Can Travellers ‘deny theirselves’ by ‘hiding in houses’? Does living in a housing estate mean ‘joining the settled people’ and becoming one of them? What kind of ‘knowing’ is involved in living in a house? And who would recognize or judge such knowledge, apart from the house itself? I often observed that people, both settled and Traveller, who confidently claimed always to be able to ‘recognize a Traveller’, frequently could not.

Povinelli observes that the ‘visual field… is saturated by social discourses of gender and racial value’ (2006:89). What remains unseen in the experience of the visible is the disavowed medium which saturates the visible: the ‘blindness’ of the law, for instance, or the

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145 This assertion is made by both Travellers and Settled. Travellers commonly claim, “I can go into a room with a hundred people in it, and I can always spot the Traveller!”
materiality of the house, where '[t]he visible functions to keep the invisible invisible' (Ravenhill, cited in Nooter 1993: 58). This, I suggest, is what Žižek means when he describes ‘concrete universality’ not as the ‘universal core that animates a series of its particular forms of appearance’ but rather as the site of ‘irreducible tension, noncoincidence, between these different levels’ (Žižek 2009: 31). The power of a ‘universal’ house dissolves into the background of social processes, seemingly detached from the ‘irreducible tension’ attributed to settled- Traveller relations. Yet the specificity of houseness in Ireland is quite distinct from that of the UK, considered in previous chapters.

**concealment and revelation: political aesthetics of visuality**

That concealment and revelation work together in performative claims to power and acts of resistance is observed in widely varied political technologies. Meyer and Pels (2003) revisit the paradox of modernity’s assumed ‘disenchantment’ in state-craft, drawing on Pietz’s (1985, 1987) discussions of the fetish. They argue that the state is premised on particular modes of representation that introduce ideological fissures between ideation and objects, the social and material, so that the state appears as a transcendent entity, distinct from material practices and effects (cf Mitchell 1991). My concern here is with the politics of visual fields: how the made-visible, the hidden and the unseen are deployed to represent, coerce and resist social relations in houses. The anthropology of visual fields makes clear the range of issues at stake.

Andrew and Marilyn Strathern (1971) have described the political aesthetics of bodily display and self-decoration in Mount Hagen, where performances summon the ancestral forces of the collectivity to the ‘magnified’ presence of the decorated individual. The body is deployed simultaneously to magnify and conceal: ‘skin’ is hidden in order to ‘[bring] things outside’ (249). Interpositions of darkness and light, surface and depth, concealment and exposure, constitute an index of bodily ‘interiority’ to reveal moods and emotions such as aggression or triumph that convey responses to particular ‘social and political environments’ (246). The ‘universal’ surface of the body itself thus formally configures the ‘irreducible tension, noncoincidence, between … different levels’ of appearance and concealment (Žižek 2009: 31). The aesthetic ritual of bodily semiotics among Hageners occurs where there is ‘no formal body of knowledge which defines itself in a category of person’ (251), that is, in the absence of state-craft, and strategies of control, deception and mystification blur the distinction between domination and resistance in the politics of knowledge. These acts of
revelation are fraught with anxiety in case their effects (a multiple elicitation of social capacities, individual acumen and ancestral support,) fall short of their desired aims to inspire awe, intimidate, and attract. The body itself is both instrument and visual field, the source of the claim to power over represented space.

Making visible, as distinct from ‘bringing something outside’, employs prosthetic techniques to frame what is made visible from a distance. Here the combination of spatial and visual command index an extensive, indeterminate field of power that captures and defines the body. Where such diffused visuality is both the source and representation of power, the person or object is transmuted into prey, target, evidence, and so forth, becoming ‘a metonym of spatial domination’ (Feldman 1997: 47). In accounts of colonial power and anticolonial resistance, where visual fields objectify political subjects in regimes of identification, ‘private lives are hollowed out’ to inhabit official frames of knowledge and narratives aimed at ‘reconciling the body with the history’ (Bassett 2007: 82; cf Thomas 1990; Foucault 2009).

The visual depiction of paramilitaries in Northern Ireland is an ‘iconic capture’ which is feared as ‘a sure harbinger of sudden death’ (Feldman 1997: 26), and for soldiers, ‘the aimed camera is considered equivalent to both the gun sight and the pointed rifle’ (ibid). The sensory experience of violence is inseparable from technologies that map and appropriate targets: ‘each prisoner incarcerated, each army or police patrol ambushed has been subjected to a ritualized gaze, an exposure that is an endowment of power to the aggressor’ (30). Feldman’s analysis of the ‘the agendas and techniques of political visualization: the regimens that prescribe modes of seeing and object visibility’ (30) includes technologies that penetrate domestic space to observe and record unseen, death postures applied to ‘stiffs’, and photographs of dead paramilitaries which are believed to form displays in army briefing rooms. Rumours of these displays, whether ‘true or not’, suggest ‘the sympathetic magic of manipulating personhood through replicas’ (ibid), emphasising the efficacy of removal, storage and realism which typify the ‘scopic regime’.146

The political aesthetics of visual technologies juxtapose the invisibility of instruments with the magnification of what they display. In Gordon’s metaphor of colonial rule in Fiji there is no single vantage point: ‘[t]he laws of the country may be compared to a net of very fine meshes, nothing can escape’ (Thomas 1990: 152). The nature of visuality is that there is ‘no human eye … for seeing, no matter how privileged …it is but a position internal to, and a function of the total scopic apparatus’ (Feldman 1997: 33). The use of realist modes of

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146 In the ‘occult economies’ of post-apartheid South Africa, Comaroff & Comaroff (1999) emphasise concern with invisibility and ‘exposure’ at the site of the body of the ‘witch’.
depiction: photographs, the ‘facts’ of identity, the naked body, and, in Fiji, statistical measurements, inspections, records, and the denuded aesthetic of ‘sanitary’ houses and villages, all constitute representations of the literal by which the ‘real’ is appropriated and reproduced in mimesis and metonymy.

Feldman suggests that the ‘realist aesthetics’ of political violence in Northern Ireland exploit an ‘ethics of correctness’ expressed in ‘homoiosis’: violence rationalised as moral order in likeness to the contexts of its deployment. The realist techniques of homoiosis satisfy an urge to iron out the ‘dense intricate texture of social life’, operating on an assumption that ‘the world is story-shaped – that there is a well formed narrative implicit in reality itself’ (Eagleton cited in Feldman 1997: 42-43).

These two forms of visuality: eliciting as surface and depth the concealed interiority of power, and making visible as a realist aesthetic which is ‘internal’ to the world, are implicated in accounts of houses that follow. Houses in Ireland coerce realist narratives through the political techniques of visual fields, so that what houses conceal, ‘bring outside’ and reproduce are metonymic formations of a relation between property, dwelling and personhood, configured as ‘homiosis’. Houses in Ireland, as instruments of a moral order that surpasses the state, mediate the possession of knowledge and legitimacy of violence.

political aesthetics of housing

When houses become ‘housing’ – a public orchestration by the state of architectural parts into wholes, and of families and dwellings into objective ‘communities’ – what is rendered unseen is how this orchestration abounds in ways of configuring exception, exclusion, and conditionality. Shades of insides and outsides, and sharp edges which define distinctions produce a hidden visual narrative in the housing estate, for the benefit of those who can see it. As an instrument and effect of government, public housing in Ireland involves such familiar methods as application procedures, eligibility criteria, waiting lists and tenancy conditions. But techniques of visuality contained in these methods also differentiate between settled and Traveller in ways that are progressively inscrutable, rationalising a moral order in which the ‘Traveller house’ is made visible as a concession that interrupts the estate’s wholeness.

The evidence required to support a housing application normally includes at least one letter of personal commendation from a councillor or other prominent local patron; the Equal Status Acts support allocation priorities which distinguish between settled and Traveller and permit the different treatment of settled and Traveller applicants; quota systems and unwritten protocols justified in the interests of ‘good estate management’ sanction systematic discrimination. Councillors request sight of housing applications and offer opinions to officials on who should or should not be offered a tenancy. Through these routes, councillors can leak information to local residents in order to foment ‘popular’ opposition and block an offer of a house, or intimidate an applicant. One councillor regularly met with housing officers in order to influence or approve housing allocations, and told me, ‘People have a right to know who’s going to be living next to them’. What follows implicitly is that they also have a right to refuse potential neighbours. The visual surface of public housing, whose uniform aesthetic purports to signify ‘equality’, is thus subject to subtle organization and disruption: knowledge, procedure and opportunist intervention cooperate in producing an architecture whose actual form is concealed. Local protocols and individual decisions, ‘lost’ applications and unticked boxes, spatial and numerical logics control relations between houses and people so that they reproduce each other in metonymic forms.

Nothing in the repetitive streets or drab architecture of semi-detached houses of a 1970s Irish housing estate announces its locally understood order to the outsider. A local official, wary of a researcher’s questions about ‘Traveller accommodation’, might readily tell

147 Personal communication with the councillor. See also Higgins (2007)
you that settled people and Travellers have been housed alongside each other here since it was first built, without any difficulty. He may not tell you, however, that the number of Traveller families admitted when it was built was controlled by a quota system – set, in one area, at a maximum of one Traveller family to fifteen settled; or that only certain houses at the ends of rows were allocated to Travellers; or that in 2007, the same controls remain in place, simultaneously framing concealment and visibility in local knowledge and practice.

Exceptionally, when a local authority allocates a house on a mature estate to a Traveller family in a way that breaches the unwritten rules of the estate, settled tenants form a crowd to demonstrate at the gate, day after day, demanding their removal, and police called to keep the peace tell the family privately, ‘We can’t protect you. You’d better leave’. In such cases, invariably reported by the press as spontaneous surges of popular anti-Traveller feeling, the ‘intentions’ of the ‘settled’ house remain undisclosed. Following eviction or flight in response to what politicians claim is the natural antipathy of settled residents to Traveller neighbours, the family returns to the side of the road, and the ‘interior’ relation between Travellers and their ‘temporary dwellings’ is restored as material evidence of the symbolic order. Hidden regulation and orchestrated ‘spontaneity’ thus mediate relations made public as collective violence latent in houses, emulating a ‘natural’ order which state technologies reproduce, and to which, when challenged, they defer.

This account refutes Peillon’s (2002) description of ‘exclusionary protests’ as a recurrent form of ‘collective action’ in Ireland for which he finds no explanation, and concerning whose mechanisms he is unaware. Although protests may well be expressions of dissatisfaction between housed residents and local authorities, Peillon fails to consider the parameters of resentment between people and the state. He is evidently unaware of the realist political aesthetic and connivance that gives protest a rational and acceptable structure. His preoccupation with categorising ‘types’ of protest by victim (Travellers, drug dealers, immigrants, the mentally ill etc.) who, he says, offend against ‘the social fabric and quality of life’ (Peillon 2002:196) leads him to neglect the central common fact that exclusion defends a moral order imbedded in houses. After all, Travellers, immigrants, drug dealers and the mentally ill are housed in considerable numbers in every town without giving rise to violent protest; what counts is not that they are housed but how, and by what covert agreement with other residents.

Such protests enact a ritual of enforcement that resembles acts of violence against, and on behalf of, the house during the Land War (1879-1882). Boycotting, the eviction of widows ‘for not turning their property over to their children’, and the ‘punishment’ of houses by tar and feathers are just a few of the examples Clark (1979: 206-304) cites, which
enforced the dual role of the house as a demotic symbol of moral order and resistance and as a private site of compulsion. Less well known than the famous ‘Land League’, the ‘House League’ was described as a ‘new form of conspiracy’ said to ‘[exercise] arbitrary powers as between landlord and tenant … to the serious detriment of property in those towns, in which said league had obtained a foothold’\textsuperscript{148} The continuity of the demotic morality of the house as a limiting instrument against the state is striking.

What is concealed beneath the surface of council housing, besides the visual technologies of a realist political aesthetic? And how might Travellers be recognized on their own terms rather than appropriated in metonymic forms through orders of dwelling? In ‘Sanitation and Seeing’ (1990), Thomas observes that ‘making visible is a project of rendering unseen’. This entanglement of mis/recognition and visibility troubles many Travellers who will not take up residence on a housing estate, describing the estate house as a kind of ‘suffocation’. The house threatens to ‘cave you in’, people say, in a phrase that combines enclosure and destruction. Second generation house-dwelling Travellers explain: ‘We’re not the same as our parents. We’re still Travellers, but… not the same.’ Neither do they speak of ‘become settled’, a transition that, for the most part, neither settled nor Traveller can envisage. The agency of houses, claimed by some as the reflection of an order of immanent relations, is implicitly understood by Travellers as instantiating a field of power.

visual technologies of ‘Traveller Accommodation’

After the 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act was passed, councils set up ‘Traveller Accommodation Offices’, separate from existing Housing Offices, ostensibly to consult Travellers about options for different types of dwelling in accordance with their new legal rights. When I met Philip and Bernadette they were being evicted from the yard of an empty industrial unit together with two other young families. New legislation\textsuperscript{149} meant that caravans could be confiscated without notice, and those now described as ‘homeless’ Travellers found themselves ‘chased’ by Gardai from one camp to another on almost a daily basis, in towns where they had grown up, often in houses. Unable to rent from a private landlord, Philip and Bernadette were beside the road, awaiting the birth of their first child. In 2002 Philip had been to the Housing Office to apply for housing. He was twenty-eight years old, recently married, and he and Bernadette, who was now pregnant, could not remain in his parent’s

\textsuperscript{148} Hansard Debate 16\textsuperscript{th} March 1886 vol 303 c979.
\textsuperscript{205} The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002, also known as the ‘Trespass Law’.
already full house. He was told “You need to go to the Traveller Accommodation Office”, even though he wanted the kind of accommodation he had grown up in, a flat or house. I asked Philip, “How would they know you were a Traveller?” He replied, “They ask you where you live, your address, and you’d give your daddy’s name, and they know from that you’re a Traveller.” From that point, the couple were subject to the separate policies applied to Travellers, which stated that the council would ‘generally endeavour’ to accommodate one Traveller family per fifteen local authority houses. “We were told we’d have to wait seven years before we’d be ‘considered’. You could be ‘considered’ and then wait another three years.”

In the following year, court orders were used in County Clare to force ‘homeless’ Travellers like Philip and Bernadette who had registered for accommodation (either sites or houses,) into an emergency site that resembled a high-security detention facility. Some families, on seeing the cameras, guards and security fences, fled the county and lost their entitlement to accommodation. Other registered applicants faced almost daily eviction from camps on derelict sites and disused hospital grounds. The Director of Services reported to the Housing and Social Policy, Strategic Policy Committee, “The question as to whether the travellers [sic] are serious about permanent accommodation is debatable having regard to the difficulties encountered by the Council in having the trailers occupy the Temporary Emergency Site”.

No one could doubt the council’s determination to remove Travellers from the side of the road. In the previous year six families, including more than twenty children, had been left standing beside the road with no form of shelter when guards impounded their caravans.
using powers under the new ‘Trespass Law’, which made camping a criminal offence. Traveller accommodation policies and new legal instruments combined to reduce the number of Traveller applicants and to force many into living conditions they found abhorrent. Traveller Accommodation, which purported formally to recognize Travellers’ rights as citizens, added new tools of coercion and the enforced visibility of a state of ‘Emergency’.

Architectures that had once been envisaged as ‘culturally appropriate’ were now called ‘Traveller-specific’.

Samantha, who grew up in a house from the age of six, lived with her husband and two children in a trailer on an ‘Emergency Site’ in 2007. Security guards record the number
plates of cars and vans entering and leaving the site, and closed circuit cameras monitor the ‘bays’. In each bay two windowless metal shipping containers house fridges, kitchen sinks, and washing facilities, and spiked metal security fences surround the site. After applying for a house Samantha went into the site when she was told she would qualify only by waiting for two to three years in an ‘emergency site’. Having spent three years there they were forced to move to yet another emergency site. So far it’s been seven years waiting. She gestures towards the shipping containers, spiked fences and reinforced concrete walls surrounding her bay: “What is it doing to the children growing up with this all around them? They’ve never seen anything else.” Her parents, house-dwellers for more than twenty-five years, list bitterly the numbers and locations of council houses on the estates near them, all boarded up and vacant, awaiting settled tenants, and can recite precisely how many months each house has lain empty. Why? Because they are not designated ‘Traveller houses’, and the estates in question are deemed to ‘have their share’ of Travellers already.

“fading out”

Since the late 1990s the policies that made ‘Traveller-specific’ architectures thinkable accelerated the ‘iconic capture’ (to use Feldman’s phrase,) and mimetic replication of Travellers with a new brutalism thinly justified by the claim of homoiosis. Robbie, his wife and two teenaged children live in permanent group housing, built as part of a programme under the 1998 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act. The site combines bricks and mortar houses with the unmistakeable features of a locked height-restriction barrier, to prevent caravans coming in or out, a locked ‘caretaker’s’ hut, its internal mechanism of surveillance, and the exceptional feature of a double perimeter boundary of two high walls several metres apart. Like all sites, it has only one entrance and exit, so that its residents may be contained and, if considered necessary, imprisoned. From outside its interior invisibility and the curious, surrounding sanitary zone announce ‘Travellers’. Robbie, a tall, dignified man of nearly fifty, inclines his head and scans the ground while we talk. “I hate this site,” he says passionately, “but even if I won the lottery tomorrow, I wouldn’t live anywhere else”, because “the site is all that is left of us”.

Robbie is the uncle and cousin of many Travellers in the nearby town younger than himself, his own breed, whose parents, like his own, moved into a council estate in the early seventies when it was new. It was an experiment mediated by the local Itinerant Settlement Committee, in an attempt to break up camps that had built up at the edge of the town, and begun to look like long-term fixtures. A few houses were offered by the council to selected
families with a great show of magnanimity. A local settled advocate explained how the young Traveller families were installed around the estate, one on each road, “before anyone had time to notice”, “because they were all moving in together”. Travellers were given houses at the ends of streets “to mitigate the neighbour factor”. Having only one settled neighbour, the advocates agreed with the council, would reduce the offence caused by the presence of Travellers. The protocols established were seen as necessary concessions and the Itinerant Settlement Committee regarded it as a great victory.

‘Normal life’ to Robbie means the camps and times he spent travelling with his parents as a boy. It was the mid-sixties, and within a day or two’s journey with the wagon and horse was an area of sugar-beet cultivation. Mechanisation had not yet arrived in these parts of the west; beet harvesters were huge, expensive machines, and it was cheaper to employ Travellers for ‘pullin’ the beet’. Robbie’s sister described the welcome they got from farmers. “We’d go into the town with the flat [cart] and leave it while we did some shopping, like, and when we came back there’d be food left on the cart, potatoes and things like that. They’d be pleased to see you back.” Within a few years the work dried up, and with it the last traces of qualified reciprocity between Travellers and middling farmers. As Robbie’s father once said “machines took all the labour out o’ the land”.

Camps outside the town gradually grew bigger, and old photographs shows Robbie’s boyhood home. Shelter-tents with igloo-like bed-tents attached huddle next to a tall hedgerow. The covers or ‘pieces’ are made of unpicked and carefully re-sewn sugar-sacks, with a top layer of plastic sheet weighed down with rocks. The shafts of up-ended flat carts stick up into the air between the tents, and barrel top wagons are interspersed between tents. In the photograph three men are striding purposefully down the lane with lurchers at their heels, young boys watching them intently, one of whom may be Robbie himself.

No one could have known things would turn out like this. “Now I can walk past a young fella in the street,” said Robbie, “one I’m related to, and not even recognize him. It could be one of my own nephews! Those Travellers [living in housing estates], they don’t know who they are. They’re fading out. They’ve been brought up next to settled people, and they’re disappearing.” The proximity of closely-related families in the hated site lends a distinctively Traveller texture and visuality to daily life - but it could never be the same. The site appropriates and mimetically replicates its residents in a realist simulation of Travellers. Girard writes that ‘monstrous doubles’ ‘occupy the equivocal middle ground between difference and unity that is indispensable to the process of sacrificial substitution’ (1977: 164-

150 The two conversations took place at different times and locations.
151 In Hiberno-English ‘young fella’ means an unmarried man, and ‘young one’ an unmarried girl.
5). The illusion practised by this architecture is that, in spite of its fearsome appearance, no one is actually imprisoned by it. People come and go to do their shopping, to take children to school and visit friends, and as Travellers leave the site they become invisible among the rest of the population, distinguished neither by language, skin colour nor appearance. The architectural allegory of the Traveller site makes hidden ‘difference’ disturbingly visible in order to demonstrate how it can be effectively concealed and suppressed. As a ‘monstrous double’, it stands between antagonists and a sacrificial victim, objectifying unanimity and reconciliation between those for whom its outside is the shadow of what lies within.

Travellers in houses are “disappearing”, “fading out”, and at any moment, Robbie believes, they will cease to know themselves. There seems no alternative to the sacrificial substitution that the site represents.
the blood tie

The phrase ‘hiding the evidence’ in the title of this chapter seeks to cut two ways: problematising what is hidden, and asking how the made-visible - the exposed - becomes a kind of evidence. What is to be construed as ‘evidence’ must be disavowed as artefact, in order to draw attention away from the constitutive act of concealment, so that the contradiction between knowingness and spontaneity can occupy a simultaneous moment of ‘recognition’, as in the claim, ‘I can always recognize a Traveller!’ In this sense, the artifice of homoiosis concealed in housing estates contrives to reveal a ‘natural’ hierarchy of incommensurable ‘identities’.

But what is at stake in the realist narrative that produces this complex ‘doubling’ of the visual field of architecture? I suggest that it is linked to an unspoken idea of dwelling as already-imbedded, organically and genealogically, in people themselves. Houses and camps are then merely the outward proof of immanent orders of difference between people themselves. According to this understanding it is not dwellings, (whether houses, trailers or camps,) that contain people, but people who contain types of dwelling, from whom they obtain their genesis and form.

An explicit expression of this notion of people as containers of dwellings is realized in Irish planning regulations\(^{152}\) which recognize what is popularly called the ‘blood tie to the land’. In 2007, a storm in the Irish parliament dominated the national news for several days. A woman owned a piece of inherited land in Mayo, although the events described could have taken place in any of the western counties: Galway, Sligo, Mayo, Clare or Donegal. She submitted plans for a house, and was granted consent. However, not having enough money to build the house, she sold the land a few months later and the new owner built the house. The discovery of a sequence of events that would be unexceptional in the UK, where land itself becomes the proprietor of development rights, caused a national uproar. The planning consent nominally granted in respect of the land belonged not to the land, but to the woman herself, or more precisely, to her relation to the land and no one else’s. She had sold something that could not be transubstantiated into a commodity: rights that stemmed from

her 'blood tie to the land'. The 'blood tie' was the moral basis of her right to build the house, a right confirmed, rather than conferred, by the local authority. The inherited 'blood tie' emanates from the existence of former dwellings on the land that both embody and disseminate it, setting some people apart. Such people possess inalienable rights to become authors of dwellings that can therefore be imagined as material potentialities contained within them. Architectures thus merge with, and emerge from, human beings in ways that the law can make visible, articulating historical processes and relations as organic, biological differences. The notion of the 'blood tie to the land', which, in defiance of European law, vests the right to become the author of a house in one person but not another, forms a striking public claim of this interior relation between people and dwellings - a relation which, crucially, persists even when there is no actual dwelling to substantiate it. Immanent, embodied dwellings, 'properties' of people in both senses, thus precede their separate material existence with an imaginary force that erupts into legal visibility and recognition in the 'blood tie'. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the house's objective mediation between reproduction on the land and the body's reproduction of itself.

The realist narrative of public housing, combining secrecy and exposure with a deep conviction of moral order, is rooted in the forceful idea that people contain kinds of dwellings, immanent, even if unrealised, expressions of personhood. What 'structures of feeling', (Williams 1977: 132) lend imaginative conviction to this embodied interiority of dwelling, and its metonymic relation to land and bodily reproduction? The material habitus of the house, its memories, images, and inherited relations, sediment into silent, enduring 'attachments', virtual parts of the body itself, so that people reproduce themselves, not only in other people, but in the dwellings they bring into being; as though houses or camps formed buds waiting to open on the stems of people, marking out distinct capacities and patterns of growth.

Across Ireland in almost every rural haggard (farmyard) stands the uninhabited 'old house' built by parents or grandparents. Some are painted up in white and green and used as a shed, the thatch roof replaced by zinc sheet; others are windowless and roofless and full of nettles, the damp walls gradually crumbling. When the 'old house' does collapse, the stone is gathered into a heap, its material memory forming evidence of the embodied right of the blood tie. Across Connemara, long uncultivated stone-walled fields shelter numberless

| Footnote 153 | Later in 2007 the European Court ruled that restrictive Irish development practice enshrined in County Plans in the western counties, based on the blood tie, was illegal. Politicians' rejection of European 'interference suggested that the ruling would not be complied with. |
| Footnote 154 | It was later said that the planning consent had neglected to restrict the permission to the 'owner-occupier' by an apparent oversight. |
| Footnote 155 | Birdwell-Pheasant’s (1999) ‘long-cycle’ ‘Irish house’ reconstructs 19th century Irish nationalism’s authorised myth of the continuity of vernacular architecture and moral unity of house and land- the ‘name |
piles of such stones, and the memories of neighbours that confirm the moral claims of embodied houses that the land has not been ‘abandoned’ hold greater force than the legal whims of County Development Plans or begrudged state mechanics of property registration. The archaeology of this embodied interiority of dwellings is rooted in a resistance to the state that bears the tough imprint of colonialism, the memory of land expropriation, and the conviction that law and government are subordinate to the rights of people to, and on, the land. The ‘blood tie’, a nexus of genealogy, land and property, connects the public culture of the house in Ireland to people and their self-determination. As an instrument of control and site of resistance, the house under colonialism became a site of cathexis where power and violence were both hidden and revealed. The political aesthetics of the house continue to deploy visible surfaces and embodied depths that claim and contest the rights of persons and their modes of reproduction.

From the claim that dwellings really live in people stems the necessary ideological work of architecture, particularly the public architecture of the state, to make visible interior relations between people and dwellings. If Travellers live in houses, such houses must be made exceptional as ‘Traveller houses’, and if new generations of house-dwelling Travellers ‘return to the road’ after marriage, to the empty shell of a life known only in the stories of parents and grandparents, people can say it was ‘in them’ to do so, ‘because they are Travellers’. The profound conviction expressed by an elected councillor, as well as by council officers and a settled Traveller advocate, that segregation, rationing, and the refusal of settled residents to countenance a Traveller neighbour, were both reasonable and ‘natural’, all testify to the obligation of the house to uphold orders of relations seen as inherent to it.

Caught up in the bitter paradoxes of dependency and the politics of Independence, the material relations of the house played out in the lives of Irish people from the mid-twentieth century are the subject of the story that follows.

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on the land’ - much favoured by the early generation of American anthropologists including Arensberg and Kimball (1968). She does not query the role of the ‘ghost structures’ (122) of old houses.
“hiding in houses”

‘Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an it self that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, against a mottled background – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare.’


It is almost impossible for a researcher to meet people who are said to be ‘hiding… denying theirselves’, but by chance I once did. I had travelled to one of the midland counties in search of information about someone’s past. A description of this quest is necessary in order to understand the encounter itself, since both involved an un-burying of what was thought to have been hidden or lost for good. Janie, an Irish Traveller now living in England, had been placed at the age of three in an institution for orphaned and abandoned children, or those otherwise ‘taken up’, as people say in Ireland. It was the mid-1950s, and what happened and why had never been explained, leaving troubling questions in its wake. Quests such as the one I undertook at Janie’s request are not uncommon in Ireland. Men and women return as strangers to towns and villages seeking relatives, records, or local priests who might be persuaded to yield reluctant secrets. I came apprehensively to the village where the ‘taking up’ of Janie and her siblings had happened, with plans for two days of research into local archives in the library that was a former workhouse, in preparation for the conversations I anticipated.

Several years earlier Janie had returned to the Galway convent she had known for most of her childhood, but the nuns were taciturn, fearing the purpose of her questions. Their records had been removed or destroyed, they said, and the journey yielded nothing. I carried loose threads of history: names, dates, and an old, grey medical card with the names of brothers and sisters long since scattered. She had recounted her recollection of the traumatic event in which she and her siblings had been taken. The memories of a child of three had remained with her like dim, still shadows until, when she was ten or eleven someone told her she was ‘a Traveller’, and suddenly images rushed forward to unite her with a certainty about her past: she had been taken from a camp, and henceforward she remained in her own mind a Traveller.
Looking for clues I searched microfilms of county newspapers from the mid-1950s, where another Ireland, both familiar and distant, leapt out from accounts of court cases, local events, and advertisements. One story told of the inaugural ‘blessing of [a] Marian statue’ of the popular cult of Our Lady at the local railway station, where the bishop ‘praised the spiritual motives that prompted the C.I.E. [railway] staff in Mullingar to have the statue erected.’ ‘The C.I.E. staff’, the bishop said, ‘was always to the fore in such matters. He knew she would bless their work’. The same newspaper reported that the mother of an eighteen year-old ‘itinerant’ ‘got down on her knees’ before a judge and pleaded: “I beg your honour not to send him up”, as her son, accused of stealing a bicycle, promised the judge “I am going to work with Bord na Mona in the morning. I can earn up to £7 a week there”’. On another page an advertisement depicted a fashionable young woman, eyes downcast, her head on her hand at the kitchen table, with the legend ‘Are YOU weary at the end of the day? Cut out HARD work! With ELECTRICITY’. Evocations of poverty, resignation and the hope of something better interlaced examples of the religious and civil discipline that defended the status quo of Ireland’s isolationist period.

More than three decades after the formation of the Free State, the labour of dismantling the colonial order was still underway. A 1955 notice titled ‘Demolition and Timber Sale’ advertised the sale of an ‘extensive private residence’. But this was no longer a house and estate, but a heap of materials merely joined together as if it was a house, a pretence now exposed through acts of practical undoing. This realist appropriation of the house took the form of:

‘[A] 200-gallon oil tank, piped heating of four hot-houses, 75 yards of 4’ high iron park railings, 4 pairs of double iron gates (11 foot); 6 cut-stone piers (2’ x 2’); the entire roofing of the residence, comprising approximately 8,000 slates of various sizes, mostly Blue Bangor; rafters from 9’ to 15’, (6” x 2”)… Oak entrance porch, with three doors and lead roof (7’ x 8’). The flooring and joists of four main rooms, 30’ x 17’… The flooring and joists of 12 other rooms…’ et cetera. 157

The atomisation of the ‘big house’ (Dooley 2001) was achieved with uncompromising precision; thus reduced to quantities, dimensions, materials and species, the whole could be made to disappear: its sixty-odd windows; its oak, mahogany and marble mantelpieces; porcelain baths and basins; staircases, copper piping, gutters and lead work, as well as ‘100 Oak… 200 Beech, Sycamore, and other mixed hardwoods’, comprising the park and

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156 The National Peat Board.

