
**Ruts of Gentrification:
Breaking the Surface of
Vienna's Changing
Cityscape**

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Abstract

Last year, the city of Vienna celebrated the 150-year anniversary of the opening of the Ringstrasse, the central ring road that stands as symbol of the huge structural renewal that accompanied the transformation of the Habsburg empire's capital into a rapidly growing modern city. The anniversary acquired poignancy on account of the way Vienna's population is once again growing rapidly, with an estimated ¼ million people to be added to the city's population over the next decade. While accommodating urban migrants was not a priority in Ringstrasse Vienna, and working class districts are not part of iconic mapped mediations, the current city council, a coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party, studiously tries to avoid 19th-century urban modernity's "mistakes" in their efforts to accommodate the growing population, and they let the Viennese, and the world, know. This time, GIS and digital mapping are mobilized for planning, mediating and communicating large-scale development and renewal projects.

This paper looks at the mediations of three crucial sites of contemporary urban transformation in Vienna that mobilize the affordances of new technologies: "Loftcity," a loft development cum cultural centre on the site of one of Vienna's largest factories, the Ankerbrotfabrik; the transformation of the district surrounding Vienna's new Hauptbahnhof; and Aspern, "Vienna's Urban Lakeside," a new satellite town promoted as a city of the future. By comparing the historical traces that remain in the mediations of these sites with their 19th-century counterparts, a geocritical reading of Vienna's gentrification emerges that situates spatial practices in historically grown lines of connectivity, presaging and transcending traditional forms of classification, such as national divides or urban/suburban dichotomies.

Keywords

Faciality, gentrification, geomediation, holey space, Vienna

Introduction

In 2015, the city of Vienna celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Ringstrasse, a central ring road that has served as the dominant symbol for the huge structural transformation of the Habsburg empire's capital into a rapidly growing modern city during the second half of the nineteenth century. The anniversary acquired particular poignancy at a time when Vienna's population is once again growing rapidly, with an estimated ¼ million people to be added to the city's population over the next decade. Accommodating urban migrants had not been a priority in the industrializing capital of a multinational empire during the nineteenth century, and working-class districts were not part of iconic mapped mediations (Figure 1).

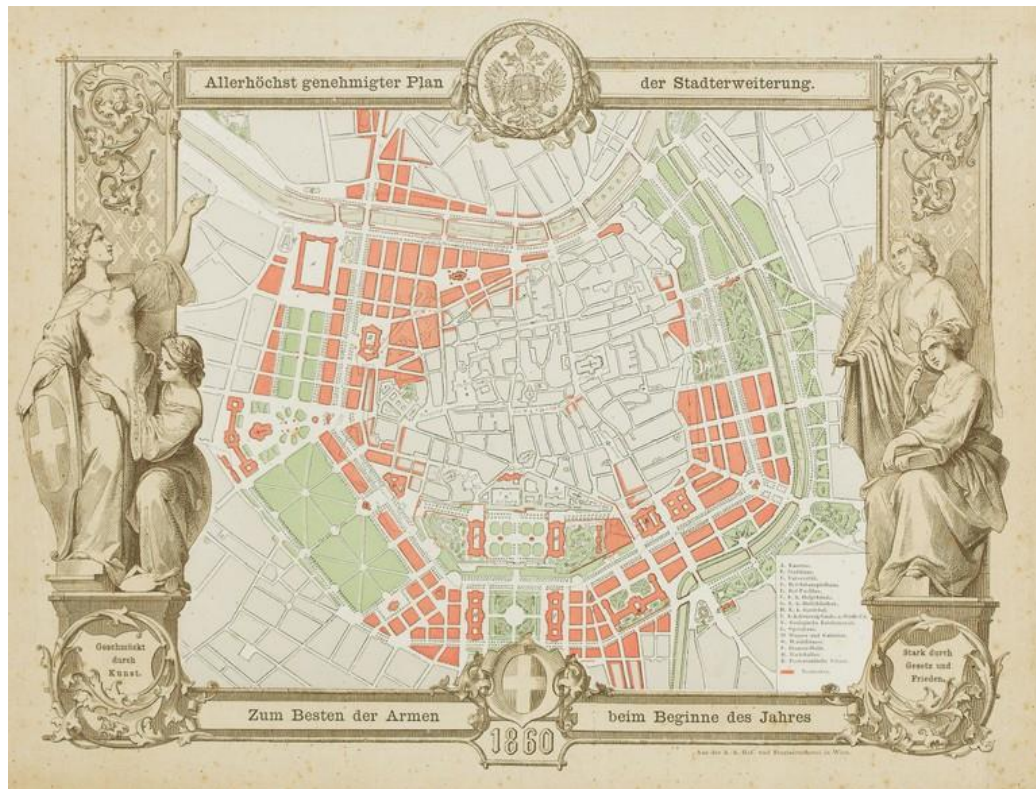


Figure 1: Allerhöchst genehmigter Plan der Stadterweiterung kolorierter Holzstich. By K. k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei in Wien [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

150 years later, the attitude towards urban growth and migration has changed considerably. The current city council, a coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party in power since 2010 (when the absolute majority the Social Democrats had held since 2001 was broken), has studiously tried to avoid nineteenth-century urban modernity's social blinkers in their efforts to accommodate the growing population,

and they let the Viennese, and the world, know. A wide array of geomediations, such as digital maps, CAD-based architectural mock-ups and publications for communicating current urban planning initiatives, is being mobilized for disseminating these processes to the public.

