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Ways of Walking

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Abstract

The writer has a poor sense of orientation and loses her way when she walks in cities. When this happens in Antwerp, Belgium, GPS maps and a music streaming application on her smartphone trigger the experience that she unfolds in this essay. Her aim is to explore an aspect of the temporal dynamics of contemporary life and, based on the element of loss, to demonstrate how machine, digital temporality and human, existential temporality may interact. Thanks to Kenneth Goldsmith's notion of displacement, the work of writers and artists related to Antwerp, namely Hugo Claus, Connie Palmen and Jan Fabre, references to ethnology and performance studies, and the writer's father who was gardening through bud grafting, the experience of losing one's way in a city with a smartphone in the hand, is restaged in writing, while loss in space encounters memory through oblivion and initiates reflection on an existential condition of loss.

>Those cities look alike, you mistook the one for the other
>
>Loula Anagnostaki, *The City*.

<div style="float:left">On loss,
cut-and-paste
and
semicolons</div>

The safest method of losing yourselves anywhere, including in your own home, is to follow me; no, not "losing your own selves"; I mean "getting lost"; no, not "get lost" as an insult, I mean "losing your way".

I am losing my way in both space and writing. When I am ready for a full stop, another meaning pops up and displaces the previous one. I am confused, I put a semicolon, I add "no, not", and I reshape my sentence. Thanks to the cut-and-paste tools of my word processor, this disoriented account of disorientation becomes:

The safest method of losing your way anywhere, including in your own home, is to follow me.

This is not a "lost" sentence anymore, it ends with confidence, with a full stop. The disruption of a cut may reshape the meaning; no cut without paste. And I have just put another semicolon; I am not confident yet.

It also happens when I walk; I walk with semicolons; like an incurable disease. This is the rhythm of the walker who does not drive and loses her way. My dearest friend is suffering from the same "disease". When we walk in Athens, my home city, we are a moving catastrophe. We speak French in public spaces, to avoid being understood by strangers – la catastrophe se déplace. Losing my way in Athens, in London, where I currently live, and in cities that I visit during travels comes as no surprise. Sooner or later, although I am preparing to see my destination, the image of my expectations is disrupted by an unknown image, an intruder: the church of Saint Carolus Borromeus appears unexpectedly, creates a cut in my way and pastes itself where I was expecting to see AMUZ, the Music Centre in the former Saint Augustine's Church. And, as I realize that the cut-and-paste tools of my word processor also operate with baroque churches in Antwerp, Belgium, I put a semicolon; I am confused, I look around to make sense of the space. Did you wonder how Antwerp popped up, while you could still see the "moving catastrophe" in Athens?

This is how losing one's way feels like. This is walking and writing with semicolons.

The safest method of losing your way in this essay is to follow my stories that pop up, demand their place and restage my experience of walking in Antwerp, which I visited in July 2018 for three days. I invite you to practice loss and explore an existential condition of loss, by gradually switching from the space of the city to the space of memory; to explore the temporal dynamics of memory and loss of memory as walkers with smartphones in your hands. This digital device carries the temporality of globalized, communication networks (Cox and Lund 2016: 9-10); I invite you to explore the memory of the contemporary world with me.

"Me", I am a performance scholar, who is interested in temporality in theatre and visual arts and its interaction with the temporality of the contemporary world; I also hold a degree in Biology; I am the "lost" person who guides you through stories by putting literal and metaphorical semicolons that offer a walking pace, as intruders cut my way in space and writing.

(what happened the last time you walked to a church?)

On displacement

The intruder church in Antwerp reminded me of Kenneth Goldsmith's 2014 text in the "Rhizome" platform for online artistic work. Goldsmith describes intruders in globalized communication networks, and other contemporary experiences, as "displacements", "rude and insistent unwashed party crashers imposing their meaning". I suggest that you put a semicolon here; if you are reading my essay on your smartphone, open your browser application, the title is *Displacement is the new Translation*, or you may copy the link from the footnote below.[1] You have just experienced displacement: you were reading my essay, and Goldsmith's text has popped up on your screen.