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woodland. The notice stated in a matter of fact tone that purchasers would find all lots ‘offered in their present positions’, and ‘in very sound condition, having been occupied until quite recently’.158 The long, slow, profitable dismantling of the ‘big house’ which had long been the material metonym of imperial government (Dooley 2001) was still underway in the 1950s, continuing the work begun under the Encumbered Estates Acts of the late nineteenth century and sustained by the Land Commission, incredibly, until the 1980s (Dooley 2004). The realist appropriation of the colonial estate and its mimetic replication as materials performs, as homoiosis, the undoing of colonialism’s political aesthetic. No moral relation to land here, just hard cash.

As nuances of land relations and resistance to the state began to materialise in houses in new ways, the Land Commission - and the local opposition and political manoeuvring it encountered - form a critical background to this story. The Commission’s work included the acquisition (through voluntary or compulsory purchase) and redistribution of large estates, grazier ‘ranches’, and uneconomic or derelict holdings, as well as the resettlement of ‘migrant colonies’ of poor farmers described as ‘congests’ from parts of the west (Dooley 2004: 20). Dooley records how the under-development and unequal distribution of land in mid-twentieth century Ireland remained principle causes of continuing economic decline, social inequality and dissatisfaction. Among politicians, opinions differed about the priorities that should be accorded to land redistribution, the principal object of the Land War and War of Independence. The Land Commission was impossibly positioned between the aspirations of the poor for self-sufficiency and the perceived needs of national economy. In the columns of the county newspaper in 1955 (the year Janie and her siblings were ‘taken up’), a member of the Westmeath County Committee of Agriculture condemned the Land Commission as ‘a relic of the days when we were dominated by a foreign power’,159 and accused it of land-grabbing by ‘taking forcible possession of small farms throughout the country’. The rights of proprietorship for which men had fought and defeated imperial rule, were, he claimed, routinely stripped by the Irish government’s ‘greatest political machine’.

‘Tenant farmers are being denied fixity of tenure and free sale,160 and… it is now the established rule of the Land Commission to take forcible possession of small

158 Westmeath Examiner, 12th February, 1955.
159 Westmeath Examiner, 29th January 1955, P. 7.
160 The ‘three F’s’ – fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale – were the slogan and political agenda of the 1880s Land War.
holdings, when old age, death or sickness, bad harvest, etc., place the owners in financial straits.’ (Ibid)

The passionate tone of these condemnations, no doubt linked to particular events, positions the speaker in the local structure of political brokerage (Higgins 2007). When an estate or ‘ranch’\(^{161}\) was to be broken up and redistributed, applications for land involved local consultations in which some opinions held more sway than others. Private resentments and neighbourly envy could lead to particular farms being targeted for redistribution, and local TDs vied to influence the results (Dooley 2004: 210-214). Policies shifted back and forth as to who was more deserving: landless cottiers, existing small-holders, internal migrants or the ‘Old IRA’. Disagreement on the relative advantages of small-holdings and large farms meant decisions could be arbitrary or biased, leaving aside the danger that officials might be swayed by powerful lobbies. Mr O’Brien, a member of Westmeath County Committee of Agriculture, said:

‘he knew of a case where the Land Commission is taking a 50 acre farm, while 500 acre farms in the vicinity are not touched… The people with large amounts of land were clever in that they had it apportioned under the names of members of their family’.

The picture was complex. The need to stem the tide of emigration and consequent national labour shortage demanded measures to improve rural livelihoods, welfare and housing, through building loans, rentable housing, viable agricultural holdings, employment generation, medical care, and so forth. The Land Commission’s work, which formed part of this endeavour, brought to the fore entrenched conflicts and class divisions. Across the midlands tillage and grazier region there were vested interests in the existing inequalities.\(^{162}\) Some large farmers supplied sugar beet refineries and local brewers and distilleries, and their interests, which supported national economic aims, extended into local politics and civil society. These ‘big men’ recruited low-paid seasonal labour from among the urban poor, their small farm neighbours, and Travellers (Hoare 2002). A dependent and readily-disposable workforce suited the needs of affluent farmers and they had little desire to see an increase in

\(^{161}\) The term used for extensive grazier farms.

\(^{162}\) The structure of Ireland’s regionally varied landscape, settlement patterns and farming systems were closely associated with Travellers’ movement and camping patterns in the mid-twentieth century and no doubt earlier, as shown in Hoare 2002.
self-sufficient small farms, or in the establishment of migrant colonies of ‘congests’ in their midst.

Furthermore, the long-established political aim of land redistribution— to support as many families as possible on the land— was incompatible with economic development. It became obvious from agricultural statistics that uneconomic holdings were widespread throughout the country, not only in the west, where small mixed farms and clachan settlements had established an ‘Irish’ pattern of agricultural subsistence under colonialism (Whelan 1997:83). Since 1931 farming output had increased only in farms of over one hundred acres (Dooley 2004: 171), and the quantity of land needed for viability was continually rising. Ireland’s cherished image of a nation of independent farmers was reflected in reality by inequality, stagnation and poverty, and from the 1950s the post-independence aim to return landless families to the land was all but abandoned. After 1958-9, ‘no more than four landless people per annum received land in any given year’, and the amount of land allocated between 1959 and 1973 was ‘an average 92 acres per annum’ (Dooley:172).

Newspaper reports and County Council minutes show the expanding public administration confronting private interests deeply resistant to state intervention and willing to subvert it, amidst the growing disillusion of poor workers whose hopes had seemingly been forgotten. Numerous examples reveal people’s suspicion of the state as a form of expanded private interest (as it had been under colonialism), and their readiness to maximise private opportunities in the public realm, whether by obtaining extra land from the Commission at the expense of neighbours or incomers, or abusing farm assistance schemes prompted by the labour shortage. A local report in the 1955 Westmeath Examiner on the suspension of a council ‘road worker’ describes the right of farmers to ‘[apply] for a road worker for harvesting operations’. This was a job the poor road worker could not refuse, under terms and conditions set by the farmer. In this case, having refused wages of ‘16/- a day for pulling beet’— said to be two thirds the going rate— the road worker was disciplined by being suspended from his regular job.

Rural housing faced comparable problems which spoke of people’s determination to transfer the anti-colonial claims of the ‘three F’s’— fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale— to their relations with government.\footnote{‘Fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale’. See fn 160.} In other words, local authority tenants expected to be able to sell their interest in their tenancy, and to be compensated if they chose to relinquish it, along the lines of landlord’s compensation for farm improvements or an unexpired lease. That it was considered necessary to comply with these expectations can be seen in many
references in council minutes to applications to permit ‘sales of interest in vested cottages’. The division of rights between the state and the tenant in the local authority house, a metonym of property that took in a symbolic relation to land, reinstatated conflicts of the colonial landlord system in a new form. As permits to sell rights in vested cottages demonstrate, the state frequently accepted a compromised role as the defender of individual rights, in preference to the harder task of undertaking a more equal distribution of social benefits. This curious situation, in which the rural and small town poor were partly compensated for their lack of stake in the land by symbolic rights in housing, is key to understanding the moral resolve and incipient violence imbedded in public housing in Ireland.

**control of itinerants**

It was at this time, 1954-55, that many local authorities began to consider the ‘control of itinerants’, and the measures adopted characteristically interlaced public-private mediation with defence of private property. Westmeath’s County Manager discussed the recent, controversial Sanitary Services Act, which allowed prohibition orders to be issued against ‘temporary dwellings’ ‘within one mile of a main road’. The grassy headlands between fields and roads known as the ‘long acre’ were used by small farmers to stake out a cow or horse for grazing, as well as by Travellers for camping. Now, these commons would be transformed into state properties, and while the farmer’s cow offended no one, Travellers’ camps could be removed. Lanes outside towns and villages which traditionally had been frequented by camps began to be designated by formal prohibition notices. Rusting signs stating ‘No Temporary Dwellings’ are still to be found half-buried in dense hedgerows along narrow country lanes, or on verges next to wider roads around the fringes of many towns. Although Travellers could readily be subjected to official discipline, it remained deeply unacceptable to bestow ‘favours’ on those who stood outside the national project, in which land, territory and property combined in a unifying symbol that appeared to

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164 Westmeath County Council Minutes (WCCM) 1955-56. The distribution of rights involved in tenancies and ‘vested’ houses remains an undocumented subject.
165 The phrase occurs in the Minutes of Westmeath County Council on 29th November 1954, in reference to a ‘resolution from Wicklow County Council’, and Councillors resolve to refer ‘the problem’ to the Minister for Local Government.
166 WCCM, 31st October 1955: 111.
167 The ‘long acre’ was significant in areas without access to ‘waste’. In winter particularly, when limited grazing was exhausted, the long acre was economically significant both for small farmers and Travellers, who frequently camped within reach of the larger tillage areas.
transcend political divisions. The relation between Travellers and houses, like other house 
relations in Ireland, was framed by land and property.

Having found a report in the local newspaper describing the events in which Janie and 
her siblings were ‘taken up’, I sought the sole accepted avenue to local knowledge, the 
priest, who directed me to Peter Dunne, a former publican of over eighty, who took measure 
of me with a suspicious eye as he imparted nuggets of what he knew. Peter knew the family 
name and many of its living members, but sought to correct my use of terms: “They were not 
Travellers, Anna, they were itinerants”. In his mind the distinction was clear: ‘Travellers’ were 
strangers who passed through, camped for a short time, and left. He described ‘Travellers’ 
as “a different race of people”: wealthy horse dealers, with plenty of money to spend in the 
pub and “fine looking women”, and they still came round now, he said, from time to time. 
There was, as he described them, a kind of glamour to those he called ‘Travellers’, which I 
had heard previously from small farmers who never went further than a trap ride to church 
every Sunday, in the days before cars. Travellers, even those who were obviously poor, had 
worldliness, independence and a ‘hardiness’ that could be admired. But ‘itinerants’ were 
different: they lived by the side of the road in tents, and never seemed to go far from the
area; you knew them by name, as individuals and families, and the ones I was asking about were definitely “itinerants – tinkers”. He became nostalgic as he thought of them and their “hundreds of children”, adding, “It was the world of my youth”. “They all used to camp on the Furze Road. There was Biddie and Josie– they’re both dead now. They used to sweep chimneys. Another couple used to make brushes for cleaning bottles. My father used to buy them. And Joe used to make saucepans, kettles, pans, all out of tin. He was a tradesman personified! He could shape it into anything! He made lamps … anything he could make, and he’d bring it round and sell it. And then you’d see him - he’d get an ass and a cart and a tent, and after a few weeks he’d go on the beer and [waving his arm] it would all be gone!”

Some of these ‘itinerants’ “became settled”, he said, and still lived nearby. He knew them, and had known their father. Suddenly he was gripped with enthusiasm to show me the site of the old camps and relive the story of Janie and her siblings who had been taken up fifty years before, something he had forgotten until now. He whispered, “Imagine a thing like that coming back after all these years; you’d never think it was possible”, and repeated this softly several times in a tone of amazement, as we drove to the spot less than a mile away, where a narrow, winding lane overhung with spindly trees and hedgerows climbed a hill, the place where the ‘itinerant’ families had camped in the “world of [his] youth”. This drive was less for the purpose of revisiting a long-familiar location, than of returning to a time he had thought could never come back, “after all these years”.

Nuances of Peter’s distinction between ‘Travellers’ and ‘itinerants’ became clearer the following day. Reading between the lines of newspapers and county council minutes of the mid-1950s, it was clear that local ‘itinerants’ – the ones who always seemed to be there, and whom you knew by name - presented responsibilities or problems in new areas of the council’s accountability for road improvements, public health, and (as in Janie’s case) for the maintenance of children ‘boarded out’ or placed in ‘certified schools’. Remembering the dog-eared medical card with the names of Janie’s brothers and sisters, I read that a new system of medical cards issued under the ‘discretionary powers’ of the County Manager168 was to replace ‘medical assistance tickets’ which ‘had to be obtained on each occasion’. The card entitled its holder to GP and specialist services, and mother and baby care for six weeks following birth, including free milk for expectant and nursing mothers, and a maternity cash grant. The year Janie was taken up Travellers began to fall under the realist visual field of

168 This account of discretionary entitlements was described in the Westmeath Examiner of 1st June 1955, which ran frequent reports of changes to medical assistance for the poor in the wake of a series of Health Acts between 1947 and 1954.
local government as people with needs and even ‘discretionary’ entitlements. Being ‘local’, known by name and recorded in County Council schemes, were techniques of appropriation that allowed local government and settled people to mimetically reproduce Travellers, whom they had known as ‘tinkers’, in the guise of ‘itinerants’.

Mrs O’Riordan, the elderly widow of the local doctor talked about how her husband had attended many of “the itinerant families” and visited the mothers in their tents, as we sat in the kitchen of her elegant Georgian house. She herself had known many of the women “by name”, and she described their poverty and how “those people” had “an awful lot of children”. Discomfited, her daughter glanced frequently at me as her mother repeated the term ‘itinerant’, capturing the unselfconscious condescension of the world in which “those people” were discretionary objects of kindness that fell short of equality or entitlement. One day, she recalled, Sister Emmanuel, one of the nuns at the convent in the next village, had telephoned: “She needed a respectable coat for one of the itinerant women whose daughter was making her communion”. She added confidentially, “You know, she would feel she couldn’t go into church unless she had the right clothes to wear”. Later, a woman had said to her in a theatrically understated way and with high amusement that she now emulated, (and this was the point of the story,) “Mrs O’Riordan, I saw your coat up at the communion rail this morning!” It was a white coat, she remembered. “Of course,” she added, with dramatic discretion, “the woman wouldn’t know where it came from. The nun wouldn’t have told her”.

Thus, the story said, the coat became the ‘itinerant’ woman’s in a partial, conditional sense, because she didn’t know where it had come from, although people whose clothes were respectable enough for them to go to church regularly did know, and were amused and exalted by exchanging knowledge of its origins, out of earshot. Insides and outsides, concealments and revelations, pleasure and power pile up around this coat. The ‘itinerant’ inside the coat was made visible (‘brought outside’), rather than camouflaged by it, as she imagined. As in Hagener displays, the interplay of surface and depth runs the risk of incurring ridicule if the semiotics of revelation and concealment should fail. Hidden knowledge of a coat that was outwardly hers belonged to the onlookers, and this knowledge animated the coat more than the woman’s body. The coat, its secret turned inside out, was perceived to walk and almost talk on its own behalf as if it were a person, having become a field of ‘untranscended materiality’- a fetish - (Pels 1998: 112) in which property and charity, a settled woman and an itinerant, discretion and public exposure are magnified in its incompatibilities. The story of a highly visible, well-known white coat walking up to the altar rail was thus filled with rich absurdity, marking an unstable ‘border zone’ (ibid) in which an
object overspills signification, and public knowledge - hidden behind ironic laughter and on display in the coat itself – revels in its power to resist the disruption of property and social hierarchy. In an ‘objectively subjective’ (Žižek 1997:120) coat, what is made visible is overloaded by the force of its materiality. The role of the Church as a legitimate channel for transforming property, on condition that this transformation remain visible in the alienated object, played a further important part in the story.

The following day I sought an introduction to the local family described as ‘itinerants’ who shared Janie’s family name. The health board had built houses for them on “land given by the nuns next to the convent” and the religious community, a sheltering, paternalistic presence, weighed up my story before agreeing to introduce me. The two houses stood close to the convent wall, set back further from the road than other houses, their large plots and unusual design marking them out from all the other houses in the road, from which they were separated by a large, empty space. As Sister Joseph introduced me to Elizabeth, a substantial, homely woman in her sixties, her adult daughter, Sarah, and three teenaged grandchildren arrived to spend the weekend.

The two women invited me to sit and listened politely. I explained my quest on behalf of a friend in England. As I began the story, adding details gleaned from the newspaper, glances flashed back and forth between the three generations of the family. The teenagers drifted from the room. No one spoke. Expressions of curiosity crossed the women’s faces, and they nodded and sighed at the concealment by adults who would never explain what happened, at the dispersal and loss of siblings, at Janie’s lifelong confusion. All the while, a private commentary of raised eyebrows and meaningful looks passed between them. “No”, they said at last, they had never heard anything about this family whose children were ‘taken up’ in dramatic circumstances. “How sad”, “poor woman”, “how dreadful”; they sympathised, but they knew “nothing … nothing about it”. They echoed each other self-consciously. I gave the full names of Janie’s parents and suggested that perhaps her father had been related to Elizabeth’s own father, a cousin maybe? Elizabeth was vague, and it was clear they would not impart anything they might know, but the women were willing to talk about the house, to help my research.

They had lived in the house for almost thirty-five years, and Elizabeth said warmly she was still as pleased with it as the day she moved in. Sarah, three years old at the time, shook

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169 Stallybrass (1998) notes in his account of Marx’s coat that clothing materialises creases known as ‘memories’ in worn garments which reduced their value as commodities.

170 Žižek describes the fetish: “when … the subject ‘believes through the other’ … we encounter this ‘bizarre category of the objectively subjective: what the fetish objectivizes is ‘my true belief’.” (1997: 120)
her head firmly when I asked if she remembered anything before then. Her life had begun in
the house as far as she knew. I asked, “And having grown up in a house, would you still call
yourself a Traveller?” Instantly I realised that it was my use of this forbidden word that had
caused their looks of alarm. Looking at her mother Sarah said vehemently, “No! No! We’re
not … We never had anything to do with … those people. We had nothing at all to do with
them…” Elizabeth repeated mechanically, “No, no, we never had anything to do with …
those people.” Neither woman could bring herself to use the word ‘Traveller’.

I had exposed the secret they hoped the house had shut off forever. I hesitated,
“Would you say, perhaps… that you were “settled Travellers”?” Although most Travellers
consider the term a misnomer, since ‘settled’ and ‘Traveller’ are commonly regarded as
apodictic ‘identities’, some house-dwelling Travellers do use the term to distance themselves
from the ‘other’ kind. Although it could be understood as framing a transition, its core
ambiguity is to fix the visibility of the house-dwelling ‘Traveller’ qua ‘Traveller’; like ‘Anglo-
Irish’, it denotes hybridity as an unresolved core of antagonism.

The women replied in unison, their eyes still fixed on each other, “No! No! Settled
Travellers? No!” Sarah sought to make sense of their denials: “We had nothing at all to do
with... them. We grew up among... “, but she stopped, unwilling to say “settled people”, as it
would suggest that she was not one of them. “Among ... the local people,” she said finally,
“we grew up with them”. She continued cautiously, “No one ever called me ... that, or ever
called me any names. I was treated just the same as everyone else when I was in school.
There was no difference. If anyone had said anything, they’d have been jumped on!” Not
only were other, adult ears listening for what was not said, but so too were hers.

I had disturbed the sediment of years of discretion, in which people had carefully
hidden from earshot their unquestioning knowledge of the ‘itinerants’ and of the houses built
on ‘land given by the nuns’. I floundered for a way through that would not increase their pain.
“I think I understand. You wouldn’t think of yourself as a Traveller at all. Perhaps you might
say, ‘We used to be Travellers’? That it was part of your heritage or background?” Sarah’s
gaze passed from me to her mother and back again, as she said uneasily “Yes, we used to
be… but not any more”. Then she added, “If we were in the town, no one would know that
we were... “. Her sentence, unfinished but complete, mimetically reproduced the gap of
reality’s dependence on appearance, like the blind spot of the woman in the white coat. ‘In
the town’, they were just people who had come out of the house to go shopping; a house, for
all anyone knew, like any other house. Except that it wasn’t like any other house. Like the
white coat that was no ordinary coat, it was a particular house, still marked out after more
than forty years, as ‘the itinerants’ house’.
**the Ireland we dreamed of**

In the mid-1950s, when Travellers fell under the scope of the expanding state (Bhreatnach 2006; Helleiner 1993; Gmelch 1977), new forms of state assistance such as old age pensions and allowances for mothers and children had a tendency towards levelling recipients, and even discretionary benefits like medical cards created broad coalitions of entitlement (Lee 1989:313-317). Travellers receiving widely-targeted welfare benefits could thus be seen as being as deserving as anyone else, and there appears to be no record of any opposition to this form of inclusion of Travellers in the state. But realist techniques which introduced implicit equalities met determined opposition when it came to housing, which had long been the intense focus of colonial state control (Fraser 1996). Opposition was mediated principally by the Church and the rural bourgeoisie, whose conservative force continued to dominate social and economic policy (Bax 1987; Inglis 1987; Lee 1989; Miller 1973). In the house, a metonymic relation to land constrained the authority of the state, and state agencies such as the Land Commission, County Councils and others who administered rural and urban housing, with or without land holdings, readily encountered the structural fracture in the state’s monopoly of violence.

As the enormous task of land reform, begun under the colonial administration, continued, new forms of exploitation, compromise, and poverty were all too obvious. Some Irish-speaking ‘congests’ from small farms in the west, transplanted to the midlands’ utterly alien farming systems, rented out their land for conacre, hired their children as labour to local ‘big farmers’, and were ‘forced into mortgaging their stock to local shopkeepers and publicans’ (Dooley 2004: 136). Small farms of all types, across most areas, were on the brink of extinction. A man told me the story of how his father, a small dairy farmer with twelve acres and six cows in the rich pasture lands of Golden Vale of County Limerick, worked ten months of every year as a labourer in England for over thirty years, leaving his wife and two children to cope alone. During these years, his son said bitterly, ‘the small man [was] wiped out … shoved to the side’, as small farms were bought up, one after another, by the ‘big men’ around them (Hoare 2002: 74-75). De Valera’s famous St Patrick’s Day speech of 1943, in which he spoke of ‘the Ireland we dreamed of’, ‘whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youths and the laughter of

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happy maidens’, looked hopelessly out of touch. Land redistribution fuelled resentment and suspicion and sharpened the sense of injustice. Some received lands that were too small to be economically viable; others were compensated with rural housing and gardens, and others with county council housing. For thousands of landless cottiers, labourers, and evicted tenants who had been the symbol of the nationalist cause, there was disillusion, poverty and dependency and ultimately, emigration.

In the forms of tenure involved in public housing, small farms and vested cottages, the project of ‘peasant proprietorship’ encountered deep uncertainty: what exactly was the relation between the smallholder and the ‘vested’ cottage, the small farmer and his farm, or the tenant and the council house in the independent state? How secure were the terms of possession? Lands given could be taken away again by the Land Commission if not farmed to acceptable standards; large farms targeted for reduction could be hit again a few years later (Dooley 2004:177) and carved up to satisfy envious neighbours or pay off political debts; and, worst of all, inherited small farms which fell on hard times could be confiscated by the state.

Some of this uncertainty sought refuge and resistance in the metonymic house. Houses bought and sold for cash in contemporary Ireland in unregistered sales are ways of ‘rolling over money’, people say, to hide it from the state or from relatives with claims. The house is a surface close to the body whose interior relations can be concealed or ‘brought outside’ as protest, evidence or claim. The thousands of heaps of stones across rural Ireland that stand for the embodied ‘blood tie’ to the land depend on names and narratives to secure an embodied order of property and reproduction that seeks definitively to cut out the state.

We may well be reminded of the apical position of the house in Marx’s (1964 [1857-8]) account of ‘Germanic formation’, in which the invisible form of ‘community’ is immanent in, and dependent on, the ‘mutual relation of individual landowners’ (ibid: 80), and its ‘real existence’ diffused through the embodied symbols of ‘descent, language and common history’ (79). Nothing could more poignantly illustrate the refusal of an objectified social totality superordinate to individual households, than the stubborn memories of stones, and the silent force of embodied houses waiting to be built.

The joint endeavours of the Church and the rural bourgeoisie militated against Travellers’ embryonic citizenship in the widening circle of state distribution: ‘itinerants’ were ‘itinerised’ in material ways. Collections at the Church gate, second hand clothes passed through the nuns, and little plots of marginalised Church land for ‘deserving’ families ‘known by name’ created a field of ‘itinerancy’ that was visibly selective, isolating, improvised and,
crucially, discretionary. For those who occupied itinerant space ‘among the local people’, like Elisabeth and her family, conditions were attached. The process of doubling in mimicry, Lacan reminds us, reveals distinction ‘from what might be called an itself that is behind’. Rather than ‘harmonising with the background’, camouflage blurs the outline of the mimetic subject ‘against a mottled background – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare’ (Lacan 1978: 99). Surrounding the Travellers of the midlands village was not the totalising gaze of later Traveller-specific architecture, but rather, a series of disruptions, minor misalignments, discretionary ‘good deeds’, isolated houses on Church land, inauthentic property, and ‘names’ used out of earshot. The purpose of all of this was to instantiate an ‘itself that is behind’, an unaffected whole where, in fact, no such whole existed.

As Girard observes, the function of the ‘monstrous double’ is to clarify terms of reciprocity through which unanimity can be reached ‘minus the victim of the generative expulsion’ (1972:160). The ‘itinerant house’, like the ritual Ndembu masks that ‘juxtapose beings and objects separated by differences [and]... incorporate and rearrange them in original fashion’ (ibid: 167), continues to be reproduced across Irish housing estates, a mottled form against the background of mid-twentieth century Ireland that was, and remains, precisely, ‘mottled’.

Through the 1950s a market for land among foreign investors further inflamed resentments over land, culminating in the organization of a new Land League. Fearing the growing involvement of the IRA in ‘the destruction of properties belonging to foreign investors’ (Dooley 2004: 187), the 1965 Land Act reversed earlier laws and introduced restrictions on the purchase and ownership of ‘Irish land’ by non-nationals (ibid: 182). This underscored a nationalist cultural geography in which land, property and the inherited ‘blood tie’ conspired afresh in the construction of citizenship, and of partial or non-citizens. The state’s acceptance of an embodied relation to property in the metonymic house had been formally acknowledged as a condition of its legitimacy.

the state of exception

In the realist visual field of contemporary Irish housing estates ‘designated Traveller houses’ endorse a moral order in which such houses materialise a ‘state of exception’ (Agamben 2005), which, being quantified and spatialised, constitutes accessible local knowledge. By designating formal limits of the state of exception, any ‘transgression’ (by housing Travellers in a non- Traveller house,) can be calculated to produce violent protests to
which the state invariably concedes. Elected councillors display their loyalty to a moral order that supersedes the rights of the state by alerting settled people to potential threats to the ‘agreed’ exception, and thereby secure their position in the fractured ‘whole’.

The visible ‘Traveller house’ makes possible this ‘agreement’ between local officials, councillors and settled house-dwellers and this, I suggest, is the crucial point. As the instrument of a joint endeavour that, coincidentally, secures settled domination over Travellers (people who ‘don’t know how to live in houses’), the house enacts a ritual conflict between people and the state, in which the state is at pains to concede a structural fracture in the monopoly of violence. The legitimate force of an embodied house-relation lies beyond the dispensation of law or government: in Wagner’s (1986) phrase, the house is a symbol that stands for itself, a metonym of property that makes visible the embodied form and ‘real existence’ of the ‘community’. In the structural fracture of visible exception, the house ritually enacts the tension between the status of persons made visible through the house, and collectivity as conditional and formal subordination to the state. The apogee of this tension arises in what is unresolved or contradictory in public housing, a form of property in which the occupier’s moral right (conferred rather than confirmed) is most clearly a relation of dependency and a diminution of embodied personhood.

In twenty-first century Ireland the spatial, visual and affective oppositions of the Traveller site: its visible concealment and hidden transparency, its simultaneous containment and exclusion, and the un-houselessness of its houses, have turned ‘Traveller-specific’ dwelling in Ireland into a visibly controlled transgression, whose origins as architecture derive from what remains unresolved in the field of the house. In this, Ireland resembles the UK. When my taxi driver, a retired farmer in his late seventies, commented with casual rancour as he nodded towards the hidden site: ‘I don’t know why they give those people houses. Those people don’t know how to live in houses’, the ‘Travellers’ to whom he referred were not real people but imaginary ‘Travellers’ – ‘itinerants’ - constructed through a particular relation to the house. Nor were the ‘houses’ of his feelings abstract or dehistoricised, but lived and experienced houses, manifested and known as structures of feeling; real and imaginary, material and meaningful houses that emerge from transformations of historical experience into public discourse about the immanent relations between people and things. People whose lives were not lived through the house, whose sociality and family groups were bound by non-material means, epitomise the alterity of the controls of the house, hinting at impassioned and invisible human
bonds, and a social world that ‘shades out in all directions and integrates into innumerable others’ (Kroeber 1925: 21).

The evolution of the site as ‘Traveller-specific’ architecture forms the subject of the next chapter.
Towards ‘Traveller-specific’ Architecture

‘What prevents a work from being completed becomes the work itself.’

Marcus Aurelius, Meditations

towards ‘Traveller-specific’ architectures

Before the mid-1990s it was never the aim of official policies in Ireland that sites should become ‘permanent’. The first policy document, The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy (COI), published in 1963, was keen to emphasise that Travellers were not, as the Vezo say, a ‘kind of people’ (Astuti 1995: 3). Under the heading ‘Social Groupings and Structures’, the report stated:

‘Itinerants (or travellers as they prefer themselves to be called) do not constitute a single homogenous group, tribe or community within the nation, although the settled population are [sic] inclined to regard them as such. Neither do they constitute a separate ethnic group. There is no system of unified control, authority or government and no individual or group of individuals has any powers or control over the itinerant members of the community.’ (COI: 37)

Such a view could be seen as consistent with the Commission’s opinion that ‘given the opportunity many itinerants would settle in houses’ (COI: 54), which formed the basis of a proposed ‘settlement programme’. Official ‘camping sites’ were recommended as an

172 Cited in Lucy (1993: 9)
173 As COI outlines, the settlement programme would depend on the efforts of local voluntary committees (‘Itinerant Settlement Committees’) often made up of nuns, priests, teachers, farmers’ representatives and
immediate means of instilling hygiene and exercising management. These sites were to be regarded as ‘clearing stations’, intended as ‘only the first step of stabilisation in a policy aimed at eventual housing of the families using the sites’ (COI: 55-6). The 1960 Census of Itinerants included in the report illustrates the way of life of Travellers at the time: of 1,198 families counted, 674 lived in horse-drawn caravans; 335 in tents; 64 families had both tents and caravans; and 60 families had motorised caravans. Significantly, 56 ‘itinerant’ families were said to live in houses or rooms, and this classification of an ‘itinerant’ population which included house-dwellers, together with the Commission’s statements about ‘origins’, raise doubts about the consistency of its views of this non-‘group, tribe or community’. Based on the report’s statement that ‘approximately ten per cent… claimed to be first generation itinerants, one or both parents having left the settled way of life for the road’ (COI: 35) it has been argued that the Commission sought to portray Travellers as ‘failed’ settled people who could be ‘rehabilitated’ (Ni Shuínéar 2004). It is certainly true that the Commission’s aims were assimilationist, and the Report’s description of ‘itinerants’ as a heterogeneous population derived from remnants of those dispossessed by colonial plantations, penal laws or successive famines (COI: 34), delineates ‘itinerancy’ as landlessness, homelessness and abjection. From this perspective, the report mythologizes a once wholly sedentary population, fragmented by the impacts of colonialism.