This paper takes what is happening in 21st-century Vienna as a starting point to reflect on a specific historical and spatial conjuncture of geomediated discourse, in which digitally generated, visually mediated urban imaginaries are being deployed to foster a discourse that encourages investment in locality, affectively as well as financially. I am particularly interested in the surfaces that are being generated through the affordances of digital tools used for place mediation, surfaces that I argue flatten and smooth the historically constituted dynamics and affects of urban habitats into clearly delineated areas of neighbourhood, community and belonging, thereby establishing, materially as well as imaginatively, an agile and investment-friendly time-space continuum. I will juxtapose this process to the counter-hegemonic tenacity of ruts, unintended remnants of overlooked or deliberately concealed habitual movement and directionality from the past that are part of urbanity's memoryscapes. My aim is to establish, in this preliminary probe into the empirical context of a specific place with historical depth, how such an approach can interrogate contemporary urban spatial practices and develop tools for an urban critique of place-making that does justice to negotiations and assertions of complex urban histories and memories and recuperates the vectors of mobility and directionality that move imaginaries beyond the confines of identitarian spatiality. As one will see, my approach is influenced by Deleuzian approaches to surfaces and 'surficiality', refracted through the lens of Meaghan Morris's readings of neoliberal urbanism, which point towards the affordances of critique that an engagement with spatial practices can open up.

My probe is focussed on the second decade of the 21st century, the period in Vienna's urban planning during which the 2015 masterplan (STEP 2015) was completed and the 2025 plan (STEP 2025) emerged (Rosenberger, 2014; see also Huitner, 2015: 131). Three sites serve as case studies: the Ankerbrot factory lofts ("Loft City"), a loft development cum cultural centre on the site of one of Vienna's largest factories; the transformation of the district around the Central Train Station

(“Hauptbahnhof”); and the new satellite town of Aspern (“Seestadt” (Vienna’s Urban Lakeside)), promoted as a city of the future (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Vienna’s Urban Lakeside Aspern promotional image (source: aspern-seestadt.at)

I deliberately discuss three urban renewal projects of dramatically different scale. Loft City is just one apartment block in a predominantly working-class and immigrant district; the train station straddles large swathes of two districts and conjoins historically very distinct urban environments into a focussed zone of entrepreneurship, investment and global connectivity; and Vienna’s Urban Lakeside is currently “one of the largest urban development projects in Europe” (Ballhausen et al., 2013: 7). While of very different scales, each of these developments plays a crucial role in the wider strategy of Vienna’s urban planning to re-centre population density in a structured way, corresponding to what has been identified as a guiding principle in contemporary planning discourse:

[C]ity-regional cooperation in planning and the international context to urban development become central to the debate. Besides this up-scaling to a trans-national level, a more differentiated involvement

with neighborhood development appears at the same time. Social fragmentation becomes a pivotal element ... [Planning] constructs two scales of intervention independent from one another – the neighborhood level and the European level (Huitner, 2015: 133).

Huitner identifies a conjuncture in which previous planning principles guided by the tenets of a social welfare state have been superseded by a concern with investment opportunities while maintaining an interest in social inclusivity and socially mixed housing, which results in efforts to blur historically established boundaries of districts that have also demarcated boundaries between social classes. Each of the redevelopment projects thus triggers a re-constitution of urban memory, mediated by representations that emphasize a European business context that is seen as the enabling factor of the city's prosperity. At the same time these mediations articulate that context to the imaginaries of local community and neighbourhood into which investments flow. In order to understand this two-pronged approach, we need to look at the specific circumstances of the city's planning and development of these three sites. Proceeding from these circumstances, I will discuss the geomedia framework into which these developments are inscribed and look at perspectives on my example sites that might provide alternative geomedia approaches to the sites by mobilizing vernacular temporalities that are not part of hegemonic spatial representations.

Geomediating a Masterplan in Vienna

Quite exceptionally for a European city, Vienna reached its highest population numbers (over 2 million) already before World War I, when it was still the capital of the Habsburg's Dual Monarchy. Significantly reduced in population after the first World War, population growth throughout the 20th century, but especially after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, was accommodated by infill of areas that were not densely populated by European standards, rather than by expansion into suburban zones beyond the city limits. This growth was guided by a relatively powerful city council with a tradition of taking the lead in master-planning urban development since the inter-war years. Infill has targeted mostly working-class areas of the city, which have generally been less densely populated since 1918. The three sites I focus on can thus all be seen as part of a wider strategy of re-distributing population

density in a structured way. They also blur historically established boundaries between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Maderthaner and Musner, 2008), boundaries that were established by an outer circumference road around the city as well as by the Danube river. As such, these developments involve forms of remembering that make the boundaries established by previous urban interventions – especially the huge reconstruction efforts of the late nineteenth century – more porous while establishing and promoting newly defined and demarcated neighbourhoods.