As a trained translator, I share Goldsmith's idea that translation is "a bridge builder", "a harmonious outcome". The "moving catastrophe" is smoothly translated into French, the code of friendship in public spaces. An intruder, though, refuses to preserve smooth intimacy. Goldsmith states that "comprehension is optional; displacement is concretely demonstrative".

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[1] https://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/jun/09/displacement-new-translation/

Saint Carolus Borromeus demonstrates itself when it pops up unexpectedly in Antwerp and in my essay. Despite being a church, it is neither smooth nor kind either to AMUZ or to the story of "moving catastrophe"; it shouts "get lost, here I am". It also shouts "get lost" to me, displaces me and demands my attention; I put a semicolon and I look. John Berger writes (7-8), that ways of seeing are determined by what we know (and I know, alas, that Saint Carolus Borromeus is on the right side of the Schoenmarkt, while AMUZ is on the left), by what we believe (and I believe that I am close to river Schelde), by the way we relate to what we see (and I do not have time to visit the church because AMUZ closes at 18:00), as well as by the way we choose to look at. I choose to see the image of my re-orientation, as I look at this displacement. Chance did its work, it is the moment to do mine, to make a choice, to go beyond disorientation and reshape my way; to continue my sentence after the semicolon. Ways of walking are ways of seeing.

(it seems like the moment to walk somewhere new, doesn't it?)

On digital space and fiction

When the moment of choice comes in my writing, I do not only displace words on the word processor; I displace the word processor itself. When I see that something sounds wrong, I minimize its window and I call up my web browser, where I navigate pages with dictionaries. Images displace each other on my desktop, meanings displace each other in my text; they are both reshaped. Dictionaries cannot displace each other on the top of my desk when I do not pay attention to them. Attention in the digital corresponds to displacement; and it can be granted to the wrong link. I lose my way among links in the digital space, as I lose my way in the streets of a city.

As I click on links, a certain moment comes when an unexpected image appears; I have taken the wrong path. I put a semicolon; I click on the undo button. I disrupt the digital space by tracing my way back to a familiar image; there is no undo button in the city. Even the familiar web site, though, is confusing, since it bears so much potentiality in its links. There is no comfort in the web; displacements of web pages "undo" my own self like displacements of buildings that disorient me in the city. The World Wide Web is not a space, but an action based on links that "causes a specific sense of temporality – the instant or moment", according to Rob Schields (2000: 158). This is the temporality of the web pages

displacing each other. The web fictionalizes the notion of space through action initiated by its undo button.

Fiction, however, is not guilty of deception. As I read in the Oxford English Dictionary (open it in your browser application and type "fiction" – have you just bumped into a paywall? What a displacement!), the word does not derive etymologically from "fake", but from "shape"; fiction reshapes the notion of space. As I read in Connie Palmen's essay, "The Joy of Solitude", fiction is not the opposite of reality, but "reality is interwoven with fictional elements" (2017a: 263). I bought the collective essays of the Dutch writer in Antwerp, when a bookstore popped up where I was hoping to find an art gallery; another instance of losing my way. A bookstore is a site where the physical space is interwoven with the fiction of stories packed in books. My legs walk in the store as my fingers open books, I read and I decide about buying them, about letting my reality be displaced by their fiction.

Encounters between space and fiction also happen when my fingers click and type. My physical materiality interacts with the digital space, whose materiality is its interactivity (Schep 2008: 325); this interaction shapes a fiction that displaces the notion of space. Fingers typing this essay "walk" the digital space and make me lose my way in it and in my stories; legs that walk the physical space make me lose my way in the city. Legs and fingers walk the fiction of the urban space, which is shaped by its physical space and the digital space of my smartphone that I always have with me; it is the gadget that keeps our hands busy as psychoanalyst Darian Leader writes in *Hands* (2016: 2). Writing and walking are acts of losing in spaces of fiction.

(how does it feel to walk in the aisles of your favourite bookstore or your local library?)