But this is not the whole story. An earlier paragraph states that when this ‘ten per cent’ - who said their parents had been ‘settled’ - were questioned more closely, it was revealed that:

‘many of the “settled” male parents were, in fact, itinerants themselves who owned houses in which they lived for a substantial part of the year when not travelling’ (COI: 35).

House-dwelling ‘itinerants’, then, could not be perceived as “settled” in the same way as non-Travellers, and living in (or owning) a house was not the same as “being settled”. The fraudulence (or naiveté?) of this assertion (underscored by the punctuation,) together with the Commissioners’ inclusion of house-dwellers among those it unproblematically defines as

parish organizations who would befriend Travellers, offer assistance, encourage them to apply for permanent or transitional accommodation, and mediate between councils and Travellers. This non-statutory base was supplemented by central government grants to councils for temporary sites and services, and to renovate unfit or condemned dwellings to let to Travellers.

174 State policy, which is widely charged with being assimilationist by many Travellers and Traveller activists, has been characterised as holding this view. For a detailed discussion of COI from a Foucauldian perspective see also Crowley (2005).

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'itinerants', reflects the views of those who interpreted the data, the Census collectors and the Commissioners, who were confident that, regardless of forms of dwelling, house ownership or parentage, they knew an 'itinerant' when they saw one. In short, the Commission was hard-pressed to reconcile its stated policy aim to 're-integrate' Travellers with a conviction it could not suppress, and covertly shared with the rest of the population, that whether in houses or beside the road, itinerants were itinerants, 'or travellers as they prefer themselves to be called'. *Something* made them different which, everyone knew, housing did not dispel. This irrepressible conviction that Travellers were, in fact, a 'kind' of people (a 'group, tribe or community') cast doubt over the whole project of 'settlement', which had at its heart the explicit aim that Travellers should disappear by 'absorption' (COI: 106) into the majority “settled” population, based on COI's key proposition that housing should and *would* facilitate this aim. Nonetheless, the 1963 report reluctantly concedes what, forty-five years later, is still the experience of many Travellers in Ireland, that Traveller families living in houses are still 'scornfully known as “tinkers”, even in succeeding generations' (COI: 103; cf Gmelch 1977: 138-9; Smith 1999: 18-19).

In the sense that Arensberg and Kimball (1968) reflect common Irish usage of the time,175 Travellers in COI form a 'class'- a 'travelling class of people' (Smith ibid.) - whose entitlement and status are seen as fixed and unalterable. The previous chapter has begun to explore the central role of architecture - not in 'absorbing' but rather sustaining the visibility of an objectified 'class'. "Being settled", as distinct from living in a house, speaks covertly of an embodied relation with the house with moral, political and organic implications. Here, our concern is with the unfolding of policies towards Travellers which persisted in viewing architecture as the material instrument of uncertain, contradictory aims. Gradually relinquishing the aim of ‘absorption’, settlement policies based on old rationalizations of 'class' reconfigured as 'identity' eventually assumed a material form, that of ‘permanent Traveller-specific architectures’ (*Task Force Report* 1995). This gestation of persons and built forms took place over thirty years, and resulted in architectures that one activist in 2007 described as ‘an expression of our identity’. In spite of the brutalism that began to characterise ‘permanent’ sites in the late 1990s, following the adoption of the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998, Travellers themselves often chose sites over housing when able to do so.

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175 Arensberg’s & Kimball’s 1968 edition of *Family and Community in Ireland* includes a valuable chapter on the rigidity of ‘class’ and social division in Ennis, Co. Clare, and its reflection in urban geography, housing and land ownership.
The material forms, relations and concepts that constituted this political process form the subject of the first part of the chapter, followed by the account of a nomadic, extended family group, the Lakes, as a seasonal camp of theirs underwent transformation into a ‘permanent’ site, following a court judgment in 1991.

The story of the Lakes focuses on the changing relations between families within the original coalition in the shadow of the unbuilt site; their sense of being ‘sucked in’ to the site over several years before it was built; and, after taking up residence, its troubling sensory materiality. The ‘permanent’ site objectifies the public secret that Travellers are a ‘kind of people’, and its interior space, hidden by high walls or earth banks, emulates the containment of its unmined ambiguities. Its sensory orders of socialised time and space, (of history as well as daily life,) fuse ‘the bodily and the normative, the emotional and the instrumental’ (Alonso 1994: 386) within its architecture. Camps, where multiple temporalities of gendered substance connect the pasts and possible futures of sibling and cousin groups, give way in the site to a personification of the masculine breed.

‘Regression’, compulsion and choice

Twenty years after the Commission on Itinerancy, the next official policy document, the 1983 Report of the Travelling People Review Body (TPRB), reflects the way the earlier recommendations had been taken up and marks critical shifts, reflected in the transition from ‘itinerancy’ to ‘Travelling People’. It recommended three approaches: standard housing, group housing and serviced sites (TPRB: 44). It criticised local authorities who refused to accept Travellers onto housing waiting lists or imposed arbitrary quota systems, instead of basing eligibility on need (TPRB: 41), and admonished that the choice of accommodation ‘must be a free one’. It described the phenomenon of young married couples brought up in houses returning to the road as ‘regression to a travelling way of life’ (TPRB: 45). For some, this ‘return’ to the side of the road was due to private landlords' refusal to let houses to Travellers or to councils’ rejection of Traveller tenants; for others it was the recovery of a remembered way of life. Whether forced or chosen, the so-called ‘return’ to the road manifested an independence associated with marriage and adulthood, and between the
1970s and 1990s it became commonplace.\(^{176}\) The trailer, like the tent earlier, had become an object-mark externalising both a ‘given’ and a chosen self, and reflected awareness of the multiple self-effects of visible material ‘sites for critical posing of freedom and unfreedom’ (Boyarin and Boyarin 1995: 36-37).

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The 1983 report, besides asserting Travellers’ equal rights to housing, now commended group housing and serviced sites as alternatives, rather than intermediate stages on the way to housing. It warned that group housing must not repeat the sub-standard provision of earlier ‘sites’ of prefabricated ‘tigeens’: ‘Design, location and layout must be such as to render it indistinguishable from a scheme to accommodate any other tenants’ (TPRB: 19), and should ‘encourage maximum integration with settled neighbours and participation in local and national services’ (TPRB: 47). Besides continuing to provide notionally temporary accommodation for Travellers awaiting housing, serviced sites for caravans were now also to be seen as an ‘alternative to housing’ for those for whom ‘the transition to housing would be too difficult’ (ibid). Sites as an ‘alternative’ to housing, although not described as ‘permanent’, were for those ‘who wish to spend the remainder of their lives in caravan dwellings’ (TPRB: 47). This third recommendation – a shift to permanent sites for some - was evidently regarded as humane but undesirable, first, because of the ‘hardships and hazards of caravan dwelling’ (ibid), but also because the Review Body had recognized that sites could be used to control and segregate Travellers by local authorities who otherwise failed to meet their needs or respect their rights. Such aims in how sites were used were clear. The Review Body therefore stipulated that ‘No family should be obliged to go on to a site or remain thereon because of inadequate provision of standard houses for travellers by a local authority’ (TPRB: 48.)

That the proposed widening of the use and role of sites was fraught with risks is clear from the abundant anxieties of the Review Body. Coercion, neglect, segregation, systematic exclusion from state housing, unwarranted court actions and extra-judicial sanctions are all highlighted in the TRPB’s explicit statements and warnings. The Review Body condemned the ‘boulder’ policy - the practice of blocking off camps and stopping places (both occupied and unoccupied) with immovable granite boulders, trenches, domestic waste, or piles of earth - and expressed concern that ‘the same public authorities who are assigned the duty of implementing Government policy on services for travellers’ should simultaneously engage in this ‘more subtle form of harassment’. It also condemned the routine deployment of

\(^{176}\) Many Irish Travellers still regard the first trailer of a young married couple as the primary material sign of marriage. Conventionally the trailer must be the gift of the new husband to his wife, signifying, among other things, his confidence in their being able to go it alone.
In order to ‘[move] itinerants out of the district’, and noted critically the role of the Gardai in supporting council officials ‘during the course of their questionable actions’ (TRPB: 30). Such extra-judicial sanctions were used to force Travellers into the grim conditions of a ‘temporary’ site against their will, or to drive them out of an area where a council had responsibilities towards them.

In spite of the appalling conditions of most ‘temporary’ sites, the report hints at its authors’ fears that caravan dwelling linked to such sites might come to constitute a reproductive way of life with compensations of its own – between the chosen and the enforced. Not only did young people ‘return’ to the road from houses where many had grown up, but many families exhibited a resistance to housing that the Commissioners in 1963 had been unwilling to confront. Although COI had admitted that ‘the life holds strong attractions’ for some, it confidently maintained that around ‘78 per cent … indicated a desire to settle’ (COI: 58). Twenty years later such a claim could not easily be made. The complexity of issues intertwined in the culture and politics of Traveller dwelling was emerging; although rarely articulated outside the privacy of the trailer, men and women constantly weighed up their circumstances and the balance of risks, necessities and limited choices. Young married men with their ‘own families’ assessed the benefits of sticking with their brothers for safety and solidarity, and trying to push for a group site through the agency of a local Settlement Committee. Parents weighed up whether to send children to school in view of the risks of prosecution or being forced from a camp; and adult siblings caring for sick or elderly parents desperately sought ways to camp near hospitals, come what may. The efforts of local activists mediating between Travellers and local authorities could not be counted on to yield security from persecution, whatever form that might take.

The Review Body ‘considered at length’ the central political problem: that ‘efforts to provide accommodation were thwarted by majority decisions of the elected bodies yielding to pressure… from individuals, community groups or commercial and industrial interests’ (TPRB: 36), which usually ‘prevailed over the basic human rights of traveller families’ (ibid). Displays of ‘local resistance when the tenancy of a house was allocated to a traveller, or where a particular location was selected for a serviced site’ (TPRB: 36) meant that negotiations were drawn out over years, and plans inevitably ‘pare[d] down’, resulting in ‘temporary rather than longterm solutions’ (ibid).

The autonomy of movement and camping, which had always varied geographically, was under attack as never before, and parents struggled to protect their children from the

177 Prohibition Orders are issued by a judge following application to the court by a local authority, and specify a named area in which camping is prohibited. Such orders were still in use in 2007-8.
physical harm and psychological injuries of being ‘hunted from place to place’ (Joyce 2000: 80). Michael Lake, a horse-dealer and young married man at this time, described the pressures on him and his wife, when gardai would tail the caravans from morning to night from one side of a county to another, never leaving them until they had crossed the county boundary. Forced to keep moving and to abandon every camp after one night meant for Michael, that ‘as far as I was concerned, I had no choice, but as far as the children were concerned the decision to move was always mine’. The definitive account of this period is that of Nan Joyce (2000), whose daughters were tragically poisoned by the lead-soaked ground of Ballyfermot, outside Dublin, where many families took refuge. Joyce wrote, ‘If you kept moving you’d be going until the day you die, and if you went every day they’d shift you every day’ (2000: 85).

To some extent the complexity of Travellers’ lives, poised between official persecution, punitive control and neglect, found its way into the 1983 TRPB report, although the way camps, sites, houses and tigeens played particular roles in the decisions Travellers made was invisible to policy makers. Sites were changing, but were they to be seen as staging posts toward housing (as in COI), as a reluctant concession to Travellers’ basic needs by the authorities, as systems of control, neglect and segregation, or as a right- a legitimate alternative to housing recognizing the dignity of choice? How could these incommensurate tendencies of sites be disentangled? The Review Body saw the need for serviced sites as both urgent and problematic. It urged that a legislative duty be imposed on local authorities to provide sites as ‘complementary to the normal housing programme’ (TPRB: 48), but that their numbers be ‘kept to the minimum’ to meet the needs of what it hoped would be small and diminishing numbers of families who would decline housing.

An insight into how the earlier policies took effect in practice can be obtained from the description of the forty-four ‘site facilities’ built across Ireland between 1966 and 1982 (TPRB: Appendix F), although the data are sketchy. Twenty-one were sites of hard standing for caravans with communal or individual (i.e. per conjugal family) ‘sanitary facilities’, usually comprising one outdoor cold tap per bay and a nominated WC, or in some cases, a chemical toilet. The remaining twenty-three were sites of ‘tigeens’: prefabricated dwellings of between one and four rooms, often with an additional ‘chalet’ (fixed mobile home) or caravan to provide for sleeping arrangements. Cold and damp, prone to decay and ‘excessive condensation’ because of the flimsy materials used, their obviously temporary and inferior status was considered an ‘expedient’ solution, the Review Body noted critically, by local authorities whose priority was to ‘[find] local acceptance for them where the settled community would have rejected any proposals bearing the mark of permanency’ (TPRB: 43).
In a column headed ‘Present Position’, the report notes that by 1982 many of these sites were in transition. Some sites of hard-standing for caravans were ear-marked for redevelopment with nondescript ‘dwellings’, which seems to mean tigeens, and some existing sites of between one and four-roomed ‘dwellings’ (tigeens) were to be redeveloped with ‘bungalows’.

In other words, the isolated, inferior plots of land used for temporary sites- officially staging posts to permanent alternatives – were either becoming permanent, or evolving, little by little, into segregated group housing that in no respect met the Review Body’s strictures for encouraging ‘maximum integration’, let alone its insistence that ‘design, location and layout must be such as to render it indistinguishable from a scheme to accommodate any other tenants’ (TPRB: 19). It appears that only three out of forty-four ‘temporary’ sites had met the 1963 Commission’s original aim (still regarded as the ideal by the Review Body,) of mediating between the side of the road and permanent, integrated housing, and then being closed down.178

By 1983, nine hundred more families occupied houses than in 1960, many having resided on sites, but sites themselves now exhibited a permanent temporariness that reflected local authorities’ capitulation to settled opposition, architecturally incorporating Travellers’ as visible ‘non-citizens’ (TPRB: 38). Local protocols denied Travellers equal access to housing, and appeased settled tenants in the vicinity of a new site by means of stigmatising features such as high walls, barriers, and later, caretakers’ huts, all of which imbued the site with the aura of a state-run, secure facility (TPRB: 26). Elected councillors, posing as defenders of a purportedly victimised ‘settled community’, enhanced their popularity by publicly railing against any provision for Travellers, voting against site proposals, and demanding oversight and a power of veto over housing applications. However, rather than creating ‘non-citizens’ as the Review Body states, it would be more accurate to say that Traveller accommodation - a term that encompassed a nexus of bitterly opposed interests - was creating a distinct category of citizenship through the social, political and material instruments afforded by architecture.

178 In Abbeyfeale, Limerick, six tigeens were converted into standard houses as part of a new housing development. A site of six tigeens in Cork was demolished and the families ‘given local authority houses’; and a site of six tigeens in Kilbarry, Waterford, was closed and the families ‘given local authority houses’. 176
‘local’ Travellers, ‘transients’, ‘non-transients’ and the cultural heritage of ‘nomads’

Two further aspects of the emerging situation of the 1980s must be taken into account, the first being demographic. First, although Annual Counts of Travellers were blighted by the motivations and precepts of those undertaking them (as well as by the benefits or disadvantages Travellers perceived as a result of being counted, in the event they could either choose or avoid being counted,) it was nonetheless clear that ‘the identifiable group of people’ (TPRB: 6) called Travellers was increasing much faster than the settled population, and there were more families living beside the road in 1981 than in 1961: 957 families were living in houses, 384 on sites, and 1,149 were beside the road without services.\(^{179}\) Furthermore, a change had occurred in how Travellers were being classified. On the basis of movement, families were now described as ‘transient’ or ‘non-transient’. Being ‘transient’ meant being an outsider and having no legitimate claim on council resources, and ‘transients’ were widely represented by local officials as being in competition with ‘local’ Travellers for the scarce resources of sites, and thus, a threat. Although long-standing nomadic economies associated with trade, craft, agriculture and the peat industry had declined over the twenty years between the two reports,\(^{180}\) the political economy of Traveller accommodation, based on a concept of ‘local’ Travellers promoted by the Itinerant Settlement Movement, had also contributed to the phenomenon of semi-permanent roadside camps that grew through the 1970s and 1980s, and perhaps also to the dramatic increase of such camps around Dublin (Joyce 2000; Kearns 1977; Gmelch 1979) where people sought safety in numbers. Encouraged by settled activists, Travellers were urged to regard themselves as ‘local’ to press claims for sites or houses. As we saw in the case of Medical Cards and state benefits, being local or ‘non-transient’ began to mean having rights, at least in principle, and this manufactured distinction also helped to foster suspicion and was used to justify extra-legal sanctions against those now labelled ‘transient’.

\(^{179}\) Figures of ‘families’ (i.e. conjugal families) give very little sense of the demographics of the Traveller population compared to the settled Irish. The Demographic Situation of the Traveller Community in 1996 (Central Statistics Office, 1998) defines a family as a cohabiting unit based on a man and woman, for example, and gives average ‘household size’ as including 3.5 children as compared with 1.8 in the population as a whole. This undoubtedly reflects a high proportion of young families, and conceals the reproductive careers of many couples, which, by completion, may include between eight and twenty or more children. The long reproductive life of many Traveller women has characteristically resulted in rapid formation of new families, and frequently, generations which overlap in age.

\(^{180}\) Farm mechanisation, a decrease in small, mixed farms and in the agricultural labour market, and a growth in road communications contributed to the diminution of nomadic livelihoods. (Hoare 2002.)
Second, while many Travellers had become less nomadic in practice, the concept of nomadism defined by the Council of Europe in 1975 (75 (13)), and the UK’s definition of ‘gypsies’ as ‘nomads’ in the 1968 Caravans Sites Act, had prompted a rethinking of ‘itinerancy’ among members of the Review Body, although not necessarily among the general public. Citing the Council of Europe’s resolution against anti-nomadic discrimination, which included the loosely formulated stricture that ‘(t)he cultural heritage and identity of nomads should be safeguarded’ (TPRB: 103), the Review Body also noted that there was no consensus on whether ‘travellers’ (uncapitalised throughout the report,) comprised ‘a distinct culture, an ethnic group or subculture, and, particularly, a sub culture of poverty’ (TPRB: 5). However, they indubitably were, or had been, ‘nomadic’. The way the Review Body resolved the problem is worth quoting at length:

‘[Travellers] are an identifiable group of people, identified both by themselves and by other members of the community (referred to for convenience as the “settled community”) as people with their own distinctive life style, traditionally of a nomadic nature but not now habitual wanderers. They have needs, wants and values, which are different in some ways from those of the settled community. More than half of those in the group now have a place to live either in houses or serviced sites. Some may take to the road either occasionally or seasonally. The majority of those not yet provided with accommodation desire a fixed place of abode, and many of them are, in fact, encamped in locations with reasonable permanence. However, there is still a substantial number of transient families.’ (TPRB: 6)

‘Traveller,’ replacing the ‘unacceptable’ (ibid) term ‘itinerant’, and imbued with the spirit of the Council of Europe’s definition which included - for the purposes of protection against discrimination - not only nomads but ‘persons of nomadic origin’, was now an historical / ontological category which included ‘transient’ and ‘non-transient’, those housed, on sites or beside the road. An encompassing ‘identity’ (as the Council of Europe described it,) reflected the Review Body’s evident concern both for Travellers’ rights and ‘self-esteem and confidence’, and saw them as linked to larger national questions that advanced ‘cultural heritage and identity’ over demeaning definitions of ‘sub-culture’. Nonetheless ‘nomadic identity’ imbricated earlier notions of itinerancy that appeared throughout the 1963 Report of the Commission on Itinerancy. In sum, while Travellers’ needs were now perceived as varied and complex, and their rights to housing equal to those of non-Travellers, the 1983 Report (TPRB) promotes the idea of timeless, incommensurable ‘communities’, encouraged by (and misappropriating) the Council of Europe’s phrase ‘of nomadic origin’. In COI, itinerants were itinerants, regardless of their assertions of a “settled” way of life or ownership of houses;
now, in TPRB, Travellers are Travellers, some ‘habitual wanderers’, others having ‘places to live’.

Although itinerancy had been replaced by nomadism, the term ‘transient’ designated a status that in practice meant being outside the law. Although the Review Body condemned the practice of ‘hunting’ Travellers, it failed to assert the positive legal rights, including that of camping, of acknowledged ‘nomads’ within the state, perhaps failing to anticipate the fast-approaching time when camping would be made illegal. In July 1970 the Minister for Justice had stated in the Dáil that “[t]he Garda Síochana are not empowered to compel itinerants to move or vacate their roadside camps”; and “the fact that somebody is camped beside a road is not of itself an offence” (cited in TPRB: 29-30). TPRB described this drily as a ‘changed approach’, by which it meant that the actions of the Gardaí had long been regarded as constituting the law, regardless of statute. The minister’s denial of the existence of such powers, which had been exercised throughout living memory, may have come as a surprise to some, but it did nothing to reduce the persecution of Travellers.

In summary, ‘nomadic’ in TPRB is a symbolic term that seems to reflect the dignity and collective nature of Traveller culture as it once was; while ‘transient’ is the condition of those excluded from the economic and political structures of state provision. In spite of an apparent sense of its own failings, and of the insoluble contradictions within ‘Traveller accommodation’, TPRB moves towards a discourse of equal rights and the dignity of difference that was clearly absent from official policy and local practice. Much less clear is the role of architectures, which have begun to assume a political role in materialising the notion of ‘identity’. Seen in retrospect, TPRB establishes the ground for permanent, post-nomadic architectures, concretising degrees of incommensurability within the state.

the Task Force: culture, identity and ‘Traveller-specific’ architectures

Just as the Travelling People Review Body adapted its recommendations to the situation on the ground, noting that earlier ‘implementation was geared to what was… politically possible, rather than what was required’ (TPRB: 35), the 1995 Task Force on the Travelling Community (TF 1995) did much the same, although it was markedly less critical of

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182 Irish national parliamentary assembly.
local government, more pragmatic, and a definitive emphasis on ‘culture and identity’ (TF: 80) replaced TPRB’s ‘self-esteem and confidence’. The Task Force report, which is widely regarded by Traveller activists as setting the ‘gold standard’ for Traveller accommodation in Ireland, is the first to commend the creation of ‘Traveller specific accommodation’ (TF: 101) and ‘permanent sites’ (TF: 106), affirming with surprising confidence ‘a close link between accommodation and identity’ (TF: 109). Skirting round the numerous concerns of TPRB about constraints on choice, and the tendency, already seen in 1983, of local authorities to use sites as means of visible control and segregation, the Task Force optimistically proposed new legal and administrative measures to accelerate site building and group housing programmes, to ensure ‘a range of accommodation types’ to meet the needs of different families. To judge from the Task Force report, which is distinctly managerial in tone and approach compared to its predecessors, what was wrong with sites was simply that there were not enough of them, and they should be either permanent or ‘transient’, the latter being adapted to the needs of nomadic life. The demand for ‘transient sites’ reflected a perceived need to facilitate nomadic life and blunt the problematic division between ‘local’, ‘non-transient’ or ‘indigenous’ Travellers and those labelled ‘transient’. Thirty years of notionally ‘temporary’ sites since COI would thus be replaced by permanent ‘Traveller specific’ architectures, together with group housing, standard housing and, it was hoped, transient sites.

Although TF’s call for transient sites echoed one made a decade earlier by TPRB, no national programme for transient sites has ever been implemented. Traveller accommodation remains geared to those who ‘qualify’ as officially ‘indigenous’ through the ‘Counts’, and the parameters of provision are still determined locally by councillors and officials in four-year plans, their arm strengthened by uncompromising legal sanctions against camping. Many Travellers have found themselves ‘forced’ into private rented housing against their will. Having reified Travellers in terms of the ‘nomadic origins’ that signified dwelling’s singularity, architectures that conspicuously prevented nomadic movement would now become the permanent mark of a given ‘identity’ stamped by the state, in the form of either ‘designated’ council estate houses or permanent sites.

A signal omission of the 1995 report is its failure to confront collusion between local settled residents’ groups, officials, police and politicians, including active threats and ‘spontaneous’ demonstrations which, as described in the last chapter, result in a predictable pattern of capitulation. This means offers of houses to Travellers being withdrawn following leaks to the media, or newly-housed families being removed from housing estates under police escort ‘for their own safety’. As a result, families had remained in ‘temporary’ sites.
sometimes for decades, awaiting promised sites that failed to materialise; others fled from areas where they had grown up, either expelled by courts who declared them ‘non-indigenous’, or to escape continual harassment and prosecution. In view of this established pattern, the Task Force’s views on segregation were highly simplistic:

‘Travellers can be segregated in the provision of various services. Segregation is an imposed setting apart of a group. Segregation is therefore different from provision which is designed to advance positive resourcing policies and affirmative action policies, where participation is by choice.’ (TF: 80)

It was eminently predictable that, unless the collusion, discrimination and violence that had surrounded Traveller accommodation for the past thirty years were effectively eliminated, ‘Traveller-specific’ accommodation would marry forceful segregation and ‘participation … by choice’ under euphemisms such as ‘positive resourcing’. Long-entrenched local practices -which, in 2008 in County Clare, included quotas restricting Travellers to one local authority house in every twelve, and only on certain estates- would continue, invigorated by ‘affirmative action’ policies which now institutionalised and permitted these practices.

This is precisely what occurred following the passage of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act (1998) and the setting up of ‘Traveller Accommodation Offices’, separate offices of local housing departments to which all Travellers, regardless of their preferences, were now directed. The ostensible purpose was to admit ‘identifiable’ Travellers on the basis of choice to accommodation which must now include ‘culturally appropriate’ options, such as permanent sites. An applicant whose ‘identity’ was unclear would routinely be asked, ‘Are you a Traveller?’ One woman who answered, ‘No’ was told, ‘In that case, I can offer you a house on ------- estate.’ Others who said they wanted sites or group housing were told that no more would be built, and were coerced into temporary housing or bays in long-term ‘temporary’ sites.

Interviews often involved officials completing forms for non-literate applicants, who were not told of their rights. Crucial questions were omitted and local policies determined in advance which boxes got ticked. Both the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act (1998) and the Equal Status Acts (2000-2004), Ireland’s first equality legislation (whose passage was driven by the Good Friday Agreement 1998 and Ireland’s ratification of the UN

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183 This was the universal state of affairs among Travellers I visited in County Clare between 2000 and 2004.
Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, (CERD) in 2000\(^{184}\) demonstrated the state’s intention to keep Traveller politics under local control. Local authorities were, and are, exempt from the Equal Status Acts in respect of their housing/accommodation duties towards Travellers, who are named in the legislation as a group in respect of whom equal treatment is not required. Was this exemption, as some chose to see it, a corollary of ‘affirmative action’? Or the formalisation of local administrative control over Traveller accommodation, with minimal accountability? Travellers’ experience of confronting ‘organised resistance’ (TF: 96) at almost every level of society and government meant that, now reified by law and architecture as a ‘separate class’,\(^{185}\) as the Government (2001:50-51) now officially described Travellers, many would choose the safety and freedom of ‘Traveller-specific’ architectures, given the chance.

In view of these trenchant criticisms, the seemingly universal approval of Traveller activists and supporters for the Task Force Report requires some explanation. Four years before its publication, the thinking of some of those involved in the ‘struggle for culturally appropriate accommodation’ (ITM: Traveller Accommodation and the Law, 1992: 2 (TAL)) was expressed at a seminar of the Irish Traveller Movement in Limerick. A series of cases had shown that action in the courts could sometimes bear fruit. The circumstances involved the relentless persecution of Travellers in camps beside the road, which they began to resist. Local activist Jim Moran stated:

‘In August 1980 Limerick Corporation decided to rid the City of all illegal halting sites. They began a very severe campaign of moving families without mercy. Trailers were pulled onto the road by tractors and towed outside the city limits. The Corporation officials doing this work seemed to have a free hand. Great hardship was caused and the suffering was intense. Children attending school became very disturbed.’ (TAL: 10)

\(^{184}\) Ireland was the last European Union member state to ratify CERD. Pavee Point (2005) points to the denial by successive governments of a problem of racism. In 1991 Minister of Justice Patrick Cooney told the European Parliament’s Committee of Inquiry on Racism and Xenophobia: ‘the country has been remarkably free of such problems as there is not a large presence of foreigners’ (cited in Pavee Point 2005).

\(^{185}\) A description of Travellers in pp50-51 of the Report Submitted by Ireland pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
To an experienced local activist like Jim, ‘It was obvious from early on that accommodation was the greatest need and that good serviced sites, rather than housing, was [sic] the answer’ (TAL: 10). Sites were a practical remedy to repeated prosecutions and extra-judicial eviction. They involved little expense to the corporation, relieved officials of the problem of illegal camps, and would give Travellers a minimal level of legal security for the first time, while preserving the extended family groups that commonly formed camps. There were also legal and ideological understandings of sites which reflected the law’s capacity to ally invention and convention (Pottage 2004: 33), realising potentialities which flowed between objects and persons. Limerick solicitor Shaun Elder said:

‘There is no doubt that there has been a perceptible change in attitudes and the law concerning Travellers over the course of the last twelve years. It seems to me that there is an ever increasing acknowledgement that there is a genuine problem that Travellers have special needs as an individual class of persons and that something needs to be done for Travellers to alleviate those needs…

‘The provision of funds by Central Government for the provision of serviced sites, guidelines on their construction, legal action, legislative changes, greater publicity of the Travellers plight and increased lobbying have all contributed in the still continuing powers.’ (TAL: 23)

As Elder indicated, these ‘continuing powers’ engendered a field of legal and political practice in which the site reciprocally indexed ‘Travellers’ as an ‘individual class of person’: the artefactual agents of the official site and its ‘cause’ in law. Elder continued:

‘Although at one time felt to be the remedy for Travellers (and it is still for some) public housing has really been superceded [sic] in thinking by the now recognised special need for serviced sites.’ (TAL: 24)

Applauding the fact that the 1988 Housing Act had recognized ‘Travellers as a separate class of persons’ and allowed in principle ‘for the provision of Halting Sites with facilities’, Elder noted with approval that the Act also provided for assessing the ‘needs of the homeless including Travellers’ (TAL: 26). A reflexive relation between official sites and Travellers now meant that Travellers without sites (or recognized alternatives) were

186 This ‘provision’ in the 1988 Act was ambiguous: neither mandatory nor discretionary, it had to be tested through individual actions and decisions by the courts, where local authorities’ duties to particular Travellers were decided on a case by case basis.
‘homeless’. Thus, ‘permanent halting sites’ (TF: 100) would give legal and architectural form to ‘the distinct needs and identity of Travellers’, finally dispelling the miasma of ‘assimilationist’ policies that had hung over Traveller politics for thirty years. Traveller representative organizations have frequently charged that the ‘underlying mind-set [of successive governments since COI] remains assimilationist’ (Pavee Point 2005: 12). In their CERD Shadow Report of 2005, Pavee Point stated:

‘many local authorities persist in the assimilationist approaches to Traveller accommodation. The un-stated policy of many local authorities is to persuade/force Travellers to move into houses rather than providing Traveller specific accommodation, such as halting sites or group housing. Opposition by local communities to halting sites is often used as an excuse for not implementing policy’ (Pavee Point 2005: 10-11).