Central Station (*Hauptbahnhof*)

This process of crossing, shifting and trying to obliterate traditional lines of demarcation in the urban environment is noticeable in all three projects I am discussing here, but perhaps most clearly advanced in and around the Central Train Station, which serves as the centre for the development of c. 146 acres of urban space, with the aim to develop by 2020 5,500 new apartments and office space for 20,000 people, as well as new hotels and infrastructure (Bönsch, 2015: 28). Mediated by lavish publicity that includes stunning visuals, the powerful metaphor of “bridging” the railway tracks that separated two very distinct parts of Vienna with a development that is driven by high-rise office developments as well as condos and shops has not eluded the planners. Futuristic architectural mock-ups, carefully airbrushed panoramic shots and long-exposure photography that implies a fast-moving crowd of smartly dressed people rushing to their next business deal are conspicuously juxtaposed to historical photographs (in sepia-toned black-and-white) of derelict warehouses on the wrong side of the tracks, firmly relegated to the past — an ideological construction readily exposed as utopian or at least highly aspirational by a stroll around the area (Figure 3), but effective in training the eye for the computer-generated cookie-cutter architecture that invariably accompanies urban transformation at this scale (Figure 4).

Vectors of directionality are powerfully mapped onto the new development by one of the historically most potent symbols of connectivity in the city of modernity, the railway lines, which are shown to link Vienna to recognizable business destinations in Europe, such as Paris, as well as Eastern European destinations, such as Budapest,

that have been highly valued targets of investment since 1989, constituting metaphorical lines of ideally uninterrupted capital flows rather than the markers of social separation that neatly divided the workers in the 10th district from the genteel areas north of the tracks.



Figure 3: Central Train Station District (photo: M. Reisenleitner)



Figure 4: Central Train Station District office architecture (photo: M. Reisenleitner)

Loft City

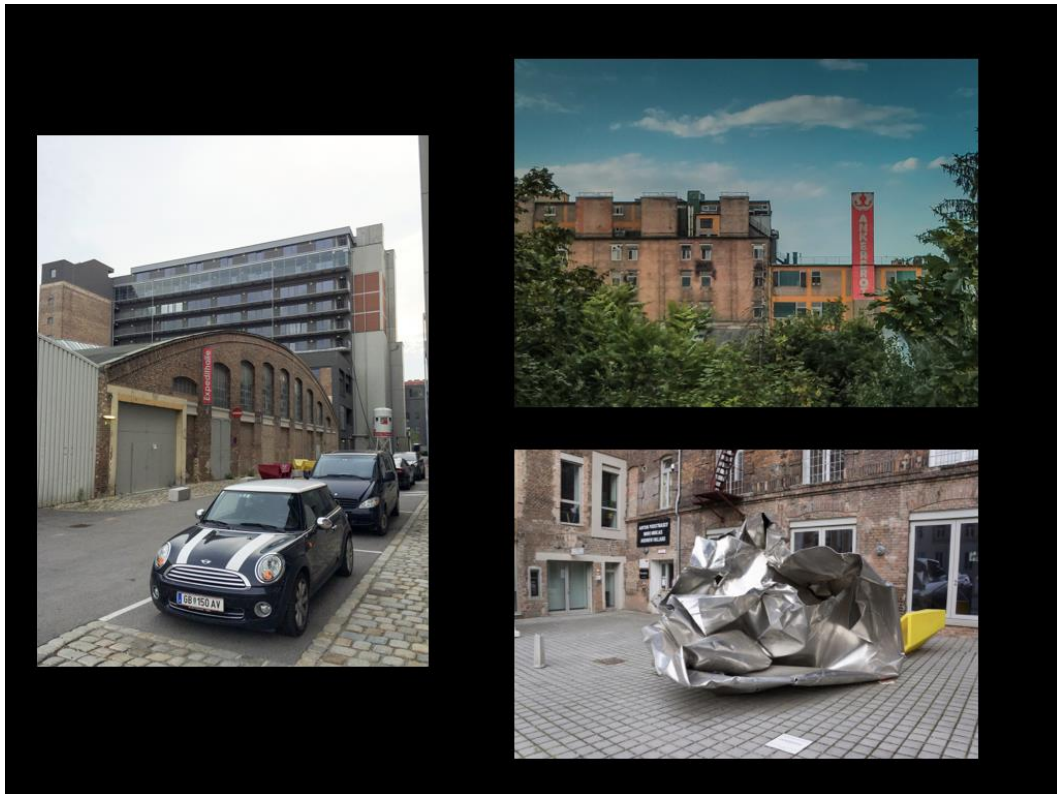


Figure 5: Loft City development (photos: M. Reisenleitner)