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On smartphone applications and tourism

For someone who loses her way, mapping applications with GPS are a gift. I am in Antwerp, at Rubenshuis, and my fingers ask the GPS to "mark my location". I am going to AMUZ and they ask the GPS to "find my location". GPS takes over, fingers lead legs, I am immersed in turn-by-turn instructions and unexpectedly, I am hit by a car. No, it did not happen that way. Unexpectedly, I saw Saint Carolus Borromeus.

Immersion is impossible, since my legs walk in the physical space and not inside the GPS. GPS offers information, but not a sense of spatiality; without it I cannot use the information. GPS is like a web search engine that provides information about the Flemish writer and visual artist Hugo Claus who lived in Antwerp, but requires some sense of literature in order to navigate this information.

When Claus's sleepwalker loses his way in language in his novella, *A Sleepwalk*, he joins together available words despite knowing that they are wrong; he disrupts and reshapes the Flemish language into a space of fiction by displacing letters, replacing them with others, and joining Flemish and English words: "It was the 18 *Remember"*, he writes, instead of *September*. "It was Agnes's *vergaarbak*" (which means *reservoir*), he writes, instead of the Flemish word "*verjaardag*" (which means *birthday*) (2003:183). When AMUZ is displaced by Saint Carolus Borromeus, I act like him and I shape a fiction of loss by joining together available elements, physical and digital, in order to make sense of the space. This is the moment when I put a semicolon; my gaze is directed not only to the church, but also to my smartphone, where multiple applications are open. I swipe them out, my fingers work fast, they hit the screen and get rid of them. "Get lost, all of you", only the GPS maps are allowed to stay. My index hits fast on the "back" – the "undo" – button of GPS. Legs stop and fingers move fast; ways of walking become ways of touching. What a confusion! I lose my way and the applications "get lost" as well. They are displaced from the screen, as I am displaced in Antwerp.

Unlike web links, applications are bunches of "objects" that communicate by passing messages to each other; messages that my index gives by hitting the screen. This is a "touching event" that "wakes up" the application, which only shuts down if my fingers swipe it out. Applications are in latency – type: "How does an App Work?" on YouTube to see them hibernating like bears. Applications are not fictions of space but fictions of objects waiting to be touched; digital materiality waiting for interaction. Hit and swipe are not caresses though, and applications compete for their place on my smartphone screen by constantly displacing each other, since only one-at-a-time can be active. This goes beyond the temporality of the instant moment of the web. It is the non-linear, net-like, temporality of the "back" and "home" buttons performing the "undo" action, and the temporality of switching among applications; this is the digital temporality of contemporary networks that displaces human temporality of the past, present and future. Goldsmith describes it as displacement, "after a parallel of the bodies in space". When bodies move in space in the contemporary city, fingers also

move and use applications. Not just the smartphone as an object, but the temporality of displacement of globalized networks keeps my hands busy, when I lose my way in the city and I am displaced by images that pop up unexpectedly.

What a confusion! The smartphone that I choose to hold has acted as an "unwashed party crasher" that makes a cut in my experience of walking; it has pasted itself in my hand. I hold the contemporary temporality in my hand, I hold the contemporary city in my hand; we are together, my hand holding the smartphone connects us. It is a habit that keeps my hands busy, an uncomfortable habit, which allows the tension between the human and the digital, my disorientation and the globalized temporality, to unfold. My hand has another habit that keeps it busy: typing. Another uncomfortable habit, which allows the tension among competing stories to unfold. I choose to type words and semicolons in order to stage the interaction between human and digital displacement, which reshapes the experience of the city not only as a fiction of space, but also as a fiction of time; ways of walking become ways of shaping time. The semicolon is not just a punctuation point. It disrupts my sentences because, as it corresponds to a walking pace, it is a way of shaping time; my writing shapes my ways of walking within/with-and-in the digital city.