Whereas temporary sites marked Travellers out as ‘non-citizens’ (TPRB: 38), and housing was covert assimilation, activists held that permanent sites would recognize Travellers as citizens, albeit, a ‘separate class’ of citizens, made visible through architecture. Rights and recognition were thus at the core of ‘Traveller-specific’ architectures, although tied up in the most rigid forms of segregation and control yet seen.

The role of architecture in the politics and objectification of personhood has an important anthropological precedent in Levi-Strauss’s work on house societies (1987, 1983). I turn next to the house as an ‘objectification of a relation’ (Levi-Strauss 1987: 55), to consider parallels between the institutional agency of ‘house societies’, and that of the permanent Traveller site, where resistance, incorporation and the mystique of ‘identity’ assume forms that resemble those of the classic house societies of the literature.

**house societies: personification, agency and autonomy**

In ‘house societies’, (Lévi-Strauss 1983, 1987) the house stands as an ‘objectified relation’ and material agent between, and superordinate to its members, and mediates between the house-group and an unstable social and political field. These are ‘societies in external or internal disequilibrium, for whom a dream of unchangeability would be a luxury
they could not, or could no longer, afford’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 183). ‘Houses’ thus emerge in fields of unresolved tension and mystify the relations held to underpin their continuity, and in particular, the ‘unstable relation of alliance’ (1987: 155). This dual aspect is downplayed in discussions of kinship, where Lévi-Strauss has been criticised for seeking to ‘transcend the old categories of kinship, descent and alliance’ in a construct that is ‘also premised upon them’ (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 28). However, houses are political institutions, and if the politico-historical field of the house is accorded sufficient analytic emphasis, criticisms of latent functionalism become less relevant.187

From the objectified relation of residents of the Traveller site, and the external field of site collectivities and settled authorities, other post-nomadic architectures arise in relation to the site, which nonetheless maintain separation from the site itself. We shall see, for example, that funerary architectures among post-nomadic site-dwelling breed segments, similar to those of the New Zealand Maori, ‘provide the occasion for retroactively defining the hapu as a house composed of dead ancestors as well as of living people, cognates together with agnates and even, eventually, of non-kin’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 180). First, our focus must be upon the circumstances in which houses emerge as ritual and institutional forms. Where social extinction is threatened, the ‘house’ as an intentional agent (an ‘extended mind’ and ‘[body] for the body’, Gell 1998:251-2) objectifies personhood across time and space, configured by descent, alliance, and other forms of co-optation, and by the particular impetus of the ‘continuing power’ of the social field in which the house exerts itself,188 which frequently discloses constitutive conflicts between ‘blood’ and ‘land’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 181). Among the Merina of Madagascar, for example, mythic traditions relate the ‘union of conquerors and autochthons, owners of the land who are progressively dispossessed and who in return receive privileges of a religious and spiritual kind’ (ibid).

Lévi-Strauss (1987: 153-4) differentiates the ‘personne morale’, which combines ‘moral and legal personality’, from the British concept of ‘corporate groups’ - entities based on customary rather than written law - and from British anthropology’s use of ‘jural’ as a vague conflation of ‘moral or customary constraint’. By contrast, the ‘moral person’, like the site community, is indicated by definite criteria of ‘descent, residence and property’ as well as ‘rights and obligations’ recognized in law. This account of the house as a personne morale aptly corresponds to much that Elder implies about the Traveller site as an emerging

187 Lévi-Strauss’s theory of ‘house societies’ is adapted over time to societies with different characteristics, alliance playing a greater role in his later work than earlier, where property featured prominently.
188 For the house in Pulau Langkawi affinity is ‘always difficult to resolve’, and the house stands ‘in inherent contradiction’ to the wider community (Carsten 1987:166-7).
institution with formal recognition and a definite basis in Travellers’ ‘special’ material and social ‘needs’. In other words, here, the removal of Travellers’ legal rights to make and inhabit camps\(^{189}\) is correspondingly substituted by a new form of official recognition: that of the site community.

In Lévi-Strauss’s account, the ‘house’ is said to mediate and resist a ‘transition’ between kinship and class-based societies (and in parallel, between elementary and complex kinship structures) where social hierarchy is based on property.\(^{190}\) Resonating the tensions of its political relations, the ritual-material life of architecture and the house-group combines legal and performative elements in claims to superior rank and mysterious agency, so that architecture is transfigured as material cosmology (cf McKinnon 1991). ‘Houses’ can be understood as works of figuration, in Haraway’s sense (1997: 11), ‘performative images that can be inhabited’ that neither transcend nor efface sexual, economic and political antagonisms, but are ways of containing them in a ‘kind of displacement that can trouble identifications and certainties’ (ibid; cf Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 12). In spite of the aestheticised estate which seeks to publicise a richly reproductive interiority, there is always something outside – or is it inside? - from which the house must be protected, and which assumes real and spectral forms for the members of house-groups, as it does for Travellers in sites. This problematic double relation, and double anxiety, of the house described here is precisely reproduced in the ‘permanent’ Traveller site.

Can Traveller sites in either England or Ireland usefully be considered as ‘houses’? They do not precisely constitute a type of ‘society’, as social actors in fields dominated by numerous, similar ‘houses’, but remain constrained in state-managed systems of land, housing and property.\(^{191}\) They are unlikely to evolve elaborate forms like the examples of Lévi-Strauss, McKinnon (1991) or Gell (1998). However, the legal, cultural and architectural forms of Traveller sites form the liaison between incompatible systems of differentiation and hierarchy. As ‘condensed maps of contestable worlds’ (Haraway 1997:11) they delineate a conflictual field of honour and distinction made visible as architecture. Neither ‘temporary’ nor ‘assimilationist’ but now ‘permanent’ ‘Traveller specific’ architectures form material evidence of ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ for Traveller activists, where these can be understood both as a stake in, and claim on, the state, and also as a way of standing ‘outside’ the state. In Bali,

\(^{189}\) Finalised by the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002, aka the ‘Trespass Act’.

\(^{190}\) This ‘evolutionary’ model is criticised by several contributors to Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995), as is Lévi-Strauss’s original claim that house societies feature systems of rank and hierarchy. Similarly, many of the same authors see Lévi-Strauss’s theory of a ‘type’ of society as, in McKinnon’s words, dogged by ‘tension between the dead weight of old kinship categories and the effort to transcend these in the face of the integrity of resistant social forms’ (1995: 172).

\(^{191}\) Pine’s (1996) example of the Goràle describes a ‘house society’ under communism.
where aristocratic houses embody the principles of legal authority, property and unity that defend their position, ‘houses’ emerge in multiple forms employing similar idioms and performing comparable functions, and Lévi-Strauss (1987: 158-9) observes that ‘[d]espite, or rather because of, their heterogeneity all these traits apply exactly to the dadia’ in aristocratic as well as village contexts. ‘Houseness’, then, as in the UK, describes a political field whose symbolic, material and social modalities rediscover themselves in diverse forms in relation and opposition to each other, combining adaptive innovation with recognizability.

‘Traveller-specific’ architecture exemplifies the same implosion of political economy, legal personhood and kinship at the site of dwelling, and its institutional forms spring up with a sense of inevitability, supported, as Elder conveys, by moral conviction and necessity. What seems practical and self-evident in the ‘permanent’ site as ‘the answer’ to Travellers’ ‘special needs’ in Ireland in the 1980s is a further innovation in the social and political field in which the house occupies an enduring hegemonic position, mediating antagonisms centred on ‘blood’ and ‘land’, citizenship and the state. The Traveller site, like the village dadia in Bali, makes its own claims and offers its own resistances in this unresolved field of houseness.

Thus, as Elder relates, in the early 1980s it becomes ‘obvious’ and ‘clear’ that a new ‘thinking’ is at work in which ‘everyone’ is agreed there is a ‘recognized need’, a ‘genuine problem’ to which the answer has been found, etc….. By the time of the Task Force Report (1995) the centre of this universal insight has been named: it is ‘culture and identity’, which, ‘through [an] act of imagination’ (President Mary Robinson, cited in TF: 109) can now be materialised as ‘permanent’, ‘Traveller-specific’ architecture.

The site’s figural ‘origins’ are experienced by residents as odd or disturbing sensations that occasionally gel into the conviction of an uncanny presence, a spectre of something that was there before the site and perhaps is still there. Auerbach’s (1953: 64) account of figuration (cited in Haraway 1997: 10) is instructive here:

‘Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfils the first… They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life.’

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192 His criticism centres on the Geertzes classification of high-ranking Bali ‘houses’ (dadia), and hesitancy in applying the same term to less elevated institutional forms, which share the features of ‘lineage, caste, cultural association and faction’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 158).
The site has ‘something in it more than itself’\textsuperscript{193} : the spectre of houseness.

The importance of funerary architecture for site collectivities forms a further important point of comparison between the ‘house’ and the permanent site, as a ‘strategic role [devolves] on to the family tomb’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 180-182; cf Bloch 1982, 1971). Both ritual process and architectural object, the grave gifts and headstones perform a work of mourning that has political weight and visibility, involving their makers in enormous effort, cost and shared commitment. The necessity of the monument, which forms the subject of Chapter Eight, quickly follows the fixing of localised Traveller breeds in permanent sites.

I turn next to the story of the Lakes, which recalls a court’s decision to order a permanent site to be built under the provisions of the 1988 Housing Act, an exceptional judgment that instantiated the ‘continuing powers’ aptly described above by the solicitor, Sean Elder. It is the Lakes’ perspectives and its impact on their lives that forms the focus of this story.

\textsuperscript{193} ‘That “surplus” in the object which stays the same in all possible worlds is “something in it more than itself”, that is to say the Lacanian objet petit a: we search in vain for it in positive reality because it has no positive consistency, that is, because it is just a positivation of a void – of a discontinuity opened in reality by the emergence of the signifier’. (Žižek 1989: xiii-xiv)
Chapter Eight

Birthing the Site

‘All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.’

Karl Marx, The Communist Party Manifesto (1848), Section 1, Para 18.

‘I do not know what shapes were in the mist,
But solitude was made more solitary
By some re-risen memory of the earth
That gathered round my loneliness,
And threatened with the dead my living breath.’

Robin Flower, Solitude

When, encouraged by local settled supporters, Michael and Helen Lake resisted attempts by a County Council in 1991 to evict them from a stretch of unopened road that had become their regular winter camp, they went to the High Court in Dublin with no expectation of victory, and no idea of what might happen if, by chance, they should win. Above all, it was an act of resistance. The Lake coalition at that time included Michael’s parents, Willem and Bridgie, eight of Michael’s siblings, several inter-married cousins, and their children.

They had migrated in 1977 from what they called their ‘home’ about a hundred miles away, and gradually adopted a new area of seasonal migration that took in parts of three adjacent counties. Horse-dealing was in decline, and the move from a region that generations of their ancestors had travelled was a bid to preserve a way of life and favoured
occupation of Willem and his sons. By 1970, three out of four of Bridgie’s and Willem’s parents had died, severing an important link with their ‘home’, and Willem’s brothers and sisters, also married with children reaching adulthood, were similarly extending the range of their movements. A gradual dispersal of Willem’s twelve siblings occurred towards the UK, Dublin and other parts of Ireland, with periodic regrouping for camps in different locations. Willem was forty-three, and his patterns of movement and camping suggest his deep attachment to the old way of life. Approaching urban centres only to sell his horses at larger markets, he avoided areas with ‘too many Travellers’, favouring small, out of the way places ‘where you could chat a horse for a few pound’, and he and Bridgie maintained the large, tightly constructed camping coalitions of their early lives based on enduring bonds between parents and children. His passion for horses both necessitated and justified the family’s continuing movements, and was closely tied up in the group’s decision to migrate south.

For two years the Lakes made an annual trek back to their old winter camps, where they were confident of relations with settled neighbours ‘who loved us’, Michael explained. By lending out a heavy horse for tilling fields, or a stallion to cover a mare, in exchange for winter grazing or hay, reciprocal relations with small farmers afforded security through the lean months. Gradually they familiarised themselves with the new region and experimented with different routes and camps, seeking out sparsely populated areas with tall standing grass beside the road for the horses, or untenanted fields. In the decade that followed their migration, most of Willem’s and Bridgie’s sons married, including Michael, and by 1991 when the prosecution was brought against them, the maximal camping coalition had expanded to twenty-two adults and forty-five children, spanning three generations. In summer they dispersed into smaller groups or separate conjugal families, ‘coming and going’ between camps of both patrilateral and affinal breeds, and each October the coalition gradually regrouped for a long winter camp.

Ballyrush was attractive, with large, empty expanses of grazing, and for several years Lake families made summer camps there, always leaving before winter. The regular use of a winter camp area may be seen as establishing a base which gradually becomes a ‘home’ for children, and the Lakes’ decision to move away in winter may have been influenced by uncertainty about the reactions of Travellers more rooted in the wider area, by whom they were watched from a distance with suspicion and perhaps some envy. After several years of summer camps around Ballyrush, the families gathered in 1986 for a winter camp for the first time, making use of a handy stretch of unopened road, still under construction. From 1986, the new road became a favoured winter camp for the group and its horses.
The fluid stability of the coalition as it was in 1991 can be understood as a typically lengthy transition, as the new autonomy of early adulthood intertwines with natal family, lifelong bonds of siblingship, and closeness between cousins which often turns into marriage. These characteristics, reinforcing the breed’s self-conscious ideology of ‘closeness’, are visible here, encompassing camping, mutual support, marriage and the continuity of the breed as ‘blood’ and ‘name’.

In spite of settled antipathy towards nomadic Travellers in the 1980s, the younger Lake adults would later look on this as a time of relative freedom. Since the value and pleasure of a camp lies in its social intensity, Ballyrush had no particular value beyond the practical resources it offered. A camp arises as part of serial movements between camps combining difference and repetition; mutual recognition and self-expression are extended across a kaleidoscopic world of breeds and back-breeds, and a sense of metaphoric interagency between empty space - suddenly inhabited and as soon abandoned - and human amplification characterises the camp’s evocations of freedom and variety. Locations, being incidental and fugitive, hold no intrinsic interest, and so the prosecution, which sought to evict them from a particular ‘place’ was both surprising and irrelevant. The Lakes were not conscious of having established a relation to a place, a legal and physical ‘fact’ that would be urged upon them by local advocates, and emphasised by lawyers, who cited as evidence the school attendance of children, the marriages of two of the Lakes to ‘local’ Travellers, and the presence of Helen’s relations in a nearby town. They had merely intended to stay for the winter as before, Michael says, wanting only, ‘to be left in peace, to be quite blunt about it’, but the prosecution itself established that their presence was a claim that the council now resisted and denied by seeking to evict them.

When, to everyone’s surprise, the High Court eventually found in the group’s favour and ordered a site to be built that they had neither sought nor wanted, this unintended result was to shape future events, but its outcome would remain uncertain for almost eight years. Reluctantly, their future became enveloped in unforeseen relations with the state that still continue. Looking back, Michael reflects how he was “sucked into’v’ it” by interests that bore no relation to his own. While the court case itself was still being discussed, the Lakes were seen by settled activists as a ‘test case for every other Traveller family in the county’. Travellers in nearby towns, some of whom had spent more than a decade in ‘temporary’ sites, were keenly watching what happened here, and so too were county and government officials. It would be eight years between the court judgement and the site’s materialisation, but long before then it took shape in numerous minds, in Whitehead’s phrase, as ‘a hybrid between pure potentialities and actualities’ (1978: 185-6), perceived, understood, and
inhabited in contradictory ways which could hardly be shaken free from each other: ‘a source for the origination of feeling which is not tied down to mere datum’. 

Different members of the coalition considered the strange prospect of occupying a fixed site as a ‘permanent’ group and weighed their options. Willem and Bridgie, the senior couple, began to feel it was time ‘to settle down’, and Michael and Helen, who had children in the local school, decided to stick with the older couple, together with several of Michael’s siblings. Others were less sure, but still unwilling to give up the familiar security of the camp. A small group of settled supporters - schoolteachers, a social worker, and a local activist all urged Michael to ‘stay with it now’. Michael remembers: ‘I said ‘With what?’ And they said ‘Keep up the fight!’

For two years following the court case nothing happened. They remained in the camp while the council cast about for ways to overturn the judgment, hoping meanwhile the Lakes might give up and disappear, disillusioned. ‘We felt victorious because we had won it, but we didn’t need accommodation. It was the last thing on our minds’, Michael said. Some of the families came and went from the camp, uncertain what to do and unwilling to be tied down, while those that remained told themselves that a site would bring ‘rights’ they had never had, a chance to remain together in one place without being ‘chased’, legal grazing for their horses, regular schooling for the children, and a life with less hardship for women and elders. “Those of us who stayed took the long term view of it”, Michael explained, and they continued to wait. Then, late one night the road-building contractor’s foreman knocked on each trailer door in turn, and claimed emphatically that he “could not answer for what his lads might do” if they couldn’t get onto the section of road occupied by the camp, to finish the surfacing. Contracts, wages and jobs were at stake, he said threateningly.

Until now the Lake brothers and their parents had stood firm, refusing to move without a promise that the council would make good on its debt to them, but in the face of this unambiguous threat their solidarity crumbled. All the families moved their trailers except Michael and Helen, who now had eight children, and it was then that Michael simultaneously reduced and increased the price he would accept for moving, by demanding a tap. A tap was such a small thing, after all, so easily provided, but once the tap appeared it could not be taken back. This bargaining position, pivoting on material evidence of a site, drew the first definite commitment that a site would be built. The tap was a ‘proposition’, a metonymic ‘lure

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194 Whitehead writes: ‘When an actual entity belongs to the locus of a proposition, then conversely the proposition is an element in the lure for feeling of that actual entity’; ‘The interest in logic, dominating overintellectualized philosophers, has obscured the main function of propositions in the nature of things. They are not primarily for belief, but for feeling at the physical level of unconsciousness.’ (Whitehead 1978: 186).
for feeling’ (Whitehead 1978: 186) that brought the non-existent site into a new, material relation to them. Cutting across the council’s evaded obligations, the tap materialised necessity, and the stretch of road to which everyone agreed to move was no longer a camp; it was now officially called a ‘temporary site’.

But the tap had another, unanticipated outcome. Demonstrating Michael’s ability as a mediator once again, the tap subtly disrupted the Lake brothers’ deemed equality as public representatives of the breed. Although still only thirty-two, Michael was reluctantly emerging as a senior figure, a fact that would influence the changing composition of the camp over years to come, and embroil him in a problematic identification with the site. The move to the ‘temporary site’ in 1994 prompted a series of changes in the group: men with fathers and brothers in other counties, (Michael’s cousins,) for whom it was properly a transitional camp, left gradually and did not return. The freedom of coming and going was about to end, seemingly, as the Lake coalition was compelled to regard itself as ‘permanent’, like the coming site. Between 1997 and 1998 a “bigger split” occurred between the Lake brothers. Michael’s eldest brother, Peter, and his wife, Winnie, decided they “wanted no part in the site”, and then, Simon and Edward, his next two older brothers, who were married to two sisters, Christina and Ann, "got sick of it and went travelling”. Shortly after, a fourth brother, Chris, and his wife, Ann, and their children headed to the UK on their own. Eventually a fluid three-generation Lake coalition formed in the UK, which included two of Willem’s brothers, three of his sons and their ‘own families’, and several of Willem’s nephews and nieces.

Although Michael’s prominence in the court case and his commitment to the site played a role in precipitating the changing structure of the camp at Ballyrush, other factors should be noted. Although all eight brothers exhibited a strong propensity to remain with their father, each man’s break with his natal family involved following a brother in four out of five cases, and thus echoed Willem’s and Bridgie’s earlier migration, when Willem had followed two brothers and a cousin, and camped with them regularly until the mid-1980s. Regardless of triggering factors, patterns of readjustment resulted in new breed coalitions, each headed by a brother or cousin of Willem, forming together an extended network of ‘the name’. Nor did the ‘splits’ end the Lakes’ close relationships, and subsequently, a succession of marriages between Michael’s children and those of his brothers has set up a new sequence of coming and going between Ireland and the UK. In short, the ‘splits’ prematurely instantiated the characteristic separation of brothers into ‘separate springs’ that normally occurs around middle age, frequently hastened by the deaths of a senior couple and the

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maturation of a new generation of young families. Those who “got sick of it” and pulled away exercised an independence that requires no explanation: “they were lonely for the road”, unwilling to be tied up by legal rules which disrupted the fractal cohesiveness of independent families.

The tap’s transformation of the camp into a temporary site was nevertheless a metaphor of a newly legalised collective status that would soon be objectified in walls and doors, locked barriers, and legal prohibitions. The Lake coalition was becoming a ‘personne morale’ in relation to the site, yet to be created.

**Personification and the ‘compatible group’**

The site as a metaphor of the public self or ‘name’ of the breed emerges from a confluence of events: the changes in a camp as it reluctantly edges towards an increasingly fixed form, the tendency of outsiders to channel negotiation through a single individual; and the legal constraints against camping’s fluid, metonymic relations, pushing it towards vertical and horizontal relations. Official attention deterred Willem’s and Bridgie’s siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews from coming and going as they used to, and eventually, a one mile exclusion zone was established around the site with stringent penalties for anyone caught camping within it.

Thus, the site gradually personifies a pared-down coalition of the breed called ‘the one family’, frequently the ‘own families’ of male adult siblings and their parents, and in the same move, it suppresses recognition of the unnamed substance of women, the ‘back-breeds’, whose discontinuous threads nevertheless persist from one generation to another, ‘follyin’ aan’ in the continuity of first names now heard only among Travellers. The ‘one family’ is an idealised sum of external and internal orientations, being the source of its own defence, sexual reproduction, and the masculine embodiment of the name. Its political force combines architectural presence and presentness. Like the house of the house society, the site’s personhood arises within the political economy that brings settled authorities, local supporters and Traveller breeds - each of whose perceptions of the site are differently inflected - into simultaneous conflict and co-operation. Possession of a purpose-built site by a coalition describing itself as ‘all the one family’ is a victory over resistant council officials; it gives architectural substance to the personified breed segment, and displays the acumen and solidarity that guarantee its continuity. It lends a competitive edge over rival breeds, and the fact that politicians fiercely resist sites adds to the sense that sites belong to Travellers by right, and as one Traveller activist put it at a public meeting in Dublin in 2007, are “an
expression of our identity”, a phrase in which Travellers importantly appear as the inventors or originators of sites.

The concept of ‘compatibility’, invented by Travellers, (and used with innocent transparency in the 1983 Report of the Travelling People Review Body) defrays personification when there is no ‘one family’. Avoiding the implication of dominance by men ‘of the name’, ‘compatibility’ reifies the force of a group’s cohesive relations without foregrounding a dominant breed. In the 1990s the ‘compatible group’ in the west of Ireland\(^\text{196}\) constitutes the new political ontology of coalitions seeking sites. A ‘compatible group’ might consist of more adult sisters than brothers, or cognatic cousins without elders. Male heads of families might be unrelated or related through women. ‘Compatibility’ objectifies an internal relation whose orientation is essentially external, and seeks to supplant tension arising (for example) from the dominance of cross-siblingship over affinity or filiation. ‘Compatibility’ s’ claimed unanimity thus skirts around the political force of the Traveller ‘name’. In the 1980s and 90s, after several years of living beside the road in their home towns, young adults who had left houses or tigeens on marriage, (‘towns Travellers’, some call them,) began to form coalitions with bilateral cousins and siblings on long-term temporary sites. They began to describe themselves as ‘compatible groups’ and solidarity was often cemented later by marriages between their children.

To summarise, sites, both temporary and ‘permanent’, materialised an indeterminate space of conciliation and resistance between Travellers and the settled state, and between Traveller breeds and ‘families’ in all their forms of nested interaction, mutual dependence and competitive autonomy. In the architectural ontology of the permanent site, the ‘one family’ and ‘compatible group’ arise as personnes morales, and something closely resembling a Lévi-Straussian ‘house’ appears. The spectral site gives rise to changing interdependencies, and a pervasive sense of bodily unease, apprehension and the uncanny begins to pervade residents’ experience of the site and its architecture. This spectral site is inseparable from its real existence.

\(^{196}\) According to one activist the term was not widely used. Further inquiry is needed to establish its significance beyond the mid-west.
The Real site

A site grows in people’s minds long before it takes solid, visible form. Walls and bays appear in discussions between husbands and wives, siblings, elders and their children; the imagined site hardens like concrete around the ‘permanent’ site community, officials and advocates, and erects security barriers between coalitions of a local Traveller population. ‘The site’ looms over tense council meetings and back room discussions between officials with legal responsibilities and councillors with reputations. Scarcely a week passes without local newspapers publishing outraged responses to the rumoured millions of Euros that ‘the site’ will cost and the luxurious facilities it will reportedly provide. Through the long years of waiting, it takes shape in countless conversations characterised by opposing interests and uncertain aims. Still unbuilt, it shelters half-hearted alliances and fuels private resentments. Between what appear as two opposing ‘sides’, Travellers and council officials, neither wants the site as they imagine the others imagine it, and yet both sides want it. Resistance and suspicion are stacked against the growing inevitability that a particular site must be built.

As the building work approaches, the Travellers’ shaky belief is undermined by rumoured changes of plans, and drawings, previously withheld, reveal unexpected realities. But ‘consultation’ has finished and next comes concrete. Why has the site been pushed back from the road, making it isolated? Why are these bays smaller than promised? Where is the land for the horses? And the stables? Rising anger is stifled beneath recognition that it is either this site, or nothing. Whenever one ‘side’ wavers and threatens to pull out, the other pushes forward with greater determination, for they are bound together in the future of the site. The true object of this alliance is a spectral site: a material extension of hope, coercion, control and resistance; of symbolic violence, rights and legal recognition; of the state’s ultimate defeat of Travellers or freedom for post-nomadic familism; of an end to, or indefinite prolongation of a present state of irresolution and impasse. The spectral site is either the end of Traveller life or a new beginning, and perhaps it is both.

The aims of settled advocates to see Travellers’ living conditions improve and encourage children into regular education, were also ‘rights’ which lent moral force to the unequal fight to procure a site. In seeking such rights from authorities that for years had constantly evicted Travellers, people unavoidably lent force to these claims by stressing their connections to ‘place’, and later, were compelled to do so by the ‘indigenous clause’ of many post-1998 Traveller accommodation policies.\(^{197}\) Settled supporters guided those they called

\(^{197}\) Annual Traveller counts were used in counties including Clare to establish continuing residency. Three years was a qualifying period for eligibility for Traveller-specific accommodation.
‘our local’ Travellers in the power of particular ideas and the intricacies of local politics. In numerous ways the borders of different interests between those involved in struggles to obtain sites were indistinct, and whatever misgivings Travellers harboured, they often subscribed to the ideas of those who were on their side, both settled and Traveller activists. In pursuit of collective rights and recognition Travellers were increasingly reified in theoretical discourses about themselves; ethnicity, culture and identity formed the currency of a new political economy that rejected the paternalism of ‘integration and settlement’ (O’Connell 1992:1). In parallel with the widening sphere of Traveller politics from the 1980s that solicitor Sean Elder identifies, evidence of statistical differences in the life of the body, which a scientific humanism held should not exist, marked Travellers’ lives out from those of the settled population. Unassailable figures on education, life expectancy and health status condensed Traveller lives and bodies into universal units shaped and misshapen by injustice, inequality and systematic deprivation (Dempsey and Geary 1979; The Health Research Board 1987; Rotman, Tussing and Wiley 1996).

As spectral sites assumed complex, contradictory forms in court cases, policy documents and the media, the biopolitical ‘Traveller’ body, reified substance and political agent, was gradually extended into the controlled visibility of ‘Traveller-specific’ architecture.

re-embodiment

Eight years after the court case, as work advanced on the site, the Lake families were about to take up residence. The more solid its material form, the more unfamiliar it became. Its three-dimensionality, invisible in the plans, obstructed sight lines, and its restraints on freedom of movement appeared. High banks concealed the residents from the outside world and it from them, and walls, angles and distances obstructed people’s sight of each other. Locked height restriction barriers prevented trailers entering or leaving at will. The council officials became nervous. How would the Travellers react to what was there that they could not have known about, as well as what was not there - the promised paddock? Minor last-minute concessions distracted everyone from big issues the site left unresolved and smaller ones they would have to get used to. Unnerved by the sudden reality of what he had held out for over eight years, Michael decided to leave with his ‘own family’. The officials were desperate: without him as its lynch-pin the site could not survive. Pleas were made for those who would go with him - the children who would lose school places, and elders the security of
a legal stopping-place. Eventually, when they resorted to offers of rent abeyance, Michael gave in, agreeing to ‘give it a go for a few years’.

Versions of how trailers, people and their daily occupations interacted in the camp were now fixed into odd shapes, with solid materials imposing separations and hierarchies. Concrete walls surrounding each family’s ‘bay’ divided and allocated spaces of possible interaction. In contrast with the way camps ranged along the edge of the road, sheltered on one side by trees and hedgerows, with trailer doors and windows giving a clear view of all that passed by outside, now the site’s centre and occupants were invisible from outside and the camp had, so to speak, lost its eyes.

In camps, spaces between trailers allowed a fluid combination of sociability and privacy. Sights and sounds drifted reassuringly from one to another, with room for people to work discretely, scrubbing rugs or clothes, fixing up sulkies or sorting scrap. Private concentration was punctuated by mutual observation, jokes and snatches of conversation. A closed trailer door in the camp created a space for private conversation; if curtains were drawn, someone was asleep or taking a wash. You could see these things without looking, and things you weren’t supposed to see you ‘didn’t notice’. In the site, walls separated the spaces where people carried out their work, the yards too far apart for easy communication, so that now you had to walk out of your own bay and round into the next one to speak to someone, self-conscious in case your unseen approach disturbed their privacy. The expansive proximities of life in the camp, and the intimate or gendered spaces of trailers, cars and campfires were terminated by the site’s imposition of new postures and formalities. People struggled to rediscover what had been ordinarily immanent in daily life: the subtle exchange between co-operation and independence; the elegant and economic way in which spaces rapidly transformed from one use to another, through which, at the micro-scale of dwelling in the camp, they had enacted and modified the same freedoms, obligations, resistances and attachments as coming and going itself.

Outsiders coming unexpectedly into the site also posed difficulties. When visitors arrived in the camp, they could read its mood in seconds from their cars. In seeing people calling through open doors and windows, women mopping out trailers, men working nearby and small children around, a van absent here and there - a precise inventory of who was where, doing what, was instantly taken in. The camp’s degrees of openness were immediately clear. Visitors would dissolve quickly and unobtrusively into its open spaces, men moving closer to the trees to talk and smoke, the sound of their voices absorbed, or into a car with the doors left open for simultaneous observation and privacy, while women and girls dispersed between trailers with open doors, and boys disappeared together towards
their horses. The site bore no such easy legibility. Concealed from approaching vehicles, its occupants could not see who was coming before they were already there in the yard. People’s ears became alert to the slight change in the tone of the engine of a distant vehicle that might indicate a van slowing down to turn into the site. The boys jump up anxiously a dozen times a day and lean out through the kitchen window to see who it might be, furnishing their father with reports. Rapid instructions follow that are instantly obeyed.