Ten blocks to the south of the Central Train Station, even further on the wrong side of the tracks, Loft City is targeting a much smaller area. The loft development is located in a bread factory established in the nineteenth century, the “Ankerbrotfabrik”, that used to be a powerful stronghold of the trade unions (Kristan and Rapp, 2011). The factory’s owners, a Jewish family, were expropriated during the Third Reich but got the property back after the war in a district that was then under the control of the USSR. After some financial turmoil, the factory was thoroughly modernized in 2003 (Kristan and Rapp, 2011: 140), reducing the necessary space. The disused parts, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 68,000 square metres of the factory (Kristan and Rapp, 2011: 141) were acquired by a development company in 2009 and turned into a mixed-use complex that includes art institutions, event spaces, restaurants, condos and office space, mostly utilized by creative industries in a mix that has become typical for gentrification projects, the “conversion of socially marginal and working-class areas of the central city to middle-class residential use [which] reflects a movement, that began in the 1960s, of private-market investment capital into downtown districts of major urban centers” (Zukin, 1987: 129). The Loft

City development promises to establish a spatial axis to the developments around the Central Train Station (even though those are not within walking distance, and there is not yet an easy public transport option). Interestingly, the factory's history is acknowledged in promotional material as the development's "authentic" working-class history and sustained by the fact that one wing of the restored building still operates as a bakery. The material presence of the project's history is thus maintained in order to facilitate place-making and emphasize a certain artisanal, craft legacy that appeals to the creative class's hipster tastes. In how far this strategy will be successful in establishing a sense of locale and add a creative clientele to the very multicultural surroundings remains to be seen.



Figure 6: "Always the same people at these parties." (Instagram)

While the development (Figure 5) seems to have attracted a fair number of media and creative companies, and the number of German license plates seems to indicate a certain international reach, the impact on creating a socially mixed neighbourhood

remains to be determined. Gentrification stormtroopers' instagrammed take on the situation includes posts such as "always the same people at these parties" (Figure 6); presumably the people who can afford to live in the lofts and their friends. It is unclear what kind of place-making the deliberate evocation of such a history will induce.

Urban Lakeside ("Seestadt")

Equally illustrative is the case of Vienna's Urban Lakeside development, and how its mediations are trying to create a sense of place. Extending over an area of almost 600 acres in an area located in the far north of the city, the development promises to provide affordable housing for more than 20,000 people by 2028, in an environment that is walkable and offers infrastructure such as a school, a dental clinic and a shopping street that in the promotional material is made to sound like more like a Disneyesque Main Street, USA, than a mall (Stadt Wien). The promotional discourse is heavily reliant on a vocabulary that mixes metaphors of small-town community, the staple of the neo-traditional movement that calls itself "New Urbanism" (Katz: 1994), with visions of the affordances of digital technologies for urban planning, creating "smart cities"; an only seemingly paradoxical suture in view of the fact that they are based on parallel structures of desire. As I have argued elsewhere:

Visions of smart cities are built on the powerful imaginary of (and desire for) algorithms that can make sense of data distilled from the complexities of urban life [...] The rhetorical invocations of smart cities, in conjunction with the new urbanist principles of walkability, neighborliness, and Main Street theming, provide a seductive template for city politicians, urban planners, and middle-class families. By merit of its limited reach and "do-ability," this palatable and hegemonic consensus agenda does not need to address the underlying issues that result from global capital hitting the ground in a world city and creating or reinforcing economic, ethnic, and legal status divides" (Reisenleitner, 2016: 286).

Mediations of Vienna's Urban Lakeside unsurprisingly include staples of urban utopias such as pop-up dorms (Czaja, 2017), self-driving busses ("Pilotprojekt ohne Pilot", 2017), etc. Again, a sense of place has not materialized so far, despite PR and branding machines operating in high gear (and a subway that now runs more frequently). This development is a first major attempt to extend the city outwards, rather than through infill, and thus a "city of the future" discourse, accompanied by a strong undercurrent of avoiding planning mistakes of the past, translates into a breathless tsunami of geomediating the area through a consensus visuality of streamline moderne that literally has no time for the area's many pasts.

Breaking the Surface

What my three examples demonstrate is a mediation of Vienna's contemporary urban geography that articulates investment in locality to transnational flows, an articulation that establishes a particular vision of economic, i.e. immaterial and abstract, lines of connectivity as an imaginary in which investment in locale is embedded and grounded. It is tempting to debunk the mediation of these three sites through the lens of a symptomatic reading or critique of official remembering and spatial practices of meaning-making in these carefully selected and curated histories that are intended to sell. However, this is not my intent here. Rather, my interest is not only to challenge the flattening of complex historical narratives into easily commodifiable space branding, but to conceptualize how memories of in-between spaces and vectors of mobility can be salvaged from being incorporated into the smoothly moving flows of (property) development discourse. I am particularly interested in material traces that disrupt, interrupt or break the surface of urban planning imaginaries and the common understanding – or, in Kara Keeling's take on Deleuze and Gramsci, visual "clichés" (Keeling, 2007: 14) – of the trajectories into which capital-friendly urban planning supposedly needs to be inscribed. What is established through clichés is "common sense," which "refers simultaneously to a shared set of motor contrivances that affect subjective perception and to a collective set of memory-images that includes experiences, knowledges, traditions, and so on and that are available to memory during perception" (Keeling, 2007: 14). The visual clichés afforded by the digital tools of geomediation are clearly linked to a contemporary consensus agenda of urban planning (and living) that is capital-friendly