There is a trap, though. Mapping applications are designed to make walking in the city a comfortable experience; an experience of tourism, which for ethnologist Marc Augé is representative of the globalized, contemporary world. A tourist "stays at home, even when [s]he is away" (Augé 2009: 61), she is comfortable in a world against comfort. Goldsmith states that we need to "have faith" that computer networks function the way they promise, but, he continues, the malware pops up, a Trojan virus that displaces faith. However, the deception of this malware is part of the system. Likewise, the smartphone deceives the tourist by covering up the uncomfortable displacement of digital temporality and offering her the gift of comfort. A tourist looks for "physical comfort" and "psychological quietness" (Augé: 2009: 61). She uses GPS like a dictionary offering specific meanings; she lets applications shape her ways of walking.

How can I stay uncomfortable in a world of comfortable tourism? How can I use GPS like a reservoir of meanings, the way Claus's sleepwalker uses words?

(how about trying to find the "reservoir of meanings" of your GPS when you walk?)

"Stay comfortable! Antwerp is not your city. Why do you long for displacement?"

On the game of memory

Because… I did not put just one, but two semicolons on my way to AMUZ. At the first semicolon, at Saint Carolus Borromeus, I decided to "follow the water", the rule of Venice, which sooner or later (always "later", for me) brings you to the Grand Canal where you can reshape your way. I believed that river Schelde could be easily reached from Saint Carolus Borromeus and I would reshape my way to AMUZ from there; thinking done by someone who loses her way. When still at the first semicolon, my fingers swiped out all applications but the GPS map; no, not all. There is one application that breaks the one-application-at-a-time rule and continues being active, though not visible on the screen; despite being constantly displaced, it displaces all others. It is my music streaming application, which reshapes my ways of walking as ways of hearing. In Antwerp, I was listening to Randy Newman's songs, because a reference I noticed while browsing Palmen's collected essays made me long for his music. Newman was playing when I arrived at Schelde, and as I started reshaping my way with GPS maps, I heard: "I am looking at the river but I am thinking of the sea". And I put the second semicolon.

I got confused when this song pasted itself into my way. My gaze shifted from the GPS map showing the river, towards the river next to me; no, not towards Schelde, my gaze was displaced and it was directed towards the sea. Not any sea, but towards the gulf of Thermaikos; at the second semicolon, I reshaped my way after the reservoir of meanings of Claus's sleepwalker, as from my reservoir of water images, the gulf of Thermaikos displaced Schelde. It is the gulf of Thessaloniki, a city in Northern Greece. There was a time when I used to go there very often, when I wanted to live in that city; not anymore. It is the city of my dearest friend's childhood; and the city of the man I loved. He cannot drive either. We walk. Mainly during the night; he is not at home when the sun is shining. During the day, I walk along the seafront and I listen to Lou Reed's "Perfect Day", while expecting his phone call to make plans for the perfect night. I had ceased to think of him; no, not "him", I mean "it", I had stopped thinking of the city. Until its sea pasted itself where the GPS indicated the river of Antwerp.

And now what? Antwerp, which is not *my* city, and the smartphone application, which does not have *my* human temporality, displace me from the space of the city towards the space of memory; *my* memory.

Network and human temporalities of displacement shift the fiction of the digital and physical space of the city towards a game of memory. My memory is not ready for me to use, it is like the sleepwalker's reservoir; I need to reshape it, make a fiction from the elements of this reservoir, like him. Chance did its work, it is the moment to do mine; to make the choice to walk with-and-in the digital city, namely to stage *in writing* my experience of losing my way in Antwerp, as the trigger for a game of memory. This is the key semicolon in this essay; I have to continue joining spaces and temporalities: Antwerp and Thessaloniki; physical and digital; city and memory. But how?

Help is available in the contemporary city itself. In Antwerp, it comes from contemporary art. Newman still sings; after 20 minutes I arrive at AMUZ. When AMUZ was a church, its altarpieces were created by Rubens, van Dyck and Jordaens. When they were transferred to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, the Flemish visual and theatre artist Jan Fabre was commissioned to create his own altarpieces in their place; they were inaugurated in the summer of 2018. This gesture creates three cuts in AMUZ and commissions works that paste themselves in them. Contemporary art displaces; as the art of the contemporary world, it takes up its temporality. Fabre, though, complicates displacement: he created three mosaics from jewel beetle wing cases and connected them to the three altarpieces through symbols – you can see them on the AMUZ web site: "Jan Fabre in AMUZ".[2] Thanks to them, Fabre's pieces become the Trojan horse that brings the baroque masters back to AMUZ in a different way. This displacement is not the "get lost" of smartphone applications, but a dynamic game that Fabre stages with the Baroque Masters, who are vital in the city's and his own memory. He transforms contemporary displacement into displacement generated by memory, he shows how the contemporary temporality of displacement may be taken up. His game of memory, which creates a fiction of joined spaces and temporalities, suggests a way of experiencing the contemporary city.