Depending on who the visitors are, family members, who now spend much of their time together in the large kitchen, reorganize themselves at the speed of light. Men and boys fly outside with a deceptively leisurely air to conduct conversations in the yard or ‘down the site’, preventing certain male Travellers or strangers from entering the house. The female head of the family makes a quick decision as to where she will meet female visitors, in the kitchen or the reserved parlour, and she and her daughters take up their positions. The social choreography that the camp made possible with little conscious effort is replaced by frequent bouts of nervous reaction, concealed by apparent ease at the moment of salutation.

Watchfulness and a sense of vulnerability arise from the way site architectures expose, conceal, and constrain the body. Refabricating Traveller ‘families’ in the guise of incipient settled neighbours on a would-be housing estate, the site’s ‘fixed and eternal forms’ contradict the performative ‘flux and movement’ (Simmel 1971: 352) of camps. Camps perform a continual re-embodifying of the social world, foregrounding and muting the gendered substance of breeds in order to give expression to the non-synchronous worlds of women and men, brothers and sisters, parents and children, and the living and the dead. In the site, the many families that make up ‘the one family’ are not those that follow on, constantly seeking to recoup the deficits of dispersed sibling groups in new reproductive forms, but those that are encased as separate, conjugal families in the site’s emulation of settled house-form.

Architecture’s simplification of collective personhood is mirrored in the site’s external orientation as an embodiment of the breed and in its self-understanding as the ‘one family’. A senior man, the local representative of the breed which lends its name to the site, might be surrounded in the site by the breed/s of his mother or patrilateral grandmother, represented in his wife, his sons- and daughters-in-law and grandchildren, or nephews and nieces. But

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198 This problematic feature of most sites is mitigated by several typical measures: the siting of the senior man’s bay in optimum sightline of the entrance; children playing outside who rapidly alert adults as to who is coming, and the use of mobile phones between trailers or houses, to inform those at ‘blind’ spots of the site that they may be about to get a visitor. Children might throw a ball or encourage a dog to impede a strange car, and then approach the car window demanding to know who you’ve come to see. This buys time, and enables a detailed report to be relayed rapidly to adults.
the hierarchy of the name, now an ‘entire political technology of life’ (Foucault 1978: 145), tends to flatten and submerge complex temporalities of gendered personhood, and those without members of their natal breeds in the site might feel, as one woman described herself, ‘like an orphan’.

Gell describes Maori houses enthralled in the dynamic of competitive practice forcibly restricted to the house by colonial rule, and ‘unable to compete... via the traditional warlike means’ (1998: 251). Instead, they project imagined future dominance over their enemies, driven on by the house’s seemingly autonomous purpose as a frustrated ‘index of agency’, to materialise the iconic male bodies of ‘future-orientated’ ancestors as dwellings (ibid: 256). Permanent sites, mediating political relations between Travellers, and those between Travellers objectified as ‘a class’ and the settled world, induce a similar architectural trope of male embodiment and reorientation of the breed’s reproductive ‘agency’. An erosion of the nuanced temporalities of gendered substance occurs that is surely comparable to the temporal re-embodiment of the Maori - a re-embodiment in which gendered complexity is sacrificed to male singularity. The passionate intensities of the temporary present and wistful remembering of the past in camps, which characterised so much of the pleasure and determined purpose of Traveller life, are ransomed against the possibility of a hoped for future in the site.

**an egg in wool**

On the point of handing the Lake site over officials begin to treat it like an “egg in wool”. Whereas its culmination had been imagined as the ‘delivery’ of the completed site, a finished object, to its occupants, now the site itself is seemingly about to crack open to reveal an unknown content, as if another kind of body were emerging which takes on some of their own characteristics. Michael’s wife, Helen, remembers those early weeks living in the house: “It was strange. Whenever you spoke you kept hearing your own voice.” The unknown experience of echo makes people perceptible and unfamiliar to themselves in the same moment. Both the house, and the site as a whole, generate a sensory split in which speaking and hearing, seeing and being observed, occur simultaneously. This uncanny doubling of oneself in the absorbent, reflective, watchful site takes more disturbing, animate forms. People constantly hear voices talking and whispering outside their windows at night, but when they summon the courage to investigate, they find no one there. For a long time the Lakes are convinced that the site is haunted.
Gradually, inexplicable habits and routines which become necessary. In the hours of dawn and late at night Michael encircles the perimeter of the site and, unseen, regularly observes his father, Willem, at the other end of the site, carrying out secretive inspections in the half-light, before anyone else is up. Michael smiles and says, “He doesn’t know I’m watching him. He thinks everyone’s still in bed, but I can see him, I know what he’s doing. He’s looking around to see if the lads’ve brought anything in that maybe shouldn’t be there. He wants to know everything that’s going on, but he knows they won’t tell him, so he’s having a good look around, and then later he’ll pretend he already knew all about it.” The site forges links between the Lakes and a wider circle of critical, appraising eyes implicit in the site’s self-observing presence, which their behaviours now begin to emulate, and their overriding aim of mutual protection begins to manifest itself as suspicion or fear of betrayal.

the instrumental complex

‘[M]y body always extends across the tool which it utilizes: it is at the end of the cane on which I lean against the earth’. ‘Far from the body being first for us and revealing things to us, it is the instrumental-things which in their original appearance indicate our body to us. The body is not a screen between things and ourselves; it manifests only the individuality and contingency of our original relation to instrumental-things.’ (349) Sartre (2003: 349)

Michael, circling the perimeter of the site and securing its boundaries in his mind, performs a work of reconnaissance and objectification that the site simultaneously performs on him. A series of partial stand-offs between the Lakes and the site are mediated by officials to appear as routine, controlled transgressions: caretakers turn selectively blind eyes; barriers appear to be locked but have no keys. How far could it go? Once, Michael asked me to design a stable that didn’t look like a stable; that, from a distance, might be mistaken for a shed. The co-extensiveness of the body and its ‘instruments’ - rendering the site’s occupants simultaneously visible and unfamiliar to themselves, contained by the site and yet able to escape its controls - augurs the potential for mutual violence.
Many sites fall victim to punishments. Windows are first to go, which is usually enough to summon silent workmen to carry out repairs, followed by official gestures of conciliation. Such punishments hold out the threat of greater destruction. An empty caretaker’s hut might burn to the ground overnight; once, famously, a vacant house in a group housing scheme was stripped bare, and, its doors and windows removed, it was turned into a stable; sometimes whole sites are abandoned. Following Sartre, the material instrument of the site is its occupants’ means of ‘enter[ing] into the world’, and the ‘resistance of things’ reveals the body to itself as a combination of action and sensation at the centre of an ‘instrumental complex’. Acts of violence against the site signal rejection of its ‘world’, and of the docility of the collective body, that the Lakes – the site’s centre of reference as a particular kind of house society – may be thought to disclose. After an early incident of broken windows on the Lake site, Michael shrugs, ‘I can’t answer for what the boys might do’, echoing the road engineer’s threat so many years earlier, which drew in its wake the promise of the tap.

The ‘one family’ draws on its ability to atomise into mutually unaccountable, autonomous ‘families’, or distinct generations with different ways of making their views known. The Traveller ‘body’ revealed by the site is always in tension as well as unanimity, and the site’s uncertain balance between coercive power and the fragility of ‘an egg in wool’ shows it does not have the upper hand.

When I ask Michael what he thinks about locked barriers at Traveller sites he replies, ‘Well it all depends on how you look at it. Whether it’s there to keep us in or to keep others out.’ In fact, the barrier keeps no one out and no one in, the whereabouts of its key having long been forgotten. But it performs the allegory of mimesis, of knowledge of ‘otherness from the inside’, as Gibbons (1996: 147) describes Irish colonial experience. The site, making hidden difference visible in order to demonstrate how effectively it can be suppressed, is metonymically constituted in the barrier. Although secretly unlocked, it could be locked, it seems to be locked, and in the official mind, it is always locked.

Sartre’s ‘body at the end of the cane on which I lean against the earth’ envisages a sensory ‘consciousness’ constituted moment by moment, like that of Michael circling the site. But the site’s foregrounding of the breed as ‘the one family’, generates a particular kind of sensate, imagined-and-constructed body and animate structure, a novel more-and-less known body in relation to the present-time of the site. The Lakes are conscious of something having been implanted among them, of the ‘secretly familiar’ sense of ‘doubling’ to which mimesis gives form and expression (Taussig 1993: 125), and yet there is also a sense of something missing; something ‘has gone wrong’ with the site, people often say.
The following chapter considers the importance funerary monuments assume as counter-sites to permanent, 'Traveller-specific' architectures, when camps no longer constitute the dominant instrument and imaginary of Traveller embodiment.
Chapter Nine

The work of the grave:

“We all have dead people.”

“A stone is going to get a lot of attention, and if it’s one of the lower scale stones, it’s open for gossip.”

(Traveller family head)

‘[W]e do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things… [W]e live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.’

(Foucault 1986)

This chapter considers whether radical changes in modes of dwelling among Irish Travellers are associated with the developing importance of funerary architecture, and what may be at stake for Traveller architects in the expressive materiality and collective labour involved in mortuary practices, complex and elaborate grave monuments and public mourning.

In Rathkeale, County Limerick, where Travellers make up at least half the town’s population and have been established as house-dwellers since the beginning of the twentieth century (O’Connor 1996), the Catholic churchyard of St Mary’s has become famous for the large, stylish monuments of generations of Traveller residents. There is a parallel in the town itself, a former colonial Protestant plantation and the centre of colonial military intelligence, whose slightly dilapidated Georgian town centre marks a striking contrast with the ‘hacienda’
style houses built by wealthy Travellers on the old Fair Hill. Recently, Rathkeale Travellers’ funerary monuments have been subsumed into local controversies in which architecture, property, private interests and public disclosure are historically intertwined. As a result, the Council cemetery became the unusual focus of a new governmentality.

In 2007, Limerick County Council introduced revised burial ground regulations for Rathkeale, governing the size and construction of grave monuments in the civil cemetery, in a move to control, but equally to sanction ambitious architectural monuments. Fears over public safety and ground subsidence were cited, and a height limit was set of 2.1 metres, based on the largest of the Celtic crosses found in many Irish cemeteries. Although much lighter than the weighty monuments favoured by Travellers, the Celtic cross formed an historical precedent for setting measurable equality between the largest of settled and Traveller monuments. Henceforth, in Rathkeale engineers’ drawings would have to be submitted for prior approval, and stonemasons would be locked into the cemetery while carrying out their work. The mason would have to summon council officials by mobile phone in order to be let out, so that they could inspect and measure the monument with the captive stonemason still on hand. While the practical aims of these measures were felt to provide sufficient justification, the new regulations served another purpose, which was to defuse growing hostility towards Travellers’ graves and forestall more extreme suggestions. In effect, the regulations defended the building of large monuments, provided that they were safe.

While councillors discussed the new regulations, settled Rathkealers described how a ‘war’ was waged over the cemetery. For several years prior to this ‘war’, the cemetery caretaker had put into practice his own unofficial system of controls, segregating settled and Traveller graves, and, seemingly, making more desirable plots available to settled people out of turn. All this came to light following the complaint of a Traveller family who had been unfairly done out of a grave they particularly desired – a corner plot with paths on two sides, affording the best visibility. ‘Frontage’ constitutes a desirable feature in graves, as it does in houses and shops. The family had accepted the caretaker’s explanation that the grave was not yet due to be used and took an inferior plot, but were aggrieved shortly after when it was given to a settled family, ‘out of turn’. Following an investigation into their complaint the unrepentant caretaker resigned. However, at this juncture, a self-appointed body of settled locals, the Rathkeale Burial Ground Committee, publicly endorsed and sought to formalise the caretaker’s methods by proposing a ‘three tier’ cemetery, with segregated zones for

199 I learned much of the story from an official directly involved, & alternative versions from local settled residents, and later from a local stonemason.
Travellers and settled, and an intermediate area for those who did not mind their dead mixing, so to speak.

Settled disapproval, bordering on hostility, towards Travellers’ funerary monuments found some support in the County Archaeologist who sternly described ‘two traditions’ to me and the ‘inappropriate impact on visual amenity’ of Travellers’ graves ‘overshadowing’ settled headstones. By implication, he appeared to support the re-organization of the cemetery. Thus, the County Council’s essentially technical and bureaucratic focus in the revised regulations on engineer’s drawings, height limits, inspections and yard sticks quelled matters before Rathkeale’s cemetery ‘war’ got even further out of hand.

The Council cemetery had become a bulwark of settled hostility toward Traveller property ownership, and a surrogate for other, deeper resentments. Rathkeale, whose long-faded importance was formerly linked to colonial military security and its Volunteer troop of ‘Loyal German Fusiliers’, had once been the principal County town, and locals attributed its ‘decline’ to deliberate official neglect and the influence on the town of its famous Travellers. Like the vacant shops and houses that they described as ways of ‘rolling over money’ out of sight of the state, Travellers’ graves were targets of rumour and suspicion. Settled detractors enthusiastically attributed all vacant property to Travellers ‘taking over’ the town. However, I learned that ownership of the more prominent empty buildings was a public secret, and it was not Travellers. Traveller graves, like the empty shops, were portrayed as elaborate repositories of guilty wealth, literal containers of hidden secrets. “What is hidden in these graves?” a retired teacher and local historian asked insinuatingly, and claimed that graves had been ‘searched by the police’ and that ‘a body was moved in the night’ by Travellers who ‘surrounded the cemetery with diggers, and threatened to dig it up’. A Rathkeale official and local police (who first locked the door of the police station,) refuted all these rumours, which appeared to encode long-held suspicions about the status and ownership of property in this former colonial hub of British military intelligence, where, a local councillor explained, people have long ‘avoided registering [title] to conceal sales’ of property.

Fetishised in the buried secrets of graves, secret title, and the unseemly mixing of the dead, what threatens to rise to the surface in Rathkeale, like an unwelcome exhumation, are the lingering secrets of colonial rule. In this former Protestant Palatine plantation,\(^{200}\) where

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\(^{200}\) In 1709 around 3,000 persecuted Protestant German Palatines were given haven in several estates in Ireland, in a bid to increase security against rebellious Irish Catholics. They received economic support, land and house-building materials, and were allowed to bear arms. Unlike most short-lived Palatine plantations, Rathkeale retained and took pride in its Palatine culture, preserving imported traditions and spoken German into the later 19\(^{th}\) century. Palatine names persist in Rathkeale, now the centre of the Irish Palatine Association.
imported religion, names and language marked out settlers and their descendants as a privileged minority for over two hundred years, some people’s ancestors are buried in the ‘wrong’ (i.e., Protestant) churchyard, reflecting a time before later generations cast in their lot with Catholicism, the religion of those formerly oppressed, and even now, the status of much property in Rathkeale is uncertain, fuelling conjecture. Much of the town was a protected estate, and houses - unusually in Ireland- were held by lease. Gradually, the Councillor explained, as colonial estates changed hands, many people ‘just stopped paying’ their ground rent, hoping to claim full title. Now, the huge prices that Rathkeale houses command as a result of demand by a burgeoning Traveller population mean that concealment of the housing market has intensified. Settled people often sell secretively for carrier bags full of cash, in unregistered sales, hiding the inflated price from relatives, and perhaps from others who, even now, may own the ground beneath the house. Images of the ground trembling and collapsing, and graves opening to reveal – who knows what? – abounded in settled accounts of Rathkeale’s ‘Graveyard War’; their real significance lies in a conflict between the nostalgia and resentment of settled Rathkeale for its lost colonial status, and the fear that property claims associated with its past might even now jump out of the grave to expropriate the town’s current residents.

Amid the mythic layers of settled Rathkeale’s sentiments the intuition that something of value remains around the body of the Traveller after death that is ‘hidden’ from settled people but proclaimed by the grave, is of particular interest to us here. Rathkeale - with its transfers of unregistered property for bags full of cash - is in many ways exceptional, but its remarkable funerary architecture illustrates the wider point this chapter explores: that changes in nomadic Traveller dwelling are linked to the increasing importance of the grave as a publicly marked architectural event and site, and in their size and magnificence, funerary monuments command the attention of both Travellers and settled people.

“then” and “now”

The accounts of older Travellers make it clear that mortuary practices have changed. Beyond Rathkeale, funerary architectures of any sort may not have existed much before the mid-twentieth century among many Irish Travellers on the road. Rituals were brief, taking the form of Catholic prayers for the souls of the dead over roadside burials. Whether many

201 I.e., Not recorded with the Land Registry.
Traveller burials took place in churchyards or, as Maher (1972) describes, eluded the ritual of the Church, can only be determined by further research. Eileen, a lively grandmother in her seventies from a famous musical family, recounted that Travellers were buried beside the road with little ceremony; as a child she witnessed such burials of her grandparents. Among settled witnesses, such roadside burials may have awakened memories of stories of the Great Famine, when many people were buried where they fell, reinforcing an official image of ‘itinerants’ as victims of poverty grown accustomed to their fate. The ‘side of the road’, imbricating social memory and lived reality, is thus subsumed as a ‘mythicised space’ which ‘functions as both object and force’ (Sack 1980, cited in Feldman 1997: 77). A metonym of modern Ireland’s moral order, the ‘side of the road’ configures an unrecuperated margin of history on the outer edge of territory, property and religion. As synecdoche of a recovered state of original wholeness in the ‘settled’ majority, the side of the road embodies a state of rupture, where ‘the substitution of the whole by the detached part is the basic principle of sacrificial process’ (Feldman 1997: 78).

Although settled on-lookers’ encounters with Traveller burials may have been coloured by nationalism’s mythic topology, for Eileen, Maher and many others ‘reared on the road’, the road was metaphor rather than margin, endowed with mimetic sympathy for human life, and minds and bodies that are, Travellers say, ‘full of going’. The road, where the dead were buried, was an unbroken material history with numberless turns and possible directions, reflecting human life as movement in the spatial metaphor of landscape. The relation between the life of the body and the road, imagined as one of endless striving, mirrored in changing vistas and the constant transmutation of one set of thoughts and sights into another, formed the subjectivity known, elegantly and simply, as ‘going’. The phrase ‘Travellers are full of going’ thus speaks of resourcefulness and invention, of the pleasure of variety and the unexpected, as well as the body’s weakening under the burdens of daily survival. Burials beside the road were simply the end of ‘going’.

Willem Lake, however, remembered burials in the churchyard of a small town at the centre of a tight orbit of winter camps. His grandfather died in the early 1940s when he was twelve. ‘At that time there it didn’t matter. Whoever had a few pound ‘d do it’. A son-in-law, married to the third daughter, ‘took it on and sold a couple o’ horses. None of the sons had any money. All that mattered was that it was done and everyone was happy. When it was done everything went well.’ Willem deliberately emphasised the absence of ‘rules’, competition and anxiety that Travellers describe today. ‘Families are under a lot of pressure to be honest’.

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202 McLean 2004: 101
203 Roadside burial in England for suicides is discussed by Halliday (2010).
today. Today you’re talking about thousands and thousands, which, it could be a couple o’ hundred goin’ back years ago.’ Two years ago, someone told me in 2005, a headstone for a family member cost a hundred thousand Euros, and between twenty and forty thousand was said to be average.

Women spoke in hushed tones of headstones that ‘cost thousands upon thousands’, and about how ‘each one o’ them’d be savin’ the money each week’. Publicly, women rehearsed the official account, that ‘the families all contributes, same as a weddin’. At the end of the day they’re all the one family.’ The ideology of unihierarchical unity among a local breed bound by well-recognized obligations papers over shades of internal difference that are the inevitable entailments of marriage, siblingship, parenthood and descent. In more personal accounts, the trope of ‘the one family’ fell away. Older women who had buried husbands proudly acknowledged that they had steadfastly refused contributions to the dead man’s headstone of ‘his brothers’. Married sons described how they had debarred their uncles, and the rights of sisters and daughters to be represented in the funerary gifts known as ‘pieces’ were, people said, strictly defined. Each account of a particular monument’s creation involved differentiated rights, exclusion, and hierarchy, yet for almost everyone who described these ‘rules’, the monument was the first, and often the only one, they had been involved in making.

The work of the grave, which takes a year or more to accomplish, has become important for making visible the social force of relationships following the death of a male family head in particular. The graves, like own-children, are works of emotionally intense provision that require labour, intelligence, and a critical and protective eye. Once complete, they come into their own and speak publicly for themselves, and the shared substance of the breed, contained as architecture in the grave, continues to flow beyond it in the names and bodies of close kin, and in mutual commitments their joint labour has made visible. Making a funerary monument is an extended act of emotional effort and imagination, a transformative exchange between the living and the dead which produces the deceased in new sensory forms among the living. The architecture of the grave both constitutes and makes visible this new material and embodied social relation. As symbolic representations and transformative agents, Traveller funerary monuments thus conflate the distinction between inscriptive and performative traditions of social memory (Battaglia 1992: 3).
reproduction, contestation and biography

Bloch’s and Parry’s (1982) comparative interpretation of culturally diverse mortuary practices identifies recurrent themes: life as a ‘limited good’ that has to be ritually regenerated; the denial of death as discontinuity; and the identification of women with death as disorder and putrefaction, in opposition to a masculine order of asexual reproduction. Among the Merina, the biological ‘facts’ of life and death are transmuted by the tomb’s architecture into the fiction of an ‘undivided and enduring descent group’ (34) eternally bound to the soil. In the ritual of double burial, individual, biographical life is subordinated to a transcendent collectivity. Where politically salient tombs, such as those of kings, do not materialise a timeless collectivity, Bloch and Parry argue that lineage or bodily preservation signify other forms of transcendence over individuality or mortality.

Key aspects of the political economy of ‘social’ death remain unclear. Is control over, or repudiation of affinity the aim or alibi for death’s ‘ideological construction’ of social order? How do relations of production shape mortuary rituals? What impels ‘the handling of death as a device for … political domination’ (41), and why do hunter-gatherers find no need for ‘transcendental authority’, or deploy gender in service of the symbolism of death? The recognition that funerary rites may serve political ends is important, but drawing gender, affinity and fertility toward a single common purpose of legitimating ‘traditional’ male authority is, in the end, both too little and too much. Too little, because linked questions concerning production and dwelling are overlooked, and because ghosts are relegated to the marginal status of ‘subsidiary beliefs’ or ‘suspicions’. An emphasis on reproduction and ideology supplants the multiple temporalities that surround the dead, the living, and those in between. And too much, because individual voices, contexts, and interpretations are missing, together with expressions of loss, grief, memory and contact with the dead that situate death and ritual within experiences of incommensurability.

Seremetakis has criticised the treatment of ‘death as an empty stage’ (1991: 14) for the performance of institutional codes, where ‘[t]o talk about death is to really talk about kinship, inheritance, the fertility of women, the social power of men’ (ibid: 13), and she cites Ariès’s (1981) suggestion that the ‘deep structure’ of European death rites points to their function ‘as a zone of local resistance to centralising institutions such as church or state’. Rather than an ‘eccentric event’ transfigured to serve ‘social structure’, ‘disynchronicity’ becomes a means to explore death rites in inner Mani ‘as an arena of social contestation… where heterogeneous and antagonistic cultural codes and social interests meet and tangle’. Recognized in terms of their own ‘temporal rhythms, transformations and levels of
engagement with and disengagement from the social order’, death rites form ‘a vantage point from which to view society’, rather than the reverse (ibid: 15). In Inner Mani, women’s dreams, laments, and divination make death rites an excluded space of memory and critical social commentary, where the dead and the living are intertwined in an enduring ‘poetics of labor, pain, death and fate’ (ibid: 203), disclosing ‘the strongest evidence for the desire to preserve the individual character of the dead’ (ibid: 178).

**beyond social reproduction and universalism: the authority of grief**

In the following account of mortuary rituals among Irish Travellers, I draw on Serematakis’s account of emotional signification and expression as ‘formative and efficacious’ ‘techniques of the self’ that derive social force from the shared ‘moral inferences of social actors’ (ibid: 4; cf. Abu-Lughod 1986; Myers 1979, 1988). Beyond a supposed opposition between ‘public’ and ‘private’ emotion, Schepet-Hughes and Lock (1987: 28) argue that ‘emotions entail both feelings and cognitive orientations, public morality and cultural ideology’. Rights claimed by the ‘authority of grief’ in empowering communities of shared knowledge reveal the limitations of approaches based on the social construction of emotion, as well as of universalist interpretations that situate emotion within a priori individual, biological processes (R. Rosaldo 1984). Clark and Franzman (2006: 579) cite the example of roadside memorials which instantiate mourning as a moral claim with its own social force, where: ‘the strength of grief, the power of presence and the importance of place allows ordinary people to assume and, therefore, challenge the authority of the church and the government as official purveyors and regulators of mourning ritual’ (cf. Doss 2008; Nora 1989).


She states that, without ‘[giving] priority to an innate biology of being’, ‘to make emotion a special form of cognition contributes to … boundaries between biological being and the cultural world.’ Beyond mourning’s nexus of cognitive rupture, social dissonance and the force of its claim to truth, Lock’s emphasis on the body suggests greater attention should be accorded to the funerary rite’s mediation of bodily relations between mourners and the deceased. I therefore seek to address a further question: how are

204 This is strikingly absent from the embodied cognition and ‘dispositions’ of Bourdieu’s habitus.
transfigured bodies necessary for creating ‘spaces of resistance’ founded on the ‘dramaturgy of feeling’ of funerary rites (Seremetakis 1991: 5)? Mourning and mortuary ritual transact transfigured realities of which the body is the complex idiom. In the opening of a tomb, the cleaning of bones, or personification in a monument and grave-gifts - bereaved and deceased share a scene of transformation as agents and patients. The ‘ornamentation’ of the dead in ‘artifacts of feeling’ (Seremetakis 1991: 214-5) forms part of an intimate transformation and exchange of embodiment between the living and the dead. It is this transformation and exchange that I seek to explore in the bodily metaphors of Irish Travellers’ funerary monuments.

**embodying the living and the dead**

A mile or two from town in the mid-West of Ireland, the cemetery had spread out to occupy two starkly contrasting sites, one on either side of the road. On one side was the nineteenth century graveyard, its filigree iron gates barely clinging to capped stone pillars, elders and hawthorns shading tombs and headstones of varied shapes and sizes with worn inscriptions, their ancient kerbstones and iron rails sinking into long grass. The neglected dead of the colonial era, evoking death as mere forgetfulness, sink from history and return to nature. Across the road its post-Independence successor admirably fulfilled R.M. Butler’s prescription for ‘very simple’ Irish modernism: ‘bold and vigorous, but very refined – indeed almost severe’ (Fraser 1996: 14). Five-barred wooden gates, a grid of tightly mown and concrete paths, and orderly rows of uniform plots and virtually identical headstones created the mortuary equivalent of a orderly row of ‘improved’ labourers’ cottages, the changing architecture of death forming a visible surface of shifting political contexts.

In the new cemetery the settled headstones, fronted by rectangles of faded stone chips, display matter-of-fact equality. They have little to say, to no one in particular. The deceased’s last address and on some, authorship of the headstone are recorded. ‘Erected by William Cassidy’ marks the headstone’s status as object rather than subject. Over seventy or more years, little had altered in the materiality of death, and ‘least said soonest mended’ came to mind as the aphoristic principle of settled grave architecture in the twentieth century.

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I had been told by local Travellers I would have no trouble recognizing the Traveller graves. Recent monuments to family heads loom above everything around them, with headstones of human dimensions. The largest, from the mid-1990s on, are peopled with statues, both single figures and groups, and the surfaces of the graves, which occupy two or three standard plots, are crowded with ‘pieces’: marble hearts and bibles bearing messages of love and grief addressed to the deceased, composed by their named donors.

NO ONE KNOWS THE GRIEF WE BEAR, WHEN THE FAMILY MEET AND YOUR NOT THERE, WE LAUGH AND TALK, WE PLAY OUR PART, BUT BEHIND OUR SMILES LIE BROKEN HEARTS.

The Traveller graves are jostling communities of voices, figures and names, and many recent headstones bear etched portraits of the deceased, some life-size. The statues and

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The headstone-body of the man.
Funerary monument, County Clare, 2005
pieces, standing as symbols of their donors, foreground a particular image of relations, made meaningful in relation to the dead. The space occupied by the deceased is dwarfed by the presence of the living, seemingly in competition for positions near the headstone, which now stands unmistakeably for the family head himself. Through the spatial order of objects and names, the grave seeks to allegorise the form of a double body in vertical and horizontal axes, and as a perspectival relation between the two.\textsuperscript{206} The upright body of the man represented as the headstone is independent, singular and 'above', as well as extended as substance through the body of his 'own family' below. The marble 'pieces', resonating animate, public voices, are (in Seremetakis's phrase,) 'artifacts of feeling' that give voice and vitality to the double body of the grave. In addition, a new order of relations among the living, whose analogue is the space of the monument, is encoded in the statues and pieces radiating outward from the headstone. These objects and their positions, which men and women say validate a hierarchy of 'rights', may be understood metaphorically as the transfigured public body of the family in its new connection to the person and name of the man.

The single premise, that the headstone is to be seen as the singular body of the deceased, enables the monument as a whole to configure an internal hierarchy variously encompassing political dominance, bodily extension and temporal continuity among the living,\textsuperscript{207} and in relation to those marked by absence from the grave. For Traveller architects, the grave's emphasis is on the indexicality of the headstone-man as the singular cause of collective relations, and as in the camp, there are no meaningful social relations without the agency and continuity of the named dead. On first looking at these graves, I recalled the words of the head of a large Traveller family to me several years before: 'A man can never be more than his father. It doesn't matter who he is, or what he does, he can never be a bigger man than his father, because his father made him'. The magnificence of the headstone, which both personifies the family head and embodies the joint labour of his adult sons, makes visible the reflexive principle of bigness and honour. Wagner (1991:163) writes, '[a] Daribi friend once observed, "When you see a man, he is small; when you say his name, he is big".' Irish Travellers would agree with this, but would quickly add that 'making the name big’ - a phrase a Traveller friend used to describe the importance of his numerous children - is what men themselves do, by extending the name, status and substance of the breed through numerous children: bigness is reflexive.