while de-emphasizing the messiness and complexities of the movement of people and the complex geo-histories of which those movements are an expression.

What is established in the current conjuncture is a hegemonic form of understanding spatial practices that originates with, but reaches beyond, property discourse. For example, recent geo-critical approaches to the mediation of space in film, literature and popular culture, such as Bertrand Westphal's *géocritique* and his disciple and translator Robert Tally's elaboration of a "literary cartography", have re-invigorated a spatial turn in the humanities that is supported by the ease and accessibility of digital map-making tools, which has in turn led to a proliferation of projects that cartographically visualize film locations, plots of novels, and biographical information. While these approaches have produced interesting insights into narratives that constitute urban imaginaries, they also tend to be caught up in flattening the representation of slippery and complex cultural phenomena that have complicated sensitive and contested pasts. In the fields of Urban Humanities and Memory Studies, recent mobilizations of the spatial turn have highlighted the intricate interplay between imaginaries that are premised on representations (and misrepresentations) of the historically constituted texture of a city on one hand, and processes of urban planning and change. While the gentrification discourse has become a lightning rod for struggles over the right to the city in the 21st century, its specific manifestations are composite and situated processes and negotiations over the preservation, re-constitution, erasure or even production of histories and memories materialized in urban environments. When Disney imagineered the New Urbanist town of Celebration, Florida, urban planners were tasked with inventing a "back story," i.e. a history that could *ex nihilo* constitute community for an urban development in the Florida swamps.

[A] key part of the Imagineering process is developing what is called a "backstory" for the product, the mythological history that provides a focus as the development proceeds. Concocting a backstory for a town did not seem too different from concocting one for a new ride. But some of the ideas were ripe. At one point, the Imagineers suggested the tale of a city rising from the ashes of General

Sherman's march across the South, though the fact that he never set foot in Florida did not seem to matter. In the end, the more pragmatic development people recognized that the town would not be a ride or a movie, but a real place (Frantz and Collins, 1999: 52).



Figure 7: Alligator in Celebration, Florida (photo: S. Ingram)

It's impressive the effects a few well-placed alligators can have (Figure 7) on creating a sense of place! However, despite efforts such as Todd Presner's "thick mapping" of Berlin and Los Angeles in *Hypercities* (Presner et al., 2014) and Google Earth's historical timelines, the affordances of digital mapping tools tend to hegemonically produce an ever-more detailed landscape of what de Certeau has termed a "concept city," in which "[p]erspective vision and prospective vision constitute the twofold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with" (1984: 93), rather than what he calls an "urban practice." Using such a surface as a point of reference for urban imaginaries, whether in the form of historical preservation, office and condo development, or strategic infrastructure investment, can thus be seen as continuing what de Certeau has labelled the "erasure of the itineraries" (de Certeau, 1984: 121), rather than the potential of human connectivity and mediation that de Certeau's in-between spaces (1984: 127) could offer. Reducing historically constituted spatial assemblages to smooth digital surfaces constitutes a

strategy for representing the future in such a way that masks its uncertainty, trying to keep people in their places, or move them from inappropriate places, or prevent them from occupying spaces where they are not wanted or are in the way, such as the tent cities that still remain in the streets in between the gentrifying nodes in Downtown LA, defying New Urbanist hipster localism in the global city's downtown. (There are no tent cities in Vienna, but a number of substandard buildings in the Central Train Station area have been razed). Digital mapping tools arguably have a propensity to seduce into a methodology of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, as tracing, a form of reproduction from selection:

It is our view that genetic axis and profound structure are above all infinitely reproducible principles of tracing. All of tree logic is a logic of tracing and reproduction. [...] Its goal is to describe a de facto state, to maintain balance in intersubjective relations, or to explore an unconscious that is already there from the start, lurking in the dark recesses of memory and language. It consists of tracing, on the basis of an overcoding structure or supporting axis, something that comes ready-made. [...] What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 12).

The same process of seduction can be found in the imaginary of big data and derivative trading, which similarly builds on a streamlined and flattened image of the past that is used for extrapolating the future.

The past is no longer the multiplicity of histories that is the spatial [...] with all its happenstance juxtapositions and unintended emergent effects but rather a resource for providing models that serve as guarantors against the randomness and unpredictability of the urban, simplified through what are fundamentally engineering practices imposed on data as well as spaces, and serving as the foundation of imposed and imposable social reform through a

particular (and equally limited) notion of community (Reisenleitner, 2016).