As my fiction of space is triggered by the digital temporality of displacement, the game of joining it with my human temporality of disorientation needs to be an uncomfortable one; like Fabre's. Fiction is not kind, it displaces, it shouts "get lost"; when Newman's fiction, his song, interweaved with reality – which is the function of fiction according to Palmen – it displaced a whole river. The words of the song were not "bridge builders" that smoothly join spaces, as it is the case with translations, according to Goldsmith. In fact, there are no bridges over

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[2] https://web.archive.org/web/20190602020920/https://amuz.be/en/janfabre/

river Schelde. Goldsmith writes that when displacement happens in computer networks, there is "cobbling together [of] bits and pieces willy-nilly, resulting in bizarre Frankensteinian artifacts". He mentions the example of PDF files put together by cobbling together "pages from various editions" (2020). The music streaming application cobbles together music and commercials; at least, in the free version that I use. The free version does not "play", but "shuffles". You never know when your song is going to be heard; maybe never. In the old times when I used to listen to cassettes on a Walkman, there was no shuffling, no cobbling together; no displacement either. The familiar music kept me calm; the unexpected sounds from the application keep me alert to play the game of memory.

(what playlist do you choose when you follow the water?)

Do I produce a "Frankensteinian artefact" when I join spaces through displacement?

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On bud grafts and weed memory

No, not all doctors are Dr Frankenstein. There are other doctors, who transplant organ grafts; the gifts of life. "Graft" is a gardening metaphor. I know it because my father is excellent in gardening. Dad has reshaped the veranda of an Athens flat into a garden of surprises; he particularly loves hibiscus. When he spots weak plants, he feels that his garden is losing its way. He is confused and he puts a semicolon; he makes a choice in order to have the most beautiful blossoms in spring: he cuts. He cuts a stem and inserts a dormant side bud from another plant, so that the joined parts may grow into a single plant; he bud grafts. A cut disrupts, but dad knows about cuts; he is a barber. Dad's grafted hibiscus is not a "Frankensteinian artefact"; he uses a cut-and-paste displacement to join temporalities of growth from different plants and help them blossom.

Picture it if you can: Athens, 1969, a couple is about to get married. When dad looks at the veranda of their new flat, he imagines a garden; he is "looking at the river [veranda] but thinking of the sea [garden]". This act of imagination is an act of choice; an act of disobedience, according to Palmen. I bought her book *The Sin of the Woman*, in Antwerp, together with her collected essays. In it, she considers "the original sin to be the sin of imagination" (2017b: 16). Choice is possible only if good and evil can be imagined; and the subsequent punishment too. In "The Joy of Solitude", Palmen defines fiction as "the making of stories with the aim to shape the meaning of life" (2017a, 253); it is writing in order "to live with

the burden of originality" (2017b: 8). Dad did not write, but Palmen states that "not all fiction is literature" (2017a: 253). Dad shapes such a non-linguistic fiction with his bud grafting choices, since he can imagine the consequences of the irreversible cuts in the stems and face the possibility of failure. Dad leads his life the way he curates his garden; through bud grafting. He imagined his home as a grafted plant that grows from the fresh stems and the blossoms of his garden, together with his family. Dad had fled his home city when his parents were killed during the civil war and mum had fled an abusive family; their home is the fiction they created in order to live originally.