\textsuperscript{206} See Kantorowicz’s (1957) classic account of the ‘double body’ of the king in mediaeval political theology.\textsuperscript{207} ‘Substance’ as in Locke’s (1961) formula.
This is the double body that the grave makes visible: the body of the man, his name, and the bigness of his breed created by him through his children, and honoured in the co-presence of the grave. No meaningful separation can be imagined here between an ‘individual’ (an ‘experienced ... self’) and a ‘social’ body (a ‘symbol for thinking about relationships ... [and] society’ (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987: 6)), a distinction which mirrors that between subject and object. The breed ‘in itself’ and the man of the breed conflate this opposition, and in the funerary monument, the fractal imaginary of (the) breed stages its incommensurable relation to the time and embodied space of individual human life. The mortal individual and undying, extended person inhabit the grave goods as a single and multiple entity intended to be read simultaneously in a theoretical axis that connects the vertical and horizontal axes of the grave, and looks back and forth between them. Wagner’s insight, that ‘[a] fractal person is never a unit standing in relation to an aggregate, or an aggregate standing in relation to a unit, but always an entity with relation integrally implied’ (163) is especially apt here. However, in the plural entity of the singular grave, the ‘different projections of its fractality’ are neither equal nor interchangeable. The material imaginary of the body that is indissociable from Traveller personhood is a hierarchical, gendered body whose substance, the breed, is publicly male, synonymous with the continuity of ‘the name’. In a similar vein, although a man can never be ‘bigger’ than his father, he might certainly seek prominence in relation to his uncles, cousins, or even his brothers, and as a man, his personification of the breed will always surpass that of his out-marrying sisters, in whom the breed (people say,) gradually ‘wears itself out’. As a spatial and temporal analogue of the generative force of fractal embodiment, the funerary monument thus painstakingly constructs an idealised bodily economy, entailing masculine hierarchy, and the breed’s orientation towards bilateral generation, or “making the name big”, through ‘blood’ and ‘the name’. It is a space of competitive power, differentiated rights, and male identification with the family head, where the breed performs and represents the social tensions, generative force, and political solidarity of fractal personhood.

I turn next to how people talked about recent graves, and how the relations described are manifested as ‘rights’ in the monument.

“What happens is …”

Where ambitious new funerary monuments have begun to appear in certain cemeteries in recent years, they soon become the focus of competition between breeds. One woman explained, ‘What happens is, somebody’d put up a big headstone and the next one
then ‘d try and best it. There’s a lot ‘o bestin goin’ aan there.’ My visit confirmed that, thirty or so years ago, Traveller graves were much like settled ones. Headstones were similar if not indistinguishable, although on some, small, anonymous gifts from family members - bronze horses, flower vases and other small ornaments - were arbitrarily positioned on the stone chips contained by the kerb, which made them slightly different from settled graves.

However, the idea that the grave could reflect family honour could be seen back in 1967, when Willem and his brothers had created their father’s grave, although this account focused on the impact of the grave vis à vis those of settled people, rather than other Travellers. Willem’s son, Michael, explained, slightly embarrassed, that ‘in those days Travellers’ graves were smaller, more like settled people’s, but they looked a bit… better – I hate to use the word – a bit different. My grandfather’s stone was brown granite with a limestone kerb. It was the only one like it in the cemetery.’

But the significant issue of ‘bestin”, whether directed towards Traveller or settled, stands in relation to other, dominant concerns: the effort, ‘intelligence’ and perceived devotion of the family to the person transfigured as the monument. In response to the comment on ‘bestin”, another woman contradicted: “With more people it id’n bestin’. The person that dies, they love them so much, they’re just tryin’ to give them, like, a… a respectable burial.”

Michael explained it in the following way: “A headstone reflects the intelligence of the person who put it up. Because a stone is going to get a lot of attention, and if it’s one of the lower scale stones, it’s open for gossip. ‘Did the fam’ly know the right thing to do? They as a fam’ly should’ve shown more respect.”

The function of the headstone as a material index of family devotion, respect, ‘intelligence’ and effort is evident in the intense consciousness of how the stone is perceived and talked about by other Travellers. It is around this most visible, costly and important object of the grave architecture, which, as people make clear, stands for the man himself, that most anxiety and contestation revolves.

From burial to the erection of the monument, the grave takes a year or more to accomplish. It involves deciding what the monument will contain and who will contribute; drawing sketches and holding meetings with the mason; costing materials, sourcing and commissioning objects; composing inscriptions; borrowing, saving and paying for its many

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208 I did not think to ask whether other breeds of Travellers were buried in the same churchyard at that time, and most of the data collected on graves of the 1970s and 1980s were in the form of visual records and impressions rather than oral testimony.

209 For reasons of space I omit a discussion here of the temporary grave adornment throughout that time, although it is deserving of description and analysis.
elements; and informing those on different peripheries of collective decisions. In the course of all this some voices emerge as dominant, and agreements between two or three may be communicated to others as joint decisions already taken. Dissent is suppressed beneath the required unanimity that the grave must embody as labour and then communicate in its final, unified form. These processes were described to me from the different perspectives of married women, adult sons, family heads and married couples, from unrelated families. People talked about who could, or could not, ‘put in’ for the headstone or ‘pieces’; who was ‘not allowed’ to take part, and who held rights over others. Making a grave means demarcating performative and symbolic rights in an imaged matrix of relations which others must also recognize.

Among a group of a dozen women, common acknowledgement of the existence of ‘rules’ did not extend to agreement about how they worked. Although no particular type of grave was suggested for discussion, the women spontaneously focused on a ‘man’s’ grave, and the man they all imagined was a family head. Some said that the headstone “would be left between the brothers” of the man, while others insisted, “It wouldn’t be the brothers it’d just be the sons”. A couple of older women qualified this: “The sons and the mother’d look after the stone – if they had grown up children that’d be able to take care of it”.

The women’s different views reflect, not simply personal choices or financial constraints imposed by young children, but the tensions of a struggle to personify the breed and status of the dead man. Consummate with this claim is the ‘right’ to erect the headstone of the man, and depending on who does it, the headstone either personifies the man as one of an ascendant group of brothers, or as a family head, father of adult men of the name. The desire of a widow and her sons to take on and fulfil this enormous task is claimed by the authority of grief, that “they love them so much…”.

Alternatively, the right to erect the headstone might be claimed by a widow on the basis of the autonomy of marriage, although this was said to be unusual. In the struggles women described between sons and brothers, conjugal families and collaterals, some women had supported the “rights” of their sons, while others asserted prior claims as wives. An alternative to independence or submission on the part of a widow was to join in coalition with her sons.

In Winnie’s account of co-operation between herself and her sons following the death of her husband, Tom, the deceased is neatly credited with independent authorship of his own headstone. Through this strategy, Winnie’s claim of submission to Tom’s continuing authority and good judgement beyond death becomes morally unimpeachable:
“Tom left me… not a whole lotta money, but a little bit o’ money before he died, the Lord ha’ mercy on ’im. It wasn’t to say, thousands or millions or anything like that, but I never kep’ a penny o’ that money for myself… I said it – it was he’s money; he’d hard earned it. He’d wanted me to keep it… [but] it went into taking care of all the funeral and it went tiv the headstone as well.”

The argument that Tom’s labour paid for his own headstone formed unassailable justification for excluding Tom’s siblings from the headstone, and through Winnie, Tom again lent weight to their exclusion from the rest of the grave, on the grounds of good taste. Winnie explained:

“Me and my own family brought the headstone over Tom. We wouldn’t let… he had two brothers; he had sisters there as well. We wouldn’t allow that. Now the ould ones, they’d have wanted to put things on the grave…”

Here, Louise, a woman about fifteen years younger than Winnie, interjected, anticipating what she believed Winnie was about to say: “Fair enough, now, let ‘em do that if they want”, but Winnie continued firmly:

“No, we didn’t. They wanted to put plaques up on the grave. The sort o’ man Tom was, Lord ha’ mercy on ’im, he’d say… “Too many thin things on a grave, ‘tis a shame, being honest, it is.” He didn’t like a grave being decorated all over.”

Louise’s response is tactfully ambiguous, “A lot o’ people don’t understand that today”. Winnie’s narrative reinstates Tom as the sole authority over the family whose autonomy is assured by her moral commitment, and the knowledge she alone, as his widow, possesses; “the ould ones”, as she unflatteringly describes Tom’s siblings, are firmly ousted in favour of his “own family”.

In a separate conversation, Michael, the head of a large family, described the hypothetical situation of his father’s burial, and chose to focus on the balance of legitimate rights between a man’s sons and his widow.

“The mother [i.e., wife] would decide on her husband’s burial place and the timing of the burial. We [sons] could never go above that. But even if he had left money and my mother wanted to pay for the stone, we would go over that, as his sons, because it is our birth right – in our group that is. If she wanted to pay for other ornaments for the grave we would welcome that.”
This account delineates the obligations of sons to each parent as well as their limits: a wife has unassailable rights in relation to her husband’s mortal body, but his adult sons bear responsibility for the ‘name’, in life and on the headstone, which their mother cannot supersede. Regardless of circumstances, the headstone here is the prerogative of men.

Speaking hypothetically of himself, Michael said: “If my sons were too young, it would pass to my brothers- automatically.” Michael’s account of male rights emphasises the succession of generations of adult brothers in staging the breed’s public name in life and in death. While Winnie insists on the full social capacity of the ‘own family’ she and Tom have created, for Michael the vertical axis of the headstone is consummate with the masculine breed, and the horizontal axis of the grave constitutes the site of a man’s ‘own family’, where women’s rights, and the breed’s reproduction through daughters as well as sons are encoded in (or as) ‘pieces’.

© Anna Hoare

Double funerary monument and pieces. County Clare 2005
the matrix of the breed

It is interesting to reflect on how the social and spatial matrix of Michael’s breed, and a mode of dwelling adapted to widely dispersed sites, influences his sense of two crucial factors that the headstone serves to make visible: first, the gendered political force of the breed, and, second, how succession occurs, unmediated, between generations of male adults. Compare this with Winnie’s sentiment of a clear cut-off in time and space between her ‘own family’ and Tom’s siblings - ‘the ould ones’. The spatial matrix of Michael’s breed consists of dispersed coalitions across Ireland and the UK headed by brothers who are also individual family heads (fathers of men), and whose bonds as brothers are reinforced by numerous marriages between their children. The power of each individual family head is mitigated by the freedom and solidarity of these younger sibling sets, and the presumed loyalty of adult children to their parents is balanced against conjugal autonomy and affinal obligations. Underscored by marriages between patrilateral cousins, movement and camping reduce the risk of competition that often arises between sedentary, non-porous coalitions, and reinforces the breed’s self-perception as a ‘strong family’ -flexible, extensive and cohesive. Young adult men identify securely with ‘the name’ without being tied down by obligations to a particular coalition.

Winnie’s life has been markedly different from what, in Michael's breed, remains close to a nomadic pattern of dwelling and sociality, albeit in sites more than camps. Tom and Winnie left the road early in married life, and lived first in a tigeen on an urban site and later in a housing estate, where their children grew up as ‘towns Travellers’, marrying other towns Travellers. Winnie’s married children live in houses close to her. The perspectives of Michael and Winnie are not only gendered, but reflect different views of inter-generational dependency and co-operation, which in turn are linked to modes of dwelling. We have seen that anxiety and conflict around funerary monuments reflect not only awareness of how the grave will be seen as a mark of status and devotion, but about how authority and ‘rights’ are transcribed in the headstone and grave goods. Winnie, who sees herself as the surrogate of Tom’s authority in her ‘own family’ following his death, fights to assert this position as a way of honouring Tom. The ‘ould ones’ - his siblings - are outside the social and material boundaries of relations made visible by the house, the fixed and bounded site of the ‘family’, now understood as the conjugal family, and are seemingly irrelevant.
By contrast, Michael conveys a distribution of gendered and generational rights and capacities, which stems from mutual recognition. For him there is no centre of authority, since the logic of the breed is internal to ‘automatic’ reproductive processes which form its conditions of possibility. The internally differentiated body of the breed as a \textit{personne morale} consists of an organic continuity between limbs, head, trunk and reproductive organs, where each is connected and dependant in a particular way, and replaced in due course by another of the same kind. The fluid changes that occur within hierarchies of age, gender, marriage and siblingship between one camp and another are reflected as successions of status, autonomy and political visibility within the collective Traveller body in nomadic dwelling, a mirror of individual bodies, ‘full of going’.

Seen thus, the grave and headstone are analogues of how time and space flow through gendered bodies and social relations, shaped by dwelling’s internal perspectives and reciprocities. The body of the breed extends through and beyond the headstone-man, making possible the generative unity of the dead and the living, and the spatialised succession of grave goods - ‘follyin’ aan’ - forms a ‘perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time’, in which ‘Loss [grows] robust and alive … always there. Like a fruit in the season’ (Roy, cited in Hallam and Hockey 2001). In camps (unlike houses), the tensions of multi-layered relations within the fractal breed and back-breeds might be constantly adjusted and seen anew, and the allure of such generative transformations remains compelling.

When Winnie, speaking for Tom, says, ‘“Too many things on a grave, ‘tis a shame, being honest, it is.” He didn’t like a grave being decorated all over’, the attraction of the messy, complex profusion of siblingship, cousin marriage and life-long coalitions between successive generations looking back and forth from the dead to the unborn, must be understood as having faded from her consciousness. From the perspective of the house, the claims of extended, reciprocal embodiment possess a troubling complexity that the grave can sweep away, once and for all.

\textbf{brothers and sons}

Winnie, Michael and others speak as if ‘brothers’ or ‘sons’ act in unison, but this is not necessarily the case. The headstone itself forms a field of expression for incipient differentiation between brothers, where different motivations coalesce.

David, whose children are still unmarried, is not yet a father of men, although he is head of a site and the most prominent representative of a local breed. He described how one man from among a group of brothers, asserting rights on the basis of age, prominence, or
headship of a site (qualifications which often coincide,) “would go in and order [the headstone]. Well then, the other brothers ‘ve no choice only just go ahead with it. There could be some o’ the brothers very well off and there could be some only just barely strugglin’… each brother would have to put in the same”. Alternatively, “the brothers might go in [together] and one fella ‘d say he’d want to have this done or that done, and then the other fellas ‘d just play along with it and say, ‘Well, that’s it”’. David had taken a leading role in designing and commissioning his father’s headstone, and emphasised the fact that his uncles had not contributed ‘a penny’ to it.

A settled monumental mason who specialises in Traveller funerary architecture recounted how brothers characteristically negotiate the commission of a headstone and pieces. One or two of the brothers accompany their mother to the first consultation with the stonemason. Possible materials and sources of the headstone are discussed, together with dimensions, costs, and the design of the grave as whole. Then, the men produce mobile phones and make calls to their other brothers, who invariably react with shock at the enormous costs under discussion, and immediately discount the most expensive options. However, ten or fifteen minutes later the phones ring as one brother after another calls back, reluctantly agreeing to whatever is being proposed, none wanting to be seen as the one who ‘scaled down’ the headstone.

The brothers present at the consultation come prepared. They have visited the churchyard and cemetery to look at other Travellers’ monuments, particularly recent ones, and carefully weighed the merits of materials, statuary and composition. They have, in other words, a sharp eye on the style and ‘intelligence’ of the grave, and how it will reflect family prestige. All of this is communicated to the mason at the first meeting. Aware of all this, the absent brothers agonize briefly over the loss of face that would result from a ‘lower scale’ stone, judged by local standards, and their agreement signifies their deference to the knowledge their brothers have brought to the project.

As noted, the headstone that personifies the head of the family also embodies and contains the effort and capacity of his adult sons, to the exclusion of anyone else. Its scale, cost and magnificence are influenced by a desire to project family dignity in comparison to other graves, (which Travellers describe as “bestin”), and may also reflect the ambition of one or two brothers to take the lead. But it would be a mistake merely to deride this as men ‘makin’ theirselves big’ - as people imply when referring to the ‘over the top’ graves of their enemies. Although the married sons of a family head already possess social capacity as men of the breed, their father’s death impresses upon them what is also clear to everyone else: a heightened need to demonstrate unity, maturity and leadership. Their father’s death
creates a tangible space for someone who can unite the brothers through personal qualities of keen perception, good judgement and determined will, for there can be little doubt that future crises will arise that demand these qualities of leadership. In the headstone such relations between the brothers begin to be configured. These men (together with ‘close’ patrilateral cousins and sometimes, brothers-in-law) make up the fighting men of the breed conceived as ‘the one family’, in the event of an affront to their reputation or injury to one of their number. All male informants rejected the idea of a widow ‘putting in’ for her husband’s headstone, even if he had left money for the purpose: the public and private logic of the headstone, synonymous with the ‘name’, is male succession.

The headstone - the tendon and muscle of the Traveller body as well as its outward-looking vision and intelligence - makes publicly visible the unity of purpose of the new, ascendant generation of men. Its sanctification of individual leadership idealises correspondence between singular and collective persons among whom there is no dissent, and the brothers’ willingness to accept the initiative and ambition of one of their number and ‘go along with it’ commits them to the unity of purpose their shared endeavour implies.

**sisters and daughters**

Before looking at how the grave reifies (Strathern 1988: 180-1) intensities transfused through objects and spatial arrangements, the ‘rights’ of sisters and daughters must be considered, since it is in spatial-material analogues of relations between the dead and the living, and among the living, that the monument assumes a form other Travellers can interpret. Wives, mothers and adult sons gave information on the ‘rights’ of daughters; when unmarried daughters were present they never spoke on their own behalf, and in all accounts the ‘rights’ of daughters were eclipsed by the claims of wives and sons. Daughters’ rights were comparatively uncertain: some women said unmarried girls might ‘be allowed’ to ‘put in’ to the headstone’ along with their brothers, but this was quickly qualified: ‘Sisters is not allowed to give in money for the headstone when they’re married’. However, most women and men believed that, regardless of sexual/procreative status, a man’s daughters could provide only ‘pieces’ for the grave, and, in this, many considered that daughters held greater rights than the dead man’s brothers. These uncertainties disclose doubts: will the breed’s ‘name’ (as well as ‘blood’) be conveyed to future generations of children? Or, beyond a certain limit of out-marriage, will the breed ‘wear itself out’?

The uncertain potentials of daughters, like the positions claimed by their brothers in relation to their father, are spatialised in the multiple objects of the grave, described below,
where, from one perspective, the headstone and pieces instantiate an ideal order of political succession, and from another, the diffusion of gendered intensities of substance. Multiple resonances of meaning are afforded in proximity to and distance from the headstone. Hierarchies of gender, reproductive power, and the passage of time and diminution of substance are all implied in the assemblage of objects. Together they instantiate the reproductive body of the man and of the social and political force he embodied.

“Travellers’ graves were smaller, more like settled people’s, but they looked a bit... better – I hate to use the word – a bit different.”
materiality and the heterotopia of the grave

We have seen how the grave seeks to make visible the breed’s fractality in relation to a principal individual, and how the headstone, emphasising the deceased’s unique authorship of a ‘spring’ of the breed, separates him from his brothers and publicises the capacity of his sons. The architecture of the funerary monument imagines the fractal Traveller body – an entity (as Wagner puts it) ‘with relation integrally implied’ – in analogues of substance, time and space, autonomy and reciprocity, and different orders of embodiment aestheticised in the monument resonate modes of dwelling, dividing site and house-dwelling Travellers.

Here, I seek to integrate a more detailed account of this architecture with the politico-historical field in which Traveller embodiment seeks to exert effects. Foucault (1986) describes the removal from modernity’s classified and ordered space ‘of sites’ of something incommensurable to a ‘counter site or heterotopia’. Between active exclusion and the critical exteriority and validation of an alternative regime of knowledge, an aesthetic of inversion and substitution is enacted. I draw on some of these ideas to explore dislocation, dissensus and public ‘access’ to the funerary monument, and to consider the symbolic force of the monument’s idealised Traveller body in the political economy of Traveller sites.

‘Heterotopias’ are ‘a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which … all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted’ (Foucault 1986: 24). Heterotopias ‘reflect and speak about’ real or utopian sites, so as to conduct a spatial-material ‘discourse’ between place and placelessness. Resisting modernity’s relational cartography of ‘sites’, concerned with ‘storage, circulation, marking and classification’, heterotopias mark recalcitrant oppositions that refuse to be desanctified by formal systems of knowledge. The questions raised by a particular heterotopia include the function of its dislocation, resistance or excess: what ‘crisis’ or form of ‘sacredness’ does it contain that is incommensurable with society’s ‘real’ space of ‘sites’? What kinds of connection are established with other (real or utopian) sites, and what ‘incompatibilities’ are brought together in its universalizing form or ‘quasi-eternity’ of the body? And finally, how does a particular heterotopia, which is not ‘freely accessible like a public place’, combine ‘a system of opening and closing’ whereby it is both isolated and ‘penetrable’? Foucault’s ‘principles’ of heterotopia offer insights to the recent monumental architecture of Traveller graves.
In the Irish cemetery, an already-existing heterotopia removing settled death from the space of settled life, how and why does Traveller funerary architecture fabricate a ‘perfect’ ‘real space’ in compensation for what should, but does not, exist in ‘real space’? In the course of this discussion I explore the grave’s ‘heterochrony’ – a bringing together of a ‘slice’ of utopian time; the ‘sacredness’ of the fractal body of the breed whose incompatibilities elude biological and numerical systems of knowledge; the troubled reflection of the graves on ‘real’ sites of dwelling which form their historical counterpart in the world of ‘sites’ (in both senses); and the role of Catholic iconography in both ‘opening and closing’ the public legibility of the graves to Traveller and settled.

(i) heterochrony and the fractal body

The monument’s ‘effectively enacted utopia’ can be understood, first, as a rejection of death as a terminal moment in a linear model of temporality of the discrete, mortal body. The monument’s mythic space-time encompasses individuals and a collective body, simultaneously relational and superimposed. In the monument’s internal spatial order, the transfigured man - ‘not so much memorialized ... as reinstated in this form’ (Gell 1998: 253) - is both individual source and continuous substance of the breed. In thus assembling ‘sites that are in themselves incompatible’ (Foucault 1986: 25) the ‘intelligence’ of the grave appears. Its first incompatibility is the ‘heterochrony’ of time: the ‘former’ time when the deceased of the headstone was alive, and his ‘absent presence’ (Battaglia 1992: 5) in the gifts and voices of the living. Numerous voices call out to the dead man from the inscriptions, reinstating him as the one who is missing, with whom each continues a silent conversation (Kidron 2012: 17). Marilyn Strathern states that ‘the recipient [of a gift] is notionally present as the cause of the debt that compelled the gift’ (1999:240). The numerous pieces amplify his presence in relations of which he is the cause: the ‘pieces’ are gifts in which both they and he are contained - each a singular relation and aspect of the man that now transforms the space of the living.

Superimposed onto the ‘incompatible’ rupture in which the dead man’s presence transects the worlds of the living and the dead, the fractal body of the breed is materialised as a continuous force throughout the grave. First, the dead man is configured as singular in the headstone which bears his living image (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 154), standing as the generative source and social authority of his family. Then he is distributed as varied intensities of substance in the spatial assignment of the pieces below: the closer someone is to the headstone-man the greater their share of his breed name and blood, and the more
rights they possess in the monument. Is the man made big by his name, or the name made big by the man? In the architectural utopia of the ‘perfect’ grave there is only one possible answer: that both should be as big as possible.

The ‘well-arranged’ cosmological unity that appears throughout the grave between the dead and the living, the individual and the collective body, is concentrated separately in the enormous headstone itself, the apogee of the grave’s publicly display. All aspects of the headstone court equal public recognition: its acknowledgement of the truth that ‘No man can be bigger than his father’, and its investiture of the leadership of his political successors, now extended into the man’s ‘body’. Behind the image of their father, and embodied with him as substance, honour and mass, the stone contains the new political leaders of the family, his sons, their labour and effort translated into costly marble.

(ii) force and resistance

Rights to ‘put in’ and be visible in the monument are fraught with dilemmas, competition and shifting resonances. ‘Rights’ might be understood as metaphors of breed substance (in Locke’s sense), and the monument as public legitimation of its political force. The monument’s configuration of hierarchy displays a unity of self-definition which inscribes this political force and its continuity, ultimately transcending ‘incompatibilities’ of life and death, singularity and collectivity.

The cosmological force and unity imagined in (the) 'breed', (simultaneously noun and verb, collectivity and substance,) is radically distinct from orthodox Christian theology’s concept of the isolated individual’s transition from earthly mortality to eternal life. Traveller life and death look not towards timeless eternity, but to the endless extension of the dead among the living through ‘generation’ and the embodied memory of blood and names. In architecture that reinstates and ‘ornaments’ the dead man with feeling, language and gifts - both representing and enacting his breed’s generative force - Travellers pit the energy and emotion of continual ‘going’ against the end of time that is the individual’s lot in Christian eternity.

Deference and usurpation, grief, solidarity, rivalry and ambition communicate incommensurable feelings at the iconic site of the grave’s objectification of the mature male body. Battaglia describes how Sabarl mortuary ‘exchange performances’ inscribe crucial social categories as ‘working political relations’ to be projected forward (1992: 4-5). For Traveller women, the successful production of a fitting headstone by a man’s adult sons is fraught with concern around the ‘need to show that you can do that’ as well as ‘the bigger need to let people see that you’re not reliant on them’. ‘[J]uxtaposing in a single real place ...
several sites that are in themselves incompatible’ (Foucault 1986: 22) the dead man’s adult sons ‘appear’ twice: first, in the headstone with their father, and again as pieces in the grave’s horizontal field, now appearing as fathers, husbands and sons. By withdrawing to positions of deference and support ‘beneath’ the headstone-body of their father, but ‘above’ their mother, sisters, and unmarried brothers, the sons’ separate grave goods mystify the usurpation of the dead man’s power, and inscribe the working political relations of the breed to be projected toward the future. These relations are closely tied to claims of political autonomy in the competitive local politics of ‘family’ sites. The widow’s ‘piece’, a marble heart or bible, typically occupies a central position on the grave, surrounded by her children. However, the ‘top’ position at the right hand of the headstone (seen from the perspective of the headstone) may be claimed by the eldest son, who dedicates a piece from his ‘own family’.

As noted above, if ‘rights’ are expressed in metaphors not only of intensities of shared substance, but also of its political force, some form of distinction must be indicated between the two. This is the crux of the tension between sons and natal siblings. Positions at the ‘top’ of the grave are analogues of intensities of shared substance, while proximity to the headstone-man signifies their political force. Therefore, where ‘pieces’ from the dead man’s siblings are permitted, (commonly restricted to one each from a brother and a sister as representatives of the older generation,) they are positioned at the outer edges of the grave, teetering on the brink of redundancy or expulsion. The natal siblings of the dead man are thus aligned with him at the ‘top’, but sons occupy the favoured position of ‘closeness’, edging the ‘ould ones’ outwards.

With daughters occupying positions ‘beneath’ their mother, the horizontal plane of the grave can also be perceived as representing gendered, reproductive sets, defined by distance from the dead man as the breed’s generative source. Unmarried daughters may dedicate a ‘piece’ between them, placed between the foot of the grave and their mother’s piece, ‘inside’ the parental space now controlled by their mother. Furthest from the headstone at the foot of the grave, married daughters face the world head-on as progenitors of their ‘own families’. Represented as mothers and wives in their own right, the presence of their children on their individual pieces acknowledges the breed’s continuity through them. A possible variation is a piece dedicated by a “son-in-law”, naming the deceased’s daughter as

\[210\] On only one grave that I saw had a daughter placed her piece in the most desired position closest to the headstone. Although I was unaware of detailed family relationships, reproductive status and birth order, her claim to this position might have been based on marriage within the breed; on her reproductive status relative to her siblings; or if all her siblings were male and had ‘put in’ for the headstone.
his “wife”. The voice of a son-in-law offers assurance of his public loyalty to her breed, and may signify the presence of the daughter’s ‘own family’ within a co-resident coalition of her own breed, rather than his.

The plaques or pieces of daughters and their families occupy the front of the grave.

County Clare 2007

In the grave’s gendered, spatio-temporal scale, men and elders occupy the ‘upper’ (head) section of the grave, and women the ‘lower’ (foot), suggesting the breed’s extension from men as its originators, through women, into a wider society of Travellers. The foot of the grave is thus the space of descent through women, where generative multiplicity and political uncertainty combine. The children of men at the top share the intensity of ‘the name’ that passes between men, independent of women, but for those at the foot, distance from the family head suggests the gradual diminution of substance that descent through women may entail.
(ii) representing, contesting and inverting ‘real sites’

The ‘intelligence’ of the funerary monument consists in whether the internal force of its analogies and elisions are perceived to ‘work’. Those that must appear most irrefutable are elisions between the sacred and the political - between the monument’s grandeur and permanence and the dignity and continuity of the breed, and between honour accorded to the dead man in the headstone, and the ascendancy of his political successors, its creators. Lefebvre describes monumental spaces as conveying not ‘signifieds’ but a ‘horizon of meaning’, where ‘a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes to the fore, by means of – and for the sake of- a particular action’ (Lefebvre 1991: 222). Through condensation and elision the ‘horizontal chain of sites in space’ is substituted by the monument’s ‘vertical imposition’, in which ‘religious and political realms symbolically (and ceremonially) exchange attributes’ (ibid: 225). Lefebvre describes how the body, mediating this substitution, is rendered docile: in the cathedral the body becomes smaller; simultaneously, sound and gesture are inhibited by the refraction of footsteps and voices against stone and marble. The body is co-opted as a receptive, kinetic instrument in the monument’s manifestation of a ‘religion that it brings alive, a political power that it manifests [or] an event that it commemorates’ (Hollier 1992: 31). Lefebvre evokes what Hollier calls the ‘supplemental’ quality of architecture, a metaphoric and embodied force that ‘cannot be reduced to a building’.

However, unlike sacred buildings, which incorporate and condition individual bodies, making them ‘small’, in the Traveller funerary monument, a body - rendered in its political attributes as a person - is the artefact that the monument ‘brings alive’. The funerary monument manifests a person whose political destiny lies elsewhere, and the new function it brings to the existing heterotopia of the cemetery is to usurp the iconic control of Traveller visibility enacted by the Traveller site or designated house. In Foucault’s terms, funerary monuments act as ‘counter-sites’ upon the ‘real space’ of ‘Traveller accommodation’ defined and controlled by settled society.

The funerary monuments mark the deaths since the late 1990s of male family heads who “came from” the area. They are thus the creations- and inventions - of a second generation of ‘local’ Travellers, and, in some cases, a third. Comparatively modest headstones of wives or grandparents erected in the 1970s or ‘80s by the ‘old’ family heads themselves may be removed to make way for large, complex monuments in honour of these men themselves. The name of the earlier grave occupant, that of a wife, for example, is then added to the new headstone on a markedly lesser scale of importance. The large, elaborate monuments memorialise the first generation of male family heads (and in a few cases, their
adult sons,) to become more or less permanently sedentarised as young men in the early 1970s, when their 'own families' were still nascent. Thirty years later, the local breed segments stemming from these men are enmeshed through intermarriage in tightly constructed co-resident coalitions, hemmed in on urban sites which offer neither mobility nor expansion. Pressed into competition for the scarce resources of new sites or 'Traveller-specific' group housing schemes from settled authorities, these coalitions of closely related families formed sealed aggregations who asserted the potent claim of being 'all the one family', and the most enduring and stable were most likely eventually to obtain permanent 'Traveller-specific' accommodation.

In one case, a group of brothers sedentarised with their wives and children in close proximity to each other, about twenty years before they might otherwise have dispersed into separate camping coalitions among their married children. Most of these men eventually moved into estate houses. Their children - now mostly middle aged and old enough to be dispersed family heads themselves - inter-married and went 'back' to the road, while remaining 'local Travellers'. Four generations of this numerous local breed have gradually formed tight, co-resident coalitions in temporary, then permanent sites. Rather than 'coming and going', forming flexible new coalitions of 'the name', the descendant sets of young married men and women are permanently submerged among cousins, aunts, uncles and parents, prolonging the appearance of childhood and dependency.