Following Deleuze and Guattari's logic, the challenge of critique in a regime of spatial practices built on the affordances of, in Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation, tracing tools is to transform cartographies into dynamic assemblages that involve affect (cf. Petschke, 2017: 12) and constitute multiple lines of flight for urban habitats. This means avoiding the binaries that so often riddle critique.

Tempting as it might be, as we have seen in the Vienna case studies, it is not particularly helpful to align hegemonic geomediations of urban locale with Jameson's seminal indictment against the "cultural dominant" (Jameson, 1984: 56) of postmodernism, in which he finds "a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense" (60), and which he connects to the waning of affect and the dominance of the synchronic over the diachronic, in which "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages are [...] dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism proper" (64). Contrary to Jameson's diagnosis, the discursive formations that geomediate spatial practices in my examples are underpinned by the assertion of linear temporalities that determine both affective and capital investment into those spaces, rather than simple synchronicity. Movement and flow are not denied but rather emphasized, albeit in smooth and clearly delineated ways, just like the stock market always supposedly moves "forward" and investment grows. Such spatial practices are addressed in Deleuze and Guattari's "Treatise on Nomadology" when they emphasize the complicity of both striated and smooth spaces:

One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and, more generally, to establish a zone of right over an entire 'exterior', over all the flows traversing the ecumenon. If it can help it, the State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of flows,

money or capital, etc. There is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 385–6).

What Deleuze and Guattari have to offer as a way out of the co-optation of smooth space is, via a still from Eisenstein's *Strike* (413), the concept of “holey space”:

Holey space appears alongside ‘smooth’ and ‘striated’ space [...] as Deleuze and Guattari’s prescient warning about the tendency to read those two categories as self-evidently emancipatory or repressive. While the state apparatus perhaps worked initially primarily in the mode of striating space, the neoliberal war machine that reigns today has just as much interest in smooth space, in terms of swarming militarism, the global gaze of surveillance technology, and frictionless capital flows. Holey space, as a substance of content, compels theorists to consider the ways in which specific assemblages negotiate the mixture of smooth and striated space that characterizes any power formation. [...] Whereas smooth and striated spaces are substances of expression, holey space is rather literally about the intermediate and ambivalent subsoil in and through which apparatuses of capture struggle with nomadic assemblages (Hantel, 2012).

The concept of holey spaces connects to an earlier discussion in *A Thousand Plateaus* in which a black hole is introduced as the site of “consciousness, passion and redundancies” (167) against the white wall of faciality:

The face constructs the wall that the signifier needs in order to bounce off of; it constitutes the wall of the signifier, the frame or screen. The face digs the hole that subjectification needs in order to break through; it constitutes the black hole of subjectivity as

consciousness or passion, the camera, the third eye (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 168).

Meaghan Morris mobilizes Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'faciality', which "shapes in their work a theory of 'majority'" (Morris, 1998: 125), to examine "the relentlessly redundant and self-signifying corporate architecture" of Sydney's CBD. Her masterful détournements of *A Thousand Plateaus* and de Certeau's spatial stories via her readings of *King Kong* and the "Human Fly" in the movie *A Spire* (1988) lay out an instance of practicing place as a form of vernacular criticism (Morris, 1998: 157), with a symbolic form of temporary occupation as a spatial practice that interrupts the logic of the corporate face of the business tower by exerting movements that are not contained in the striations of corporate and state control.

While Morris's reading provides a convincing example of acknowledging the complexities of the stakes in negotiating spatial practices in the contemporary city, I do not claim that the affordances of digital tools geomediating Vienna's masterplanning should simply be read as equivalents or extensions of the smooth tower surfaces of 1990s global corporate architecture. What Morris calls, with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'haecceities', "individuating intensities" (Morris, 1998: 124), necessarily alerts us to crucial differences in the historical and spatial conjunctures of Sydney in the 1990s and Vienna in the 2010s. Morris draws our attention to the gendered home/voyage opposition in the imaginary of a colonial settler nation, Australia, that renders movement masculine and relates it to linear notions of time while relegating home to static and cyclical temporalities that are rendered feminine.

What is at stake in the contemporary re-imaginering of Vienna, by contrast, needs to be understood in the context of a national discourse that is inimical to immigration and a city that tries to practice place as a home for affective and capital investment in stability (rather than movement) while remaining married to the seductive discourses of flows and growth. The dominant imaginary is not one that juxtaposes the smooth flow of capital to the perceived stasis of home-making. Rather, local investment is represented as being predicated on the articulation of locale and circumscription of people's movement to the circulation of global capital

on which the real estate economy is built, in other words: on controlled movement, steady movement, juxtaposed to the irregular and unpredictable rhythms of migration and migrants' and migrations' uneven histories. In this conjuncture, an anti-hegemonic reading of memoryscapes that performs what Morris calls 'vernacular criticism' requires attending to the unruly forms of mobility that resist the seamless sutures of digital surfaces, historically saturated interruptions that challenge the representations of dominant flows of time (as teleological progress towards an ideal community) and capital/property (as investment and growth). What seems to be at stake in such an approach is identifying the holey space that punctures the surface of geomeia as a visual regime of common sense that has "found ways of moving with relative ease by affirming aspects of common sense" (Keeling, 2007: 4). If we accept that geomeia's hegemonic assemblages resemble film in being "defined by [an] 'internalized' relation with money" (Keeling, 2007: 17), we need to look for tokens of movement that defy this cliché.