According to performance scholar Dee Heddon, "place[s]… are not simply given, but are made – like experience" (2009: 162). No, AMUZ is not a "Frankensteinian artefact"; it is a grafted plant, where the temporality of birth-death-rebirth for which the beetles of the mosaics are a symbol, is joined with the temporalities of the building's past as a church and present as a music centre. This grafted plant was growing with music, chats, swaying bodies and scents of a beer festival when I visited it, and Fabre's green altarpieces were the fresh stems of rebirth. My joined space that I explore through legs that walk and fingers that touch screens and type on keyboards is not a "Frankensteinian artefact"; it is a grafted plant, it is my way to experience the city in an original way. I let my loss in space intertwine with the displacement of contemporary networks, although I can imagine that I may be eliminated by them; because I can also imagine the grafted plant, my non-Frankensteinian fiction of joined space.

"Weed!", dad exclaims as he sees a frail, green, stem, among his hibiscus plants. A weed is Goldsmith's "unwashed party crasher" that triggers displacement as it demands the space of hibiscus. Dad is not kind with weeds, he uproots them; he displaces them. Weeds, though, cannot be eliminated, dad may forget them but they keep popping up; the displaced returns and displaces. In his book *Oblivion*, Augé claims that "remembering or forgetting is doing gardener's work, selecting, pruning. Memories are like plants." (2004: 17). We are all gardeners; we choose what is painful and we avoid it; we choose what we can afford to lose. Oblivion disrupts, creates cuts; like the ones in the sentence of Claus's sleepwalker. No, this sentence is not a "Frankensteinian artefact"; it is a grafted plant. Not letters cobbled together, but a birthday reservoir that joins the temporality of birth with the reservoir from which new meanings may grow. Augé gives oblivion the role of "the principle operator that initiates fiction in individual and collective life" (2004: 34).

The gulf of Thermaikos, the sea, is a weed that I had eliminated with the act of gardening of oblivion; and unexpectedly, it popped up and displaced the river of Antwerp; and displaced me. Chance did its work and brought me a weed, it is the moment to do mine. What kind of plants would have grown if dad had joined the temporality of weeds with that of hibiscus? The weed forces me to put a semicolon and imagine how to continue; I bud graft the space by using the weed-sea as a bud. I take up the game that the smartphone played with me: "I am looking at the river [losing my way], but I am thinking of the sea [losing love]". The sea stands for the space of another city, and the temporality of the digital space, since it was called up by a smartphone application; and for the space of my memory of lost love. Ways of walking are ways of shaping space through grafting. Applications stand for a fiction of objects cobbled together; they do not grow. My joined space grows through the intertwining of its dimensions, the digital, the physical, the city and the memory; what grows can be reshaped into fiction.

Heddon suggests that there is a kind of "writing of place", which she calls "autotopography" (2009: 161). Autotopography is, for Heddon, "an autobiographical act", "an act of selecting, of ordering, of editing, of forgetting, of embellishing, of intervention" (161), a process analogous to selection and elimination that take place during an act of gardening. My grafted space is a pre-linguistic way of writing of place, which is adapted into the writing of this essay. My fiction of space is autotopography as an act of bud grafting. Thanks to the application that played Newman's song, my loss in space was connected to my oblivion of what was painful. This double loss initiated my autotopography of bud grafting as a game of memory; my ways of walking became ways of shaping memory. My fiction is memory coming from loss in space and writing. Loss acquires new sense from the reservoir of forgotten meanings; it grows and blossoms into the life of memory. Digital and human loss and oblivion transform the space of the city and make it grow; it is not "lost" space anymore, it is the space of lost love. The painful, unwanted, displaced weed, becomes a graft organ, a gift of life, a gift of memory; my semicolons blossom into a fiction of weed memory. The prize for the gift of life of the weed is loss; I keep losing my way.

(how many times can you listen to the same song when you walk through a memory?)

*On being
"Lost in my
life"*

And I keep walking, writing, remembering. Chance did its work, it is the moment to do mine. By chance, I have a poor sense of orientation; by choice, I turn it into a way of being. I make sense of my experience with-

and-in the contemporary world by writing in public spaces, where displacement is probable. I encourage weeds to pop up, I put semicolons; I deal with loss, I shape the fiction of weed memory. Unexpectedly, my screen saver pops up and displaces everything else. I look at the girl with the ribbon, my dearest friend, and I see catastrophe; no, not the "moving catastrophe" in Athens. The girl is dead; this is my incurable disease of losing.