Pinned down by the 'indigenous clause' and the political economy of 'Traveller accommodation', relationships resonate differently. From the presence of the breed in local affairs, unfamiliar, expanded roles as negotiators and representatives have emerged for some family heads, so that some men stand out among their brothers. The impositions of local politics have sharpened inequalities formerly dampened by the independence and reciprocity of nomadic life. Tensions emanating from the site's interface with settled authorities, although rarely allowed to affect the solidarity of the ascendant generation of brothers, may reverberate within the men's 'own families'. Rivalry or resentment may arise between male cousins, wives and sisters-in-law. Where uncles and cousins with distant camps formerly signified the adult freedoms of new destinations and associations, when permanently at hand, the same uncles and fathers-in-law suggest an irremovable weight in their control over settlements. Unrelieved proximity, lack of mobility and a seemingly permanent hierarchy between ascendant and descendant sets of brothers and male cousins are sources of unease and competition.

The graves of family heads have become the sites in which succession, autonomy and the political agency of a 'spring' are claimed by descendant sets of brothers. Evicting the
‘ould ones’, ‘he’s brothers’, who have surrounded their father for too long, sons materialise a unified and exclusive group, taking possession of the headstone, ownership of the name, and demonstrating the political force of the breed’s future reproduction. Rather than replicating the site’s ‘one family’, the ritual prerogatives made visible in the funerary monument publicise the separate capacity of adult sons, formerly encapsulated and obscured by the site.

Where the sons and ‘own family’ of a family head are made visible as a distinctive group in a magnificent funerary monument, its impact on the whole site collectivity to which they belong might be perceived as a demonstration of future rights, either over the present site, or of sites that may follow in the future. The monument’s demonstration of strength has multiple, possible effects. Besides inspiring a combination of envy and admiration, their children and unmarried siblings will become more attractive as potential marriage partners, either within their own breeds or back-breeds, or to less numerous (i.e. less ‘strong’) local

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The Last Supper: A popular image on Travellers’ headstones.

211 Adjacent generations sometimes overlap, so that uncles and nephews, aunts and nieces are the same age. This may intensify competition between younger members of a senior set of brothers and their nephews. As the former are not yet fathers of men, and the latter are adult sons of an established family head, the question of hierarchy is moot.
breeds. This newly burgeoning group’s proven capacity holds promise of recognition in future negotiations for sites, and young Travellers seeking a way out of housing estates or other sites will be drawn toward friendship with them. The prospect of a wide field of potential marriages among local Travellers enables the group to form alliances which further strengthen its position in local politics: ‘making the name big’ in the funerary monument makes the name big among Travellers and settled authorities.

The funerary monument engages themes of rights, personification, history and material culture that frequently appear as distinct theoretical concerns in anthropological accounts. They coalesce through their emergence, and relation to, what resembles a colonial context, and with familiar resonances of the house of the ‘house society’. The following chapter seeks to bring together aspects of this anthropological field.
Part 4 – Ireland

Chapter Ten

“We are Travellers, but not like our parents.”

‘Everyone can enter the heterotopic sites, but in fact it is only an illusion – we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded.’ (Foucault 1986)

Performative images

Like public attitudes towards Travellers’ funerary monuments in Ireland, Küchler (1988: 629) notes that the efflorescence of malanggan funerary images in New Ireland was interpreted ‘as a sign of decadence and disintegration’. Malanggan emerged within a rupture ‘in the relation between people and land’, which saw ‘clans shattered into fragments and scattered across the region’ in the wake of ‘the imposition of Western trade and commodities’ (ibid). For a brief period within funerary rituals, malanggan embody anew remembered images between mourners, and modify and reiterate the structure of land rights within expansive matrilineages. The distinctive form of displacement entailed in ‘Traveller accommodation’ has disrupted subtle forms of intergenerational succession and mutual recognition among Irish Travellers. Funerary monuments do not- and cannot- replace what was enacted in camps, but in a somewhat similar ‘efflorescence’ to that of malanggan, public (Traveller) recognition of exclusive rights of access to ritual and imagery legitimise the monument’s embodiment of a political collectivity, and the social and material entailments that follow successful performances of ritual.

Questions that have arisen from rights which may also be understood as claims of ownership over performative ritual and imagery (what Travellers call rights ‘to put in’), and thus, as Harrison (1992) observes, as intellectual property, include the strategic ‘ends’ of the
monument’s symbolic economy. Are the ‘ultimate goals of actors in the system’ (ibid: 236) to obtain material assets such as productive land or Traveller sites, or is the function of material wealth secured through representational economies to extend prestige and social relations? Put differently, is the value of ‘incorporeal property’ (Lowie 1921: 224-232) independent of the material objects, images or land that circulate within it?

The question posits a misleading distinction between the material and the immaterial (or incorporeal,) inasmuch as it directs the ‘materiality’ of objects towards an implicit (economic) identification with ‘wealth’, and incorporeality with ‘strategy’ (or prestige), the former being concealed behind the latter. The distinction between property in images, rights to perform dances or knowledge of magic (Malinowski 1922: 185-6), and material wealth objects conceals a deeper homology, which involves their role in regimes of personification. The classic account of this is, of course, Mauss’s The Gift (2002 [1925]). Harrison argues that intellectual property such as performance rights, or rights to ‘put in’, resemble ‘thing-gifts’ (Gregory 1982: 93); their ‘redundancy’ in neoclassical economic terms may be compared to sacrificial potlatch goods, shell valuables, or ownership of images: ‘thing-gifts’, as extensions of prestige and social relations, obtain their force and elicit their effects through personification. The relevant point is not a distinction between material and immaterial property, but how objects, remembered images, ancestral land, or the spatial assignment of pieces on a grave make relations appear between persons (Strathern 1988: 176-182).

the affect of personification

As Marilyn Strathern describes for Melanesians, the way in which objects ‘personify relations’ is not simply a matter of construing that an object ‘stands for’ a person; if personification is to ‘[elicit] an effect from another, to evince power or capability, it must manifest itself in a particular concrete way, which then becomes the elicitory trigger. This can only be done through the appropriate aesthetic’ (1988: 181). What is an ‘appropriate aesthetic’? In malanggan and Traveller funerary monuments, symbolic economies form a densely configured meeting point between the sensory, the memorous and the political. Becoming active as the production of the grave commences, if successful, this aesthetic power is imparted by the monument itself, as its ‘intelligence’. The being and memory of an individual person, the political force of shared, hierarchical rights, and the fractal embodiment of the breed in and across time are ‘brought alive’ in the affect of personification. When malanggan are displayed for the brief moment of their material existence, people weep freely, deeply moved by memories, recognition, and sensory evocations (Küchler 2002: 106),
and are inspired by loyalty to relations that ‘go forward’. Surpassing distinctions between the material and the immaterial, or means and ends, personification is linked to the aesthetic capacity of objects-as-persons to move, or become an ‘elicitory trigger’, in Strathern’s phrase. An important methodological aspect of this meeting between the sensory, the memorous and the political is the prominent evocation of physicality’s internalised knowledge of the world.\footnote{In Lefebvre’s example, the individual body entering \textit{inside} the cathedral is the sensory modality of its experienced affect.} The odorous, fragile, permeable ‘skins’ of \textit{malanggan}, the sensual skins of women and men, the liquid-soft skins of the very young and very old at the cusp of mortality, the permeable skins of settlements where houses, farmland and people come and go, and the fertile skins of swampy, taro-yielding soils merge into a single evocation of everything productive and transient, full of promise and destined to decay, whose boundaries, subject to particular limits and expansive possibilities, must be carefully observed, nurtured and understood. For New Irelanders, as Küchler shows, the sensory and cognitive idiom of skin is the ‘elicitory trigger’ of the image.

There is, I suspect, no way of ascertaining the numerous ways that funerary monuments have the power to move or ‘act as persons’ for different individuals, since they elicit private memories, and imbue a particular texture to hopes and expectations between those who share the ‘inclusiveness’ (Küchler 2002: 178) of mourning and ritual.

Personification as a mode of economy is distinguished by this ‘triggering’ or bringing alive of relations, past, present and future, and in spatial analogies of temporality, it focuses on circulation, extension and continuity, as in the ‘paths’ of shell-valuables, or the ‘going’, and ‘breed’ of Travellers. Nellie Collins describes personification’s ‘bringing alive’ in the endless circulation of forenames through generations of Travellers: ‘It was their belief to keep the generation up. They never wanted the generation to run out’, so ‘[e]veryone the names is follyin, follyin’ aan’ (Pavee Point 1992: 126).

A friend in Ireland enacted such a ‘triggering’ of self and relations, when reciting from memory the message to her father, inscribed on the piece she had dedicated to him some years earlier. She then produced from her pocket the piece of paper on which it was written, its message pondered over and perfected over many months, and which now she kept always with her. Committed to memory, inscribed on the piece, and kept in her pocket, this composition conveyed her voice and feelings from herself to the grave and then back again, and in the piece of paper a personification of herself was made to appear, permanently with her, elicited by her creation of the piece and the piece’s permanent gift-relation to her father. I am certain that when she looked at this fragment of paper and read the words aloud, the
image of the grave was once again ‘triggered’ in her memory, like malanggan, as a way of ‘knowing with [the] eyes’ (Küchler 2002: 53).

**subaltern history reconsidered**

In reacting to, and seeking to act upon, the ‘ruptures’ of political circumstances connected to their emergence, Traveller funerary monuments might be seen as configuring subaltern histories. I do not mean by this modernism's self-consciously alternative ‘history from below’, which stages ‘[minorities] as the agents in the process of history’ in order to ‘combat … elitist biases’ in the unitary account of what has passed (Chakrabarty 1998: 475), but as vital instantiations and enactments of reproductive temporalities which are intrinsic to the social relations to which they bear witness, and by which these relations are affirmed. These ‘subaltern’ temporalities, nurturing the ‘hidden presence of the sacred’ (Foucault 1986: 23) in the aesthetics of personification, make visible their resistance to the political economy of the cemetery, which encodes in mundane orderliness the productive life, disposal and termination of the body.

This account of ‘history’ takes liberties with what Lloyd intended when he wrote of Ireland’s ‘multiple temporalities that constitute the uneven fields of anti-colonial resistance and decolonisation’ (2001:14), and where ‘cultural forms that are constituted as mutually incommensurable … are irreducibly contemporaneous’ (ibid: 22). Chakrabarty, writing of the project of subaltern history, describes the insistence of the Santhals on the historical agency ‘of their god Thakur’ using the metaphor of ‘stubborn knots that stand out and break up the otherwise evenly woven surface of the fabric [of history]’ (1998: 478), and mark the limits of its project. His evocative image captures the ‘stubborn knots’ of the material history of monumental Traveller graves, disrupting the architectural uniformity of the Irish cemetery, and giving rise to the resentful euphemism of ‘two traditions’. By stretching the notion of ‘subaltern history’ to take in the implications of temporality as practice, the point I seek to make is elucidated by Foucault’s distinction between utopia and heterotopia. Whereas utopian placelessness constitutes a perfected, ‘unreal’ analogy with a ‘real’ place, the practices, architectures and rituals of heterotopia’s ‘other-place’ –which are partly removed but still encapsulated - serve to ‘suspect, neutralize, or invert’ dominant spatio-temporal relations, substituting an alternative order of ‘superimposed meanings’ in time and space, which, like history, are both ‘mythic and real’ (Foucault 1986: 24).
In the Traveller funerary monument, the co-presence of pasts, presents and possible futures - formerly configured in camps, and in the repeated encounter of life and the space of death ‘beside the road’ - are newly arranged, and an unassailable relation between the living and the dead is visibly set in stone, in order to confront new futures, resist new dependencies, and seize opportunities that may arise. Subaltern history, from this perspective, is the making and doing, and taking charge over time as well as the representation of it, and consciousness of this ‘historical’ fact pervades the complex affect of the monument among Travellers. The graves of these “ould ones”, linked to ‘slices of time’ (Foucault 1986: 26) before and beyond the classifying topography of sites and cemeteries, mourn lives and freedoms which will not be lived or known again, and form counter-sites to which the crisis of loss, and of unknown, uncertain forms of survival can be removed, and where the generative productivity and renewal of Travellers’ distinctive social embodiment must be reimagined and made certain. The massive solidity and crowded, multivocal intensity of the Traveller graves are as poignant as the silence and ephemerality of malanggan, and just as evocative of incommensurable emotions.

**a system of opening and closing**

‘I begin to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am’ (Foucault 1986: 24)

The concept of subaltern history leads to a consideration of the monument’s Catholic iconography, and how the grave – no longer merely ‘a bit … better’ than settled graves - stands out in Travellers’ eyes ‘as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled’ (Foucault 1986: 27). As a second heterotopia inside the first, religious images constitute the medium of the grave’s expression, so that ‘in order to be perceived …[it] has to pass through this virtual point’ (ibid: 24), but they are also a surface of counteraction. As the ‘virtual point’ of its ‘absolute connection’ to the cemetery, the funerary monument inverts the direction of Christian allegory.

The powerful authority of the Church that sanctifies Catholic death and burial is incontrovertibly directed toward the site of official ritual which Traveller mortality self-consciously inhabits. The cemetery forms part of a network of governance - of ‘real sites’ that
classify, store and separate - since the Church is a counter-state with systems of sacramental 'counts' and an 'indigenous clause' that encompasses the living and the dead. As Travellers claim rights to 'culturally appropriate' settlements, they also claim equality in the rites of the Church, and, as in Rathkeale, equal access to corner plots. From this perspective, the monument's profusion of Catholic iconography vaunts undifferentiated rights of entry to the Church's system of 'counting' souls. But its iconography is expropriated, and enacts what Foucault calls a 'system of opening and closing', where what appears accessible 'hide[s] curious exclusions' (Foucault 1986: 26).

In their orthodox function Catholic icons serve only to mediate the contemplation of miraculous acts and transformations, and the mystery of incarnate divinity, in which a single death is exchanged for eternal redemption. The point of contact between humanity and divinity in the person of Christ frames the central mystery of an otherwise unbridgeable separation between different 'kinds' of beings. But in Travellers' monuments, strategically positioned statues reference human individuals, family roles, and histories, so that the living and the deceased are represented in the grave by saints, apostles and the Holy Family, whose prototypical postures now convey the lives and relationships of Travellers. In one, an armed sentinel saint who bears the name of the deceased family head stands next to the headstone, sword in hand, guarding the family images, and replicates in addition his successor, the eldest son who bears the same name. In another, an image of the Sacred Heart, dripping with blood, portrays the murder of the dead man whose headstone it adorns, and Mary clasping her dead son on top of the headstone is intended to evoke the events of this particular death. The crowded table of the Last Supper is engraved on both old and new Traveller headstones, affirming the egalitarian ideals of Traveller culture and sanctifying its social order, as Traveller sociality is now replicated in death as the perennial union of the one and the many. In sum, the orthodox allegory of divine embodiment at the centre of Catholic teaching - the single event of 'God made man', transposed beyond time to 'eternity' - is, in effect, inverted. In conveying the mortal sufferings, relations and values of Travellers' lives the grave configures an 'ultimate unity' (Turner 1957:290) with the divine; prefigured by the lives and deaths of Christ and the saints, the meaning and value of Travellers' lives are vested with cosmological truth.

By reversing its iconic textuality, the monument subverts sacramental economy's final separation of temporal and extra-temporal modes of being, and its denial of human agency.

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213 It is surely significant that these monuments have assumed increasingly elaborate forms in a state noted for the exceptional position of the Church as a counter-state.
and desire beyond death. Paradoxically, Christianity’s foundational tenets - that divine purpose is concealed from the minds of men, and human dignity equally disbursed - form fertile soil for the nurture of difference, provided that faith’s eternal truths are assured.
In the foreground lies the headstone of a wife who predeceased her husband, removed in order to make way for a monument in honour of her husband, a family head, to which her name has been added.
the incipient ‘house’

‘The tavu complex was an exquisitely elegant expression of a recomposed totality and synthetic unity. [It] expressed the potentiality contained in the unity of male and female, the power of its roots in the past and the multiplicity of its future growth, the individuality of its ancestral source and the structural mass of its descendants’ issue.’

McKinnon (1991: 93)

McKinnon’s description of the politico-aesthetic role of the Tanimbarese tavu, a ‘standing altar panel’ conceived as ‘the founding ancestor … become a house’ (1991:92) bears striking resemblances to that of Traveller funerary monument. Furthermore it points to a nexus of objects, relations and concepts held to constitute a ‘house’ in its absence as an actual ‘physical entity’ (85). Of particular interest in the funerary monument (illuminated by Travellers’ accounts of its creation,) is the distributed force of a relation between the ‘permanent’ site, the monument, and the politico-ritual collectivity that the monument makes visible. The grave of the family head draws to itself the promise contained in a critical temporal-spatial moment of the fractal breed: that of the emergence of a new ‘spring’ of the breed as capable, cooperative adults. For the monument’s architects, the source of problematic distinctions between wholeness and hierarchy, substance and its political force, resides in the very circumstances that lent the fractal breed its social, imaginary and political force: the fluctuating forms of its ‘totality’ through time, as people enacted and counteracted in camps changing capacities and interdependencies between children and parents, women and men, siblings and affines, and the dead and the living, through whom flows of substance produced both equality and difference, continuity and separation. The critical mediators of the ‘rules’ around ‘what happens’ when a monument is made are precisely foregrounded in the intentionalities of camps: gender, procreative status (and the intensity and diminution of breeds), the interdependency and autonomy of men and women, and adjacent generations, including the dead. In the monument, the expressivity of spatial, material and dimensional

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McKinnon writes that most ‘old, raised houses’ were removed by order of the Dutch between 1920 and 1940 and remaining ones destroyed in WWII by the Japanese (1991: 85).
analogues makes visible how intensities of substance, continuity and social force are embodied differently by women and men, and collectively ‘made big’ by the dead man’s descendants, in whom reciprocally, he is ‘made big’. The ‘real’ residential site, where the ‘ould ones’ remain too long in a position of dominant coalition is the provocation for the grave’s image of succession and replacement. Rights and duties strategically coalesce in this emergence of the breed’s new generational ‘limbs’, and in the monument’s ability to allure and impress, to command envy and admiration, the grave seeks to elicit among other Travellers the social and political effects of youthful determination, sexuality and vigour. The sacredness and heterotopic opposition of a virtual, imagined Traveller site, to replace old, outworn ‘real’ ones, now, paradoxically, seems to materialize in the grave.

The consolidation of a future site of ‘the name’ thus hovers unborn inside the grave, its masculine ‘centre of gravity’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 157) contained in the headstone; non-breed affines, bilateral cousins, and sisters’ offspring are ‘all part of the group’ subsumed by the breed name in the grave, exactly as in the site, where, people say, ‘We are all the one’. The siblings represented in the monument form a number that closely corresponds to the official ‘maximum’ for the number of families in a site: around ten. The grave’s delineation of a politically salient collectivity united in generational time, procreative capacity, and shared interests in co-residence reflects neither calculation nor coincidence, for the official size guidelines for sites were determined precisely in relation to the unity (or ‘compatibility’) claimed by an earlier generation of siblings, that of the core formations of the long-term, roadside camp. Thus, the site, the funerary monument, and the relations of those ‘contained’ within the monument, understood together, can be seen to constitute a ‘house’.

This account endorses Levi-Strauss’s (1982: 171-174; 1987: 151-2) emphasis on the dialectic between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ aspects of the ‘house’, i.e., the political economy of sites as real and symbolic ‘domains’, and the internal tensions of differentiated wholeness or ‘fictional’ unity of the ‘one family’ (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Lévi Strauss 1982, 1987; Macdonald 1987; McKinnon 1991). For Travellers, ‘estate’, dwelling and embodied personhood map co-implicated potentialities. No principle over-rides another, but each enlists in the others varied, uncertain and changing potentialities. If houses are recognized first, as ritual, and only secondarily as material entities (Cunningham 1973, cited in McKinnon: 90, f/n 4), the separation of the ‘house’ into the ‘perfect’ form of the monument

215 The freedom of belonging and social status of a sister among brothers appears differently if her (non-breed) husband and children experience a sense of subordination. Solidarities between siblings, cousins and affines may either give way to isolation, or alternatively, be cemented by marriages between cross-cousins.
and, as one family head put it, the ‘completely incomplete’ - Traveller site becomes understandable.

The distributed nexus of a Traveller ‘house’ exists, as in other house societies, within and against actual or impending crisis. However, rather than following Lévi-Strauss’s (1982: 176) view of the house as a ‘device’, where ‘social or political manoeuvres [are disguised] under the mantle of kinship’, the Irish data foreground three issues with particular force: the politico-ritual and aesthetic functions of the grave qua house, its dual relation to the site as both constraint and possibility, and the monument’s elicitation of all that might construed as ‘embodiment’. Comparisons and contrasts between Tanimbarese asymmetric cognatic ‘pathways’ and Traveller ‘coming and going’ are superfluous here; however a couple of observations may be made. Like a number of other ‘house societies’ (Carsten 1997; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; MacDonald 1987) formerly termed ‘loosely structured’ (Kelly 1977:274), the permanent site insists on the principle of ‘keeping close to the one family’, preserving the visible unity of a sibling group dominated by brothers and their ‘own families’. Rather than expressively encompassing affines in an idiom of idealised kinship, ‘keeping close’ means marrying breed or back-breed cousins, so that an image of the ‘one family’s’ self-perpetuation is made real in the site. The ‘houseness’ of the site is, in the last resort, the politico-ritual estate of the breed as a kind of body whose productive substance is made visible in dwelling: a body that is both male and female, named and unnamed, ancestral and yet to be born. The crucial insight of Lévi-Strauss is that ‘houses’ minister to the originality and productivity of an objectified form of property (substance or power), whose social relations must repeatedly be determined in practice and made visible by sacralised means of inviolable exclusions and oppositions. Flows of persons and ‘aspects of persons’ (Strathern 1988: 191-207) between sites qua houses do not diminish the breed’s absolute instantiation of value and insolubility. However, rather than being ‘decomposed’ and ‘reconstituted’ (McKinnon: 36) through time, the breed, as the funerary monument demonstrates, is precisely concerned with the uniqueness and originality of the people themselves who ‘make the name big’. Reversing the dictum of Wagner’s Daribi informant, for whom the name makes the man big, emerging ‘springs’ of Travellers actively elicit recognition from others, suggesting that fractal bodies, sites and funerary monuments will continue to elicit or, put differently, ‘folly aan’ from each other.
Chapter Eleven

Dolly, Dolliness and the site

Zeus saw the tears of the immortal horses and grew sad.

“It would have been better my hapless horses
If we had not given you! What are you doing down there,
Among woebegone humanity, the plaything of fate?
You for whom neither death nor old age lie in wait,
You are harassed by transitory calamities.
Men have implicated you in their troubles.”

C.P Cavafy

‘It is the act, which, through its temporality, individuates.’

Marilyn Strathern (1999)

Unlike the site’s mediation of settled-Traveller worlds, the architecture of the gift is contained within the site (or between sites of the breed) among closely related men and boys. The gift contained in horses, particularly mares\(^{216}\), consists of their ‘breed’, and like (a) human breed it is made visible in a name. It imposes an expectation on the recipient of the gift to sustain and reproduce the breed in further mare-foals. Whereas the funerary monument displays the public, collective force of the local breed, the gift-horse elicits the breed in the iconic form of a mare given to an infant boy, and in practices

\(^{216}\) Conversations on the gender of gift-horses yielded different perspectives. For some men, mares held a special value and pleasure ‘in themselves’; for others, the breed of either stallions or mares was logically the same, although mares were said to be far easier to control.
associated with her care, ownership and fertility, taught to him by his father. In this field of naturalism and growing familiarity, the continuity of the name and the morality of male relations combine in a predictive logic of how things are, and how they should be, between successive generations of men of the name.

Travellers themselves proffer no simplistic parallel between human and animal reproduction: one activity does not ‘stand for’ another. Rather, the intentional and the implicit are intertwined in forms of analogy, metaphor and substitution in the trope of breeding/ reproduction. Humans produce horses and turn them into ‘breeds’, which become gifts, relations, and images of continuity within a critically restricted circle of distribution, and in the same process, horses realise particular possibilities of human ontology and sociality.  

Natural facts and moral relations

Horses were an important element of social life among men and boys in almost all the site-dwelling communities I visited in Ireland, and this was markedly different from Travellers I knew who lived on housing estates. It would not be over-stating the case to say that horses were the beating heart of male social life on many sites, and more than one man commented to me that without horses his life would be empty, and that to lose his horses would kill him. Conversely, a friend once expressed his feeling of overwhelming depression by saying that even his horses had lost their interest for him, a thing he had thought could never happen.

217 In Stewart’s (1997) notable account of Hungarian Rom, horse-dealing is understood as a ‘utopian fantasy of exchanging and swapping their own women’ (179), a metaphor made possible by means of using horses as ‘a vicarious symbolic control over the gaźos’. The inter-relations of animals and people in pastoral societies have frequently been described (e.g., Asad 1970; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Stenning 1994; Kelly 1985; Hutchinson 1996), many accounts emphasising the moral framework of livestock - human social relations in relation to bride-wealth and property distribution.

218 Travellers in some parts of Ireland who live in houses or flats do keep horses, although in Co. Clare it was exceptionally rare. Saris et al (2000) write on the keeping of horses as part of a ‘culture of protest’ in Dublin housing estates (cf Saris and Bartley 2002). Conway (2004) documents the impacts on Travellers of seizures of horses under the Control of Horses Act 1996. Neither account contributes significantly ‘to our understanding of Irish Travellers’ (Conway 2004: 65), horse being described merely as a ‘symbol of identity and community ownership’ (Saris et al 2000: 119).
Unlike the settled equine industry, which distances (or resists) equine personhood by referring to ‘sires’, ‘fillies’ and ‘dams’, Travellers describe young horses as ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ foals and use human terminology for generational links, so that a girl-foal is the ‘daughter’ or ‘grand-daughter’ of a particular mare. Horses provide other points for comparison, and are spoken of as possessing idealised human qualities of beauty, strength and gentleness, as well as resistance to domination, known admiringly as “kick”. These qualisigns of natural horseness (which in turn make people cultural connoisseurs,) are iconic of a distributed humanity that horses are thus held to share in certain respects. By means of culturally produced ‘natural’ resemblances and active human mediation, horse breeding, mediated through the gift, becomes a processual metaphor of family reproduction and history. Combining the practices of breeding with
forms of prestation between men and boys, the gift takes on the moral and aesthetic character of a ‘normative science’ (Peirce 1998: 200).219

A typical pattern described by men in three different breeds involved the gift of a female foal by a grandfather to a grandson, either at birth or around five years of age, once the boy can recognize the animal as his own, sit on its back, and begin to learn to care for its needs by watching his father.220 As soon as a small boy can carry a bucket of water, his father sends him to fetch water for the foal while he feeds and grooms her. He frequently lifts the boy and sits him on the horse, showing pleasure and approval. The boy’s father is situated pivotally at the centre of two relationships: between the grandfather and grandson, and between the boy and his horse. Gradually, the child learns his property rights: although no one but the boy himself can sell the foal (in normal circumstances), he is not considered capable of making such a decision until the age of thirteen or fourteen, by which time he can buy and sell horses on his own behalf. However, according to Jack, who, as the father of eleven children found himself in the central, mediating role more than once, and is also a giver of horses to his sons and grandsons, the child inherits reproductive interests and rights in the mare (as the foal becomes,) only gradually from his father.

While his son, its ‘real’ owner, was still young, Jack paid to have the mare ‘horsed’ (inseminated) in order to produce foals, and these foals belonged to Jack to either keep or sell, until his son was considered old enough to receive money from the sale of a foal. His son would first receive proceeds from the sale of a foal at the age of twelve or thirteen, and could use that money either to have the mare horsed the following year, or to buy another foal or yearling. In short, the child’s father claims reproductive interests in the mare given to his son, until the boy himself approaches maturity: money put into the mare in the form of semen is taken out again in the sale of her foal, and this reproductive flow of money and foals marks the distinction between men and boys. The first gift of money from father to son signals the young man’s sole rights henceforth over his mare’s fertility, as well as his right to sell her if he chooses, converting her into more horses and money. However, the moment of relinquishment of the totality of the grandfather’s gift of the mare’s fertility from son to grandson carries hopes and expectations that the

219 For human-livestock moral/ reproductive communities see Asad’s notable account (1970);
220 Slight variations were described, all broadly resembling that described here.
mediating adult son/ father will continue to influence his son’s decisions concerning the mare and her foals. Thus, Jack explained, last year he paid to have his teenage son’s mare “put in foal”, and “the foal would belong to Pete. It’d be his decision to sell it- with guidance from me. The money would be Pete’s.” Jack added that he copied a pattern set by his father, Frank. “My father did it before me, that is, paid for the mare to be horsed. After a certain age, sixteen or seventeen, I paid myself for the mare to be put in foal.”

The gradual modification of the mediating father’s role can be viewed in several ways. The mare objectifies mutual respect and interdependence that it is hoped will be reflected in other aspects of the father-son relationship. A man hopes to “be consulted” for “guidance” by his son, while formally disclaiming any authority over him. This hoped-for balance between mutuality and autonomy is carefully observed between adult
Travellers, and is soon reflected in the young man’s independent ‘coming and going’ between sites and camps, and his breaking of economic ties to his father. The father’s advantage in the relationship is strengthened by his superior knowledge of both horses and children, production and reproduction being analogous capacities. Finally, the mare and her foals are unique links to the young man’s father’s father, and a parallel between human and animal generation means that this mare, or rather what is in her - the substance and potentiality of her ‘breed’ - are held in special affection and esteem. The ethics and aesthetics of horses as productive gifts draw on the objectification of an intergenerational flow of male substance, transmitted and exercised according to hierarchical norms and internalised constraints.

The semiotics of mare/foal, father/son/grandfather relations encompass all three of what Peirce identifies as the ‘normative sciences’: aesthetics, ethics, and logic (1998: 196-207), concerning which, Peirce states, that they readily correspond to the three categories of iconism, indexicality and symbolism (200). Between childhood and adulthood a boy’s mare acquires incremental layers of affect, significance, and efficacy for him. Initially, simply another sensory being requiring human care and adult control, she is soon recognized as a gift and mark of distinction, and eventually, as the external thread of an extended human genealogy in which men and boys take up distinct and changing positions in relation to each other. Jack's account conveyed the affective density in which personal freedom is enmeshed: ‘If Billy said to me “I’m getting the old mare shot”, I’d say “It’s your decision”. But I’d be consulted. He wouldn’t do it. My eldest son – there’d be a lot of advice sought from me’.