In his exploration of critical art in *The Emancipated Spectator*, Jacques Rancière introduces the powerful metaphor of a visual wound or scar in his discussion of a photograph by the French artist Sophie Ristelhueber of a bird's eye perspective of an Israeli roadblock on a Palestinian road as a form of resistance of the viewer's anticipation:

She has photographed not the emblem of the war, but the wounds and scars it imprints on a territory. In this way, she perhaps effects a displacement of the exhausted affect of indignation to a more discreet affect, an affect of indeterminate effect – curiosity, the desire to see closer up. I speak here of curiosity, and above I spoke of attention. These are in fact affects that blur the false obviousness of strategic schemata; they are dispositions of the body and the mind where the eye does not know in advance what it sees and thought does not know what it should make of it (Rancière, 2011: 104).

Wounds or scars invariably point to the violent nature of the movement and/or temporality that caused them. I do not deny that such violence is often what is at

stake in re-remembering, in undoing smooth representations of historicity, but an interruption through a wound is not the only possible form of subverting surfaciality. What needs to be uncovered in a more general sense is what Homi Bhabha calls a “minority discourse” that is set against the commonsensical form of singular temporality inscribed in geomedial representations:

Minority discourse sets the act of emergence in the antagonistic *in-between* of image and sign, the accumulative and the adjunct, presence and proxy. It contests genealogies of ‘origin’ that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority ... Now there is no reason to believe that such marks of indifference cannot inscribe a ‘history’ of the people or become the gathering points of political solidarity. They will not, however, celebrate the monumentality of historicist memory, the sociological totality of society, or the homogeneity of cultural experience. The discourse of minority reveals the insurmountable ambivalence that structures the *equivocal* movement of historical time (Bhabha, 1994: 157).

While Bhabha presents these considerations in the context of his discussion of writing the nation, the principle obtains for any conjuncture in which locality needs to be released from the controlling forces of a dominant historical and controlling flow – in my case the specific temporality of investment – and restored to the multiple minoritarian temporalities that are able to accomplish the vernacular criticism Morris demonstrates in the Australian context. Rather than focussing on the violence of scars and wounds, as Rancière does, I propose, for the specific conjuncture I am addressing, to expose less spectacular interruptions of surfaciality, namely the ruts, understood both literally as furrows and indentations, and metaphorically as routines and patterns, i.e. as habitual imprints of, and produced by, movement and directionality in memory spaces that are neither obvious nor spectacularly disruptive yet prone to disturb or jar the mappability of urban space because they constitute sites of “the hybridity of histories and the displacement of narratives” (Bhabha, 1994: 169), revealing historical vectors that are camouflaged under the predictability of maps, graphs and computer-assisted design. I argue that turning our attention to these imprints can serve a similar critical intervention to the

kind of challenges to contemporary urban practices through visual culture identified in Jordan and Lindner (2016).

Interruptions

I will now return to my three examples to identify some of those ruts that point us towards alternative vectors of directionality, and thus alternative temporalities of the local that resist the linear makeovers of geomediated gentrification and investment discourse.

In the case of the Hauptbahnhof, this would seem most obvious. The project is centred around a line of transportation with multiple lines of connectivity that cannot easily be contained. As a railway station, the Hauptbahnhof necessarily needs to maintain an uneasy relationship with the dynamics of movement provided by the railway, movements of immigrants and refugees into, and deportations of the marginalized and discriminated out of, the city (at times, such as during the deportations of Jews during the Third Reich, with lethal consequences for those concerned). While PR maps currently tend to emphasize train connections to business centres in Western and Eastern Europe, the lines to the South that were historically the station's main lines are mainly absent from geomediation. Yet it was those lines that the "guest workers" from Yugoslavia arrived by for decades, starting in the 1970s. The Syrian refugees who were stranded in 2015 and 2016 at the Hauptbahnhof were also en route from the Balkans and Hungary, along the same lines that had been established by an empire whose traces are still there if you know where to look for them.