The girl is Loula Anagnostaki, the leading playwright of Greece; the opening quote in this essay is from her play *The City*. Her character searches for the city of her painful memory and she loses her way as she pastes unknown cities in the cuts generated by oblivion; the poor sense of orientation switches from space to existence. "I was lost in my life", she wrote in a song for another play; an existential loss from lost love, like sleepwalking. Claus's sleepwalker had forgotten the woman who once was the "light of his life" (2003: 140). Unexpectedly, the light found a cut and reached him; she popped up like a weed. He refused to recognize her; then, he searched for her. Words were confusing him because of the denied memory of love; he was not lost in language but "lost in his life". For years, I was comfortably leaving the pain of lost love behind. I denied the love that I needed and I put a semicolon; I could not continue my sentence, I was "lost in my life".

Palmen writes about giving up what one is longing for in a piece about her husband, Hans van Mierlo. "I have never felt adequately equipped for life", he explained (2017a: 399); he was 67 when they met. This successful and respected politician was longing for something else; he seemed to have put a semicolon to his dreams and to have been "lost in his life". Palmen's piece has the title *The Child and I*, after a poem by Martinus Nijhoff: Someone in dark mood finds a child that writes "without haste and without shame, all the things of my life that I'm still dreaming of writing". The child, though, washes the writing off and refuses to offer him a ready-to-use biography; he has to reshape his memory into fiction. Even if you do not speak Dutch, search for "Hans van Mierlo- Wat ik nog steeds te schrijven droom" and listen to the music of van Mierlo's voice reciting the poem, while collecting olives in South France; longing for writing and an act of gardening grow into an act of fiction that reshapes memory. In fact, he continued after the semicolon and he began writing his memoirs, which were interrupted by his death; maybe it was love that gave him the power to write, Palmen states (2017a 401). Since I have read this piece, I choose to look at my semicolons in the face. I was lost in comfortable displacement, as I had given up another love as well; love for art. I made the comfortable

choice, I studied Biology, it took me 22 years to change country, language and discipline and continue after this semicolon; and write *about* my semicolons.

This is "me", who invited you to practice loss; a tourist in my own life, who used to avoid loss; not anymore. Loss can be irrevocable, though. When Claus could not play the game with words anymore, he chose euthanasia. Palmen calls Alzheimer "the disease of the oblivion" (2017a: 412). When oblivion becomes an incurable disease, its gift of loss becomes a Trojan Horse; fiction is silenced. In fact, I bought Claus's book in the bookstore "The Trojan Horse", in Ghent, Belgium; I had taken the tram towards the opposite direction, I got off and…

Who cares about you, disoriented person, who cannot find your way even by GPS?

I am afraid that you are right; almost right. It all began from a personal anecdote; no, not that "personal", since it all began from widely used smartphone applications and the way they may interact with human temporality. This was an essay on the temporal dynamics of contemporary life. When tourism is rejected, risk is taken and digital and physical space and temporality are allowed to interact. The tension between them has led to an existential reflection on space and time; to a way of taking up the temporality of the contemporary world. I take up its aspect of loss, thanks to my personal anecdote; digital displacement triggers fiction generated from oblivion rather than memory. Walking in the digital city does not eliminate the physical space of the city or human temporality, it does not lead to more loss, but generates new ways of existence. This essay explored such ways of walking; no, not "walking", ways of writing; no, not "writing", ways of memory. Those ways as pathways, means and methods of being, create grafted plants growing from joined spaces and temporalities of humans and digital technology.

(walk; write; graft; remember; enjoy your own displacement.)

In the memory of a certain smartphone there were photographs from dad's grafted hibiscus plants; it broke down, I lost them. All memory is vulnerable. I remember their colours, their shapes – so beautiful; and my proud dad taking care of them in his gardening clothes. I now walk in cities far away from dad's garden. He died on February 18, 2012. His garden still blossoms every spring.

Acknowledgement

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