The identification of the mare and her breed with her original donor is explicit. Jack explained, ‘[The boys] will want to keep her breed going, and that’s the intention when you give them the horse.’ The mare is considered an ‘inalienable possession’ in Weiner’s (1992) sense, and if she dies or has been unavoidably sold, a mare of her ‘blood line’ or ‘breed’- a ‘daughter’ - must replace her.221 The lengths to which people go to hold onto a gift-mare and to retrieve her if she is confiscated222 confirm this. Robbie, a father of four young children, living beside the road with his ‘own’ family in 2008, described waking up to suspicious noises late one night, several years earlier. He ran

221 Compare Hurn’s account of ‘Cardinauts’ (2008), in which farmers who breed Welsh cobs extend their name and reputation through the horse’s name and blood line, which Hurn also compares to Weiner’s concept of ‘inalienable possessions’.

222 Under the provisions of the Control of Horses Act 1996.
out of his trailer to discover police and wardens cutting the chain on his securely-locked horse box with bolt croppers in order to impound the mare, in a particularly egregious use of powers given under the Control of Horses Act (1996), aimed at preventing wandering horses. Later he paid a substantial fine to retrieve her, because, he said, ‘We had to get her back’ though the fine might well have been more than she was worth. She was a gift to his son from the boy’s grandparents, and could not be lost, least of all through what Travellers see as legitimised theft by the state. The mare was the boy’s link to his dead grandparents, and Robbie felt utterly responsible for her safe-keeping on his behalf. Several years later, as the family moved from camp to camp driven by court evictions, the horses were kept nearby, hidden in isolated woodland or remote empty fields, and Robbie occasionally agonized over whether or not to sell the mare, but could never bring himself to, because she was, as he put it, ‘a member of the family’.

Jack’s youngest brother, Martin, is a father himself and lives with his ‘own family’, on a site with three generations of men of the breed including Jack and their father, Frank. Martin speaks of his mare’s production of a foal, reproducing her ‘breed’, as almost synonymous with recreating Frank, who gave him Dolly at the age of ten. He spoke of his strong desire for Dolly, now a ‘middle-aged’ mare approaching the end of her reproductive life, to foal again ‘before Frank dies’. A ‘good filly foal’ of Dolly’s would ‘keep the breed going’, he says, and with it, a further image of Frank himself. Each female foal that Dolly has produced and that the family keeps223 and passes as a gift among themselves is also named Dolly, creating a perpetuity of immortal Dollies which index the physics and metaphysics of her ‘breed’ in the qualisign of Dolliness. All the Dollies are said equally to be ‘connexions to Frank’, and everyone ardently hopes that ‘Maybe next year we’ll have a filly foal from her – a young Dolly!’ ‘Dolliness’ thus delineates a breed which, without a name, would remain socially invisible, and the circulation of Dollies among Frank’s descendants ensures both recognition of the breed ‘Dolly’ created by Frank’s original gift, and spurs on the active production and circulation of the breed among successive generations. The more Dollies that can be produced before the dreaded, inevitable event of Frank’s death, the greater his amplification in his gifts - gifts which are simultaneously independent, productive beings, social relations between grandfathers, fathers and sons, sources of consolation, and aspects of Frank that ‘contain’ his memory.

223 Not all foals are kept: colts and ‘bad’ filly foals are sold off at between six months and two years of age.
Dolly (any Dolly) is an icon neither of horseness nor humanness, because she is more particular both in her uniqueness, and in the complex fractality of relatedness to Frank and his descendants, in which she is both a creative subject and a transmissive link of the sign ‘Dolliness’ that traces itself to Frank. Dolliness indexes the cultural being of (the) ‘breed’, coming to exist through the semiosis of naming, mediated reproduction, and the superimposition of natural and conceptual law which states that every Dolly produces another Dolly as her daughter. This law of naming is central to the gift she embodies, and extends Dolly *qua* horse beyond the status of an icon, or ‘image in the mind’ that ‘[belongs] to past experience’ to that of a symbol, capable of ‘[influencing] the thought and conduct of its interpreter’ (Peirce CP 4.4447-8).

There is reason to resist the temptation to overdetermine the polysemic evocations of Dolliness in human creativity and reproduction. For one thing, apart from the pleasures of practical horsemanship, knowledge naturalised as connoisseurship, and the anticipation and luck involved in breeding, which all generations share as the stuff of daily life, each of three generations of Frank’s descendants has experienced the role of horses in human sociality quite differently. Coming from a line of tinsmiths, as a young man Frank was the first in his family to conceive a passion for horses, so that they rapidly came to represent both means and ends of his livelihood. He described the central place of a mare in the early years of his marriage to Neeny:

‘[Neeny] was fifteen and a half, and I was nineteen. We put our hands together and we worked awful hard, and at the end of that year we had twenty pound. We bought a mare, and that mare, she put us on our feet. She lifted us up. She set us going. In four or five years I had eight or nine horses and three or four sets of harness, and a new caravan.’

The fullness of Frank’s emotion in this spare description is concentrated in “She lifted us up. She set us going”, phrases which speak of the mare almost as the parent of the new family, and of Frank and Neeny as her small children. At a time when young couples typically set off on the road of married life with a handcart, a kettle and kettle iron, a grub box and the basic elements of a tent, the mare was the source of a new way of life and embodied the family’s feeling of its shared centre and future. Jack, the fourth child in the family, vividly remembered Frank’s ‘first Dolly – a little black mare. He

224 A rigging pole (ridge), piece (cover), and set of wattles.

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dealt her, swapped her up, when I was seven. She was there before I came. I remember it clearly. He dealt her for a horse [male] foal and another foal. I felt disappointed and bad about it. My mother was against doing it.’ Many years later Frank bought a new, valuable Dolly with the intention of implanting her breed as an expansive gift among his sons and grandsons: ‘I gave four hundred and fifty pound for her – a lot for a one year filly foal. She was the quality I was looking for, a small heavy one.’ The original Dolly, the little black mare whose successors were not genealogically from her ‘breed’, is thus symbolic to older members of Frank’s family differently from the later Dollies, being identified with the family’s origin and mobility, in the days before sites. She was the horse that pulled the wagon, taking Frank to ‘out of the way places’ where you could ‘chat a horse for a few pound’, and sell it on later for a profit elsewhere. The intimate import of Dolly to the particular relations of this family become clearer. The breeding of Dollies images the originality of Frank’s creative extension through his ‘own family’, as a father of many men and grandfather of more than a hundred grandchildren, many of whom are now parents themselves. Frank laughs when I ask him how many direct descendants he has: they have become uncountable. Like other post-nomadic architectures, the gift-mare is an organic container of future social relations prefigured in the structure of the gift, in which the architect’s design lives on beyond his death.

I have suggested that Dolly can be understood in terms of the progressive semiotic forms Peirce describes as icon, index and symbol. The icon denotes a relation of ‘firstness’ or immediacy between object and interpretant; the index signifies an (absent) object by virtue of a relation with it –this is the ‘secondness’ of indexicality; and the symbol’s ‘thirdness’ involves the notion of law or generality in a modality of relations between things. The field of the sign thus expands, and ‘thirdness’, the interpretant of ‘law’, is itself a symbol; which ‘therefore, produces an endless series of interpretants’ (Peirce 1998: 323). Moreover, unlike ‘logical’ interpretants, law (or predictability) is an intellectual concept which has no given object in the sign formation. The symbol, which Peirce states is the basis of all reasoning, whose object- generality itself - lies outside ‘immediate consciousness’ (207) thus combines determination and vagueness. Peirce writes, ‘[t]he very entelechy of being lies in being representable… A symbol is an embryonic reality endowed with power of growth into the very truth, the very entelechy of reality. This appears mystical and mysterious simply because we insist on remaining blind to what is plain, that there can be no reality which has not the life of a symbol’ (Peirce 1998: 324).
Peirce’s semiotics, unfolding in Dolliness, articulate the incremental intensities of social life. First, the breeding, buying and selling of horses by male Travellers in general cultivate a horse aesthetic which shapes aspirations, tastes and skills, producing connoisseurship with its attendant implications of financial acumen. Shared between related and unrelated male Travellers alike, horse-practice forms an iconic ‘Traveller’ style of life, connecting younger men with the values of mobility, independence and horse-skill identified with the senior, recently nomadic generation. This is the iconic aspect of Traveller horse-practice. Second, the breeding and gifting of horses among related men and boys determines a restricted field of circulation, which indexes the inter-generational, male breed. Refining this indexical field, the social entailments of shared substance are elaborated through gifted and inherited rights and shared interests in particular ‘blood-lines’ of horses. Debts of deference and memory owed by young men to their elders are paid in the nurture of breeds as inalienable possessions, creating further gifts. Finally, when the breed, Dolly, is named and renews itself in the offspring of an original ancestor, and simultaneously as a cultural artefact imbedded in a restricted field of circulation, the fractal personhood of the breed is temporalised in relation to a particular human lifespan, that of the original namer and giver, whose creativity is thus extended in his immediate descendants. The named breed, Dolly, becomes the sign of a law of Dolliness: a symbol. Dolly stands not simply for the generality of Traveller ‘breed’, for which ‘secondness’ is sufficient, nor even Frank’s breed as a timeless, extensive entity, but for Frank himself as creative agent of its multiplicity. All Dollies stand for Frank, a symbolic Frank ‘with relationship integrally implied’ (Wagner 2001:163), or ‘holograph’ of the breed.

Wagner observes that naming brings ‘points of reference … into a relational field’ (1986: 30-31), and as a ‘point of reference’, the name ‘[stops] … the flow of analogy for social purposes’. In the perpetual Dolly, the quality of (Peirce’s) ‘thirdness’ encompasses Frank and everything that his male descendants, recipients of the gift, mean for him, and which now finds an architectural corollary in the sites of those he calls his ‘own family’. Dolly is the body beyond the body which is (the) breed, and the singularity of its internal impetus in the lives of real people. She thus brings into play the politics of breeds and

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225 Not all of a Dolly’s offspring become gifts. Male foals and “no good” females are quickly sold, and once they leave the restricted field of circulation they are socially invisible, no longer ‘Dollies’.
the political saliency of dwelling in the site, while aligning with them the intimate force of individual human existence.

Whereas earlier chapters demonstrated permeability, resistance and interagency between the field of the house and the site, here something contrary occurs. In seasonal rounds of horsing and foaling that recreate the gift, the site becomes permeable to a camp-like rhythm of anticipation, repetition and variation. The monotonous present of the site is reworked into cycles of production, circulation and nurture, broken into fragments of intentional relations between old men, their adult sons and young grandsons. A temporal architecture re-appears in such fragmentation, whose directional impetus toward wholeness, like that of the camp, is endless re/creation, recalling Grosz’s concept of the body’s ‘materiality … as destination’ (1994: 21). The breeding of gift-horses, privately contained within the site by men, elicits an intimate scene of skill, obligation and reproductive commitment which transmutes the site into a ‘collective scene of disclosure’ (Warner 2002:

Herding mares and foals back onto the site in the evening. Limerick 2007.
63) of ‘the one family’s’ self-reproductive capacity, hypostasised in descending generations of men.

The one family, the breed and the spring

Dolly’s reproductive continuity seeks to reconcile the ideology of (the) extensive breed with its individuation in the life of a man and his descendants, an ‘embryonic reality endowed with power of growth into the very truth’. As in the making of funeral monuments, the implicit tension this entails involves separation or exclusion. The breed considered as an historical ‘entity’ is constantly in the process of breaking apart. In order to effect its internal reconciliation, the ‘one family’ imagines a singular procreative moment that one Traveller described to me as ‘starting a new spring’, evoking Marilyn Strathern’s observation that ‘the act, through its temporality, individuates’ (1999: 96). Frank’s achievement in framing this temporality in Dolly combines the dual potential of naming as both reference point and relational field (Wagner 1986: 30-31), stopping the flow of analogy at himself while envisaging its endless reproduction among his male descendants. ‘Making the name big’ in the plenitude of one’s descendants thus involves telescoping a logically expansive, unbounded breed (with multiple diffused, gendered intensities) into the real, practical existence of a politically salient body of men and their ‘own families’. Brothers, their adult sons and father, uncles and cousins delineate the core, practical constituency of the breed, and as such, relations between them may be sustained by shared sites, camps, visits and repeated inter-marriage, or alternatively, severed by dispersal, marrying out, and deliberately cutting off allegiances. Over several generations such separations lead to the accepted notion that Travellers who were ‘once the same’ are now ‘different breeds’. These recently ‘different breeds’ retain the same breed name, however, and so something must be done to create a new ‘reference point’, and stop the ‘flow of analogy’. This is done by means of (what begins as) a nickname which permanently prefixes itself to the ‘new’ breed and obtains public recognition, differentiating the new from the old ‘crowd’. McDonagh, the most common surname among Irish Travellers, is unusual, being divided into at least six breeds each of which has a separate prefix. There are Bumbie McDonaghs, Quinn McDonaghs, Barber McDonaghs, Redbreast McDonaghs, Bold McDonaghs and so forth, each of whom
constitutes a separate breed. Some cutting-off points are lost to memory, while others are recent, such as the creation of Barbers from former Bumbies. When Travellers talk, reference to the Quinns, Barbers, Bumbies or Laffers is sufficient to designate the breed in question, while the name McDonagh reveals nothing, unless local context makes it self-sufficient.

This invites closer consideration of the way sites objectify breeds for Travellers. The ‘one family’ is conceived pragmatically in terms of a range of breed and back-breed relationships, but nearly always by reference to the coalition’s oldest or most senior male member, or in the absence of such a man, to one already dead. The time and space of the ‘one family’s’ particular elicitation of the fractal breed has a parallel in self-consciously constructed narratives, temporal scales, individual biographies and points of re-naming of the breed as a ‘personne morale’.

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Brothers training their trotter. County Cork 2007.
These historico-political accounts of breeds reflect a more pervasive concern with how time is made visible as the symbolic ground against which action is situated; in short, they reconfigure the temporality of the breed in relation to agency. Marilyn Strathern’s observation is particularly salient here: ‘it is the act, which, through its temporality, individuates’ (Strathern 1999: 96). The site, the creation of which demonstrates the agency of a collectivity and usually assures the prominence of a particular individual as its head man, can be understood as a chronotope, Bakhtin’s term for what he describes as ‘organizing centres for the fundamental narrative events of the novel’ (Bakhtin 1981: 250). The chronotope is a means of ‘materializing time in space’ (ibid) so that what would remain abstract takes on the force of concrete re/presentation, connecting actions, images, and ideas to the material form of a given space and the temporality it elicits. Viewed through the lens of the gift, the site can be compared with other chronotopes: the funerary monument and the camp, each of which materializes a bounded space for the re/presentation of a symbolic temporality within which people and relations are elicited, through acts which determine a particular field of agency and potentiality. Like Bakhtin’s threshold, site, camp, funerary monument and gift-mare mark ‘breaking points’ of instantaneous time whose reflexive significance is elicited by materiality. Where the site elicits the historical present moment of the ‘one family’, the funerary monument is a fulcrum around which past, present and possible future combine as a unitary spatial event, and the gift-mare’s expansive futurity is imaged in the original moment of her naming.

As a spatial ground for the setting of temporal action, camps may materialise time quite differently. In the camp described, the living defer to a previous generation of siblings: a ‘one family’ almost forgotten. Long-dead mothers and sisters assume pre-eminence and are ‘brought alive’ (as Kuchler writes of malanggan,) in stories of their appearances among the living, in the hope that a maternal back-breed might be reunited with its name. The uncertain relations of present-time families (now three different breeds,) are muted for the duration of the camp, as spoken and sensory connections make visible its temporality, and dramatic enactments foreground the overlapping time and space of the living and the dead. The flows and stoppages of camps as chronotopes

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226 This is powerfully exemplified in the force fields and concealed presences of dreaming landscapes among aboriginal Australians (Munn 1996; Povinelli 1993).
uncork new possibilities for previously interrupted flows – new futures for seemingly completed individual lives, so that the dead are never really gone.

If, like the brother who strikes out and ‘starts a new spring’, the temporality of action individuates, the diversity and varied repetition of chronotopes engenders the possibility of multiple, distinct individuations and collective tropes of selfhood.
Conclusion

I have described the social and imaginative force of distributed metaphor and analogy disclosed in the material/living forms and embodied/objectified temporalities of post-nomadic architectures, in the relations transacted and configured in their making, and in their effects directed towards others. The thesis has argued that post-nomadic architectures and subjectivities are interproduced, contingently, creatively, and in conflict, and that the fields of practice they inhabit and create are alternately mutually resistant, permeable and interdependent, or discrete. The material and performative sites of designated Traveller houses, sites and camps, funerary monuments and gift-horses, and the heterogeneous time and space they make visible, bring into play reflexive problems concerning the body’s containment, division, continuity and relationality, implicating the body as architecture’s constitutive force.

The concept of the body used throughout is necessarily generalised. In self-objectification, embodied personhood is performatively elicited to shape the intention of social interactions, instrumentalising the body not as a given totality, but as capacities and sources of difference. In the seriality of dwelling in camps these capacities are linked to the contraction and expansion of gendered reproduction, where the endless ‘following on’ of ‘generation’, in which two bodies result in one, imparts different capacities and perspectives. By multiplying perspectives through repetition and variation, camps create opportunities to recoup the deficits of history that constrain the time and space of individual bodies, alive and dead. The sense of the body thus also encompasses subjective spatial and temporal cognition and the interagency of perception, thought and action. In Piaget’s account of the bodily origin and production of ‘figurative’ and ‘operative’ knowledge’, which he calls ‘genetic epistemology’, sensation, movement, action, and cognition are inseparably linked, so that ‘knowing an object does not mean copying it, it means acting upon it. It means constructing systems of transformation that can be carried out on or with this object’ (1968: 11).
function’ of the body’s ‘structuring structures’ and ‘transposable schemes’ means that the body is ‘always simultaneously form to the content it subsumes and content for some higher form’ (1973: 35). Thus, what Huxley (1977: 31) calls the ‘stereomorphic twist’ between the body as epistemic subject and existential object ‘cannot be separated from the body’s physical performance in that construction’ (30). The body thus simultaneously engenders and inhabits complex sites of memory, such as remembered camps, or gifts to the dead and the unborn, which are simultaneously internal and external, sensory, objectified and embodied.

The symbolic forms of embodiment that arise from this bodily nexus can be understood, in the first instance, as an indexical field of incomplete perspectives, emulated and exchanged in the performative practices of camps. Camps, which may involve ghosts as protagonists, combine repetition and uniqueness, forming one-off architectures of the pasts, presents and anticipated futures that meet in individual bodies, and analogies of how they intensify, separate, and recombine in new forms. What Grosz has called the ‘ontological incompleteness’ (1994: x-xi) of the body is a relation to the absence of finality and determinate form of the media of its existence: time and space. In the second instance, in bodies ‘full of going’ and names endlessly ‘following on’ and growing ‘big’, the force and possible fulfilment of the body’s ‘substance’ or breed is imagined as a spatio-temporal destination, the impetus toward another camp, children yet to be born, a mare about to foal, linked to the strategic interplay between adjacent generations of breed and back-breed in an endless series of metonymic camps.

In the perspectivist field of camps where embodiment circulates, an alternative account of history appears at the site of the body. Death fails to constitute a transcendent surplus of undifferentiated ancestry and, as such, to supply the objectivist illusion of the ‘view from nowhere’, through which capitalist circulation constructs the autonomy of fields and separates the dead from the living. An afterlife clings to the earth in quiet lanes leading to camps, in the wakeful darkness of the trailer, in faces of the dead appearing in car windows, and voices whispering at night. The sensory and imaginative life of the body exceeds corporeality in the vibration of lived, remembered and future space. This heterogeneous time

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227 These terms originally used by Piaget are taken by Bourdieu, and their meaning both inverted and narrowed. Rather than being the productive source of figurative, operative and abstract knowledge, the body is seen by Bourdieu as the effect of power sedimented in the material world by ‘history’. 261
and space of the body which inflects the repetition and variation of camps never constitutes the structured illusion of a field that the house more easily elicits.

Rancière’s (2004) account of the ‘distribution of the sensible’ is of value in understanding how the social force that post-nomadic architectures exert is differentiated between ‘the one family’, the breed, between different breeds, and between Travellers and settled society. The ‘distribution of the sensible’ concerns effects rather than causes: ‘who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed’ (2004: 8). The thesis follows Rancière’s ‘politics of aesthetics’ in regarding post-nomadic architectures as ‘ways of doing and making that intervene in the general distribution of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and visibility’ (2004:13). The monument’s ‘intelligence’, its relations of production, visible hierarchy, magnificence and unitary effect are critical to a local breed’s ‘presentational power’ across Traveller and Traveller-settled politics, and it will ultimately be judged by its effects across these partly-linked fields. The monument’s perceptual ‘distribution’ is thus radically distinct from the private scene of breeding, naming and nurturing gift-horses within the site, where temporal continuity and spatial delimitation of the gift’s reciprocal relations maintain the ‘modes of being and [self] visibility’ of the ‘one family’. Perception and effect of camps, sites, funerary monuments and gift-horses are differentiated according to who participates and who is debarred, and how aesthetics, performativity and materiality maintain particular ‘modes of being and visibility’.

In Rancière’s account it is clear that fields of practice are not merely homologous distributions of capital; as in other fields of production, the divisions of labour of post-nomadic architectures are characterised by mutual resistance, permeability and interagency. Camps, exclusively the work of Travellers, debar settled subjects, selectively redividing coalitions in particular conjunctions of ‘closeness’ while preserving the separate threads, outside time, of ideologically distinct breeds. The ambiguous distribution of power of sites creates conflicting forms of visibility which tether autonomy to dependency, reflecting the uncertain outcomes of interactions between particular Travellers, their advocates and local settled authorities. In the encompassing field of settled familism and the house, the site (like the ‘designated Traveller house’) is constituted as a state of exception. In Ireland, the ‘permanence’ of the ‘Traveller-specific’ site makes concrete what remains unresolved, and becomes the provocation for the
funerary monument. Like the camp, the monument encapsulates a bounded field of Traveller sociality, but like the site, it visibly intersects settled and Traveller worlds. Standing large beside the ‘inferior’ graves of settled ‘neighbours’ in the common burial ground, distinction between Traveller and settled, and Traveller and Traveller, is displayed and held aloft. The funerary monument proclaims the unity of emerging coalitions of ‘the one family’, as well as the force of Traveller relations in the settled world. Finally, the architecture of gift horses between generations of fathers and sons transforms the site’s constrained interiority into ‘a public [Traveller] world of belonging and transformation’ (Warner 2002:199). Partly shared and partly exclusive, post-nomadic architectures differentiate between a variety of forms of exclusivity and conscious involvement in the unequal world of settled- Traveller relations and resources. As Rancière summarises, the politics of post-nomadic architectures ‘[revolve] around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to speak, around the properties of space and the possibilities of time’ (8).

To conclude, I turn to a debate within anthropology concerning a tension between objectification and materiality. Anthropological approaches to objectification (Bourdieu 1977:87-95; Gregory 1982: 31,34; Strathern 1988: 176-7; Buchli 2013; Rowlands 2005; Pinney 2005; Tilley 2006), share the principle derived from Marx that ‘material forms do not simply mirror pre-existing social distinctions, sets of ideas or symbolic systems. They are instead the medium through which these values, ideas and social distinctions are constantly reproduced and legitimized or transformed’ (Tilley 2006: 61). Whitehead, with an emphasis on process, contingency and organism, describes objectification as ‘the particular mode in which the potentiality of one actual entity is realized in another actual entity’ (1978: 23). The arc of the concept of objectification encompasses later twentieth century anthropology, from Bourdieu’s theory of practice (where it is dialectically linked to embodiment,) Lévi-Strauss’s house society and notion of the fetish, to material culture studies, gift exchange, personhood and performativity. Objectification is also at the crux of a perceived antinomy between ‘meaning’ and ‘materiality’, in which meaning (understood as the logical semantics of sense and reference) is held to be linguistic, and materiality regarded as essentially indifferent to sense-making.

The thesis has sought to demonstrate that the materiality of sites, camps, funerary monuments and gift horses can be considered neither as an autonomous substrate of social life, nor as the peripheral shell of ‘meanings’ encoded in ‘things’, whose origin and
real existence lies elsewhere. Disassembling ‘actual entities’ into autonomous materiality and intentional social relations presupposes the possibility of a separation between the ‘material’ and the ‘social’ that assumes different modes of being. Miller (2005) describes this as an alternative between ‘objects as inscriptive surfaces of human meaning – i.e., signifiers, and as ‘materiality’ – a realm beyond the colonisation of discursive “meaning”.

Pinney, criticizing the ‘tradition of subordinating objects and images to culture and history’, so that ‘context’ eviscerates the ‘force field’ of materiality (2005: 261; cf Strathern 2013), highlights a tension between context or ‘biography’ (‘social life’ pace Appadurai 1986) and the uncertain agency of material objects in human affairs. In sum, the sensory worlds and socialities material objects create, alter, and destroy, remain resistant to human control, and the sticky element of language (‘meaning’ or ‘context’) hanging about the heels of things seeks to infiltrate or defuse the power of their ‘materiality’. Logically, anthropologists risk subordinating or explaining away the material worlds of anthropological subjects, rather than, as might be hoped, evoking the solid and radical uncertainty of real worlds in which people and things combine, clash and interact. Drawing on perspectives suggested within the thesis I seek to address some of the questions that arise from materiality and objectification.

One question is whether ‘materiality’ is shorthand for the (perceived as) given material qualities of something, or whether it is held to possess an autonomous existence. If ‘materiality’ is abstracted from the complex particularity and functioning of an ‘actual entity’, its status becomes that of an ‘eternal object’ or universal. In evoking ‘materiality’, ‘uncolonised’ by perception (Whitehead’s ‘prehension’), we cannot help simultaneously evoking realms of ‘mind’ that are distinct from material objects and milieux, thus reinstating the Cartesian dualism. Locke’s (1961: 247) critique of ‘substance’ as seeking to convey the ‘secret and abstract nature of substance in general’, applies equally to an autonomous ‘materiality’:

> ‘[w]e accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein [simple ideas] do subsist, and from which they do result; which therefore we call substance’… [W]hen we speak of any sort of substance, we say it is a thing having such and such qualities: as body is a thing that is extended, figured, and capable of motion; a spirit a thing capable of thinking… These and the like fashions of speaking intimate that the

228 In Whitehead’s account: ‘An actual entity is a process, and is not describable in terms of the morphology of a ‘stuff’.’ (41).
substance is always something besides the extension, figure, solidity, motion figure, thinking or other observable ideas, though we know not what it is’ (245-246).

According to Locke thinking, led by language, reifies universals as ‘real’ objects pertaining to some larger universal form or substrate.\(^{229}\) Whitehead’s insistence that ‘every so-called ‘universal’ is particular in the sense of being just what it is, diverse from everything else; and every so-called ‘particular’ is universal in the sense of entering into the constitution of other actual entities’ (1979: 48) resists the twin tendencies of abstraction and dualism. The thesis follows Whitehead’s description: the force of material things (as actual entities) is as ‘ultimate agents of stubborn fact’ (128). The presentational power (58) of ‘stubborn facts’ combines the immediacy of their experience (or ‘prehension’) for the viewer/recipient and the already existent world in which they appear.\(^{230}\) In the interagency of effects between the ‘microscopic’ ‘individual unity of experience’ and ‘macroscopic’- ‘givenness of the actual world… which at once limits and provides opportunity for the actual occasion’ - a comparison can be made with Strathern’s observation that objects, which both ‘contain and elicit interpretations’, must be experienced (2013: 169), and their effects are both concrete and uncertain. The ‘agency of stubborn facts’ is neither reducible to a linguistic (referential) coding of external context nor to the inchoate unity of perception and interpretation.

However, something of the resistance of things to ‘prehension’ still eludes these account of objectification, for which I draw again on Agamben’s description of gesture as the ‘exhibition of mediality: … the process of making a means visible as such’ (2000: 58). What gesture describes is not the autonomous agency of a material essence remote from meaning, but the expropriation of meaning. Objectification inhabits the realm of gesture inasmuch as its forms of ‘making and doing’ are neither precisely ‘making’ (\textit{poiesis}), nor ‘acting’ (\textit{praxis}) (57). Gesture, according to Agamben, instantiates an alternative to the (makerly) ends of \textit{poiesis} and the (actorly) means of \textit{praxis}, and indicates the ‘emergence of being-in-a-medium’ in which the ‘mediality’ of something is both an inescapable means of expression and a gag: ‘the communication of communicability’ (59). Gesture marks the intersection between what would negate or

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\(^{229}\) Cf Balibar 2013, on Locke and the invention of consciousness,

\(^{230}\) ‘The notion of “organism” has two meanings... The microscopic is concerned with the formal constitution of an actual occasion, considered as a process of realizing an individual unity of experience. The macroscopic … is concerned with the givenness of the actual world, considered as the stubborn fact which at once limits and provides opportunity for the actual occasion’ (Whitehead 1979: 128-129).
cancel each other out—such as spontaneity and performance, public and private, life and art—and is the point at which conflict and accommodation meet and separate, still unresolved. The gesture ‘is always a gesture of not being able to figure something out in language’ (59). From this perspective, objectification makes visible the mediality of the material entity’s potential agency (or legitimate authority) and its foreclosure of possibility in public-private worlds of meaning. For Agamben the de facto medium of human beings is language, but, as gesture, language is not synonymous with proposition, reference, or the encoding of meaning. It is language as currency rendered valueless, where nothing is exchanged or consumed. Agamben’s concern is with the dispossession of language, when ‘the distinction between public and private loses its meaning’ and ‘an absolutely private person’, ‘severed from the political community’ inhabits an ‘opaque zone of indiscernibility’ (122-3).

In the material relations of the permanently temporary UK site, and its subject, the g/Gypsy, we find objectification as dispossession in extremis: an inhabited zone of indiscernibility, in which public legitimacy and private desire are forced to meet in the gesture of offering to make yourself and your dwelling disappear. What is at stake in the site’s ‘prehension’ in houselessness as an unhouse, policed by Kafkaesque regulations, courtroom elicitations of g/Gypsy fatalism, and psychologically attested architectural ‘aversions’ cannot well be comprehended as a harmonious dance between meaning and materiality. The core of objectification in the site is dispossession, of speech, political life and of a compromised expression of familism. Here we see that the mediality of objectification involves not the tyranny of ‘meaning’ but simultaneous interdependence and resistance. The multiplicity of perspectives of subjects who inhabit not one, but multiple fields or ‘already existent worlds’, repeatedly reconstitutes the parallax or blind spots of minimal difference in material objects themselves. These contours of permeability and resistance that incompletely determine objects in relation to other objects constitute the resources from which new objects (interpretations and subjectivities) may arise. Materiality is then neither a form of closure that encompasses an object’s entrance into history, nor are human frames of meaning distinguishable from objects themselves. To appropriate Agamben’s (2000: 80) description, gesture, at the centre of objectification, ‘is neither use value nor exchange value, neither biographic experience nor impersonal event: it is the other side of the commodity that lets the ‘crystals of this common social substance’ sink into the situation.’
The social and material relations of permanent, temporary dwelling, affirmed in gestures of desire and aversion by post-nomadic subjects, communicate the uncertain possibilities and limits of a social and material world whose sphere of mediality is architecture, where political economy and ethical commitments intersect.
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