In this case, it is actually difficult to overlook the vectors of migration that have inscribed themselves into the cityscape. Literally across the street from the train station is the Belvedere palace, a tourist attraction that recalls the glory of the Habsburg Empire after the defeat of the Ottomans and the colonization of the Balkans. The Belvedere was the palace of Prince Eugene, the army leader who was instrumental in defeating the Ottoman troops at the end of the seventeenth century and pushing them back through what was to become Yugoslavia, and it still serves as a powerful symbol of the re-orientation of the Habsburg Empire's colonial efforts

towards the southeast. I have discussed this in more detail elsewhere (Reisenleitner, 2006), but what I want to emphasize here is that what was intended to be squeezed into a clearly demarcated space of development is crisscrossed by multiple historical fault lines and forms of connectivity that escape containment and alert us to flows and encounters that determine spaces in a myriad of ways. The Belvedere, built in Baroque grandeur precisely to give visibility to a particular history of the Vienna metropole as a colonial power, is located between the southern train station that used to connect the capital with its periphery in the southeast and a major traffic artery that points us towards southeastern Europe, and in the city's memory it is the street where "the Balkan begins," a territory imaginarily assimilated into the city and the historical root of Vienna's largest migrant population from the former Yugoslavia (Fischer, 2006). This has been the site of arrival and departure of migrant workers from (former) Yugoslavia since the 1970s, when a whole village of Yugoslav shops existed in its vicinity and signs in Croatian directed migrants to facilities in the train station. Gentrifying the district while calling for an end to refugee migration via the "Balkan" route is thus exposed (by the powerful presence of the Belvedere and the less powerful but still quite visible presence of Serbo-Croatian migration) as glossing over a temporal dimension that has constituted this particular locality. A clearly demarcated space of development is crisscrossed by the ruts of former connectivity that negate the containment of flows of gentrification. Those are the metaphors of the flows and encounters that overdetermine spaces as contested by multiple vernacular temporalities.



Figure 8: Ankerbrot delivery vans (photo: M. Reisenleitner)

Similar vestiges of the ineluctable instability and mobility that characterize any urban environment can be found at the other sites, even though their ruts are carved in different ways. The Anker bread factory became prominent through its billboard advertisements, delivery vans (Figure 8) and its distribution network of up to 270 outlets throughout Vienna that cut across the social and spatial divisions of the city (“Ankerbrotfabrik – Wien Geschichte Wiki”; see also Kristan and Rapp, 2011), generating a sense of local pride by claiming that its products were what the Viennese were looking for most when they returned from holidays. Both outlets and delivery vans are still a highly visible presence in the city and are often adorned with historical, clearly nostalgic photographs of the factory’s past presence and movement within and across the city, rather than the very local yet globally connected imaginary of Loft City, with its art galleries and media production companies. Through the constant movement of delivery vans and persistent presence of branded outlets, Loft City is thus both extended beyond the few blocks of redevelopment and at the same time scaled back from the transnational aspirations of its architecture and promotion, folded back, as it were, into the space of Vienna as a remembered, bounded, historical entity that intersects with the smooth flow of global capital trying to gentrify a district.



Figure 9: Ruts of Aspern airfield (photo: M. Reisenleitner)

Vienna's Urban Lakeside, on the other hand, is currently being promoted for its fast connectivity, via a major subway line, to the centre of the city, with every effort being made to gloss over the peripherality of the new town and the problematic aspects of its aeronautical past. The site was the city's airfield from 1912 to 1977, infamous as a site of air raids against Red Vienna during the Civil War of 1934 and as a base for the German *Luftwaffe* during the Third Reich. The historical town of Aspern was also the site of a major battle of the Austrian Empire against Napoleon in 1809 (drawing attention, just like the Belvedere, to a long history of imperial violence), but the morphology of Aspern's space is determined by the former temporalities. Indeed, one can literally find ruts left by the airfield in a remote corner of the new town (Figure 9), a reminder of a military past left behind by aspirational gentrification that its nautical, and not aeronautical, name (the "Seestadt") clumsily seeks to mask.

Conclusions

What I hope my three case studies have demonstrated are the possibilities of mobilizing, against the powerful geomediations of gentrification and capital flows, the barely visible markers and vestiges of complex historical directionalities, vectors and encounters that can constitute alternate, vernacular temporalities. These traces live on in memories and representations, such as maps, roads, and images, and are an oblique and potentially transgressive supplement to the smooth digital surfaces that mediate predictable urban futures as instruments of investment, an "encounter [with] the past as an anteriority that continually introduces an otherness or alterity into the present" (Bhabha, 1994: 157) and remind us of what Doreen Massey calls "throwntogetherness," "an attempt to urge an understanding of this place as permeable, to provoke a living of place as a constellation of trajectories, both 'natural' and 'cultural', where if even the rocks are on the move the question must be posed as to what can be claimed as belonging; where, at the least, the question of belonging needs to be framed in a new way" (Massey, 2005: 49). Only if we acknowledge spaces as nodes crisscrossed by a multiplicity of vectors of exchange, encounter, expansion, arrival and departure and thus constituted by the unpredictability of temporalities that cannot be translated into algorithmic models, that support a minoritarian knowledge of history as a possibility rather than a base of calculation, "a source of a liberating certainty that anything could happen" (Morris,

1998: 26) can they become meaningful commons, sites of participation and belonging.

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