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J9 - JULIAN KONCZAK

J9 is interactive television - uniting video, virtual travel and narrative. It is an invitation to take a journey that starts from a number of cities across the globe. Experience virtual travel from the comfort of home - explore the sights and sounds of faraway places either to help plan a voyage or to avoid the trials and tribulations of real world travel.

The computer databases that now underlie the production process offer radically novel ways for audiences to engage with content. Audiences crave meaning, for disparate images and sounds to come together cohesively. In linear television, this is the domain of the scriptwriter and editor. Interactive television, however, creates new structures that allow the audience to define story.

J9 develops narrative around a pre-determined structure; each version of the sequence offers the user a variable itinerary. It's an interactive experience akin to an on-line booking service; using a map of the world, the user clicks on a departure point and is offered a ticket for a multi-stop journey. Each travel itinerary is individually created by this interaction with the software - ensuring that every visit is unique.

Embark on an audio-visual journey that incorporates images and sounds from a wide range of locations – Paris and Sao Paulo, Tokyo and Kathmandu, Istanbul and Los Angeles...........

J9 is about the stories we make when we travel and steps into both the physical and the emotional spaces we explore. This collection of writing develops the 'art of travel' in greater depth and draws on expertise from a range of disciplines.

Start the journey at www.j9interactivevideo.com

Whenever Des Esseintes, the hero of Huysman's decadent 19th century novel, felt the need to travel he sat in the 'train bleu' cafe in the Gard du Nord, listening to the trains coming and going, imagining their various journeys and destinations, until, satiated, he was able to return to his comfortable home. We can do very much the same thing by sitting in front of Julian Konczak's extraordinary and wonderful *J9*. The artist spent six years travelling the world with his camera and the material is now beautifully and mesmerically organised as an ever-changing, cyclic triptich. Sound and image complement or contradict each other, seemingly at whim. The mind is invited to wander. I was enchanted; six years flew by in half an hour. I even forgave the waiter for forgetting to bring my absinthe!

JON SANDERS
Writer and Director: Painted Angles (1998) Low Tide (2008)

GLOBALISATION AND TOURISM
LISA POWER

As technology makes the world a smaller place, travel and the two-way traffic between destinations have increased. At the heart of this increasingly globalised world is the movement of people, objects and images creating an interconnectedness between societies that is a key feature of post-modern life. The to-and-fro made possible by contemporary media, communication, flows of information and transport facilitates a sense of both belonging and displacement. Individuals who were once separated by vast oceans and political barriers find themselves side-by-side.

The 24-hour media broadcasts news and cultural events from around the world directly into our homes and makes what was once foreign and unfamiliar about different peoples and identities surprisingly recognisable; we no longer have to venture far from our own front doors to encounter what was once viewed as exotic. A global society finds China Town in Manchester and New York, a 'curry capital' in Bradford, Chinese calligraphy tattooed onto Spanish bodies and KFC in Kathmandu. The world has become smaller.

The compression of time and space enables travellers to visit far-off places that were once thought inaccessible to anyone other than the global elite. The airline industry provides routes across all continents making travel easier and faster than previous generations could imagine. Complicated overland and sea travel routes can be planned and booked on-line from the comfort of home, whilst familiar hotel chains provide accommodation, and fast food restaurants are guaranteed in capital cities and well-known tourist destinations. A mobile society has brought the local into contact with the global.

The globalised hotel sector, fortified by travellers who want the comforts of home, creates increasingly recognisable, standardised products devoid of local flavour. The ubiquitous all-inclusive resorts ensure that holiday-makers, and their all-important euro, stay in purpose-built tourist enclaves with no need, or possibly even aspiration, to venture out into the local community. In these circumstances tourists clearly experience a degree of both social and spatial separation from the local population. Not only do many tourists fail to integrate with the local community, but when they do their relationship is often asymmetrical, predominantly favouring the visitor; and it is well documented that western tourists in particular, when travelling in developing world countries, can assert power and authority over indigenous people.

Whilst the majority of international tourism occurs within a relatively small number of developed countries, developing countries have nevertheless increased their market share considerably over recent years. The mass holiday market however, is dominated by a very small number of multinational corporations, and as the tourism industry has expanded, so has the control and influence these international travel companies exert. They control supply in terms of quality, availability, access, price and the facility to reach consumers and they inevitably seek to minimise costs whilst maximising revenue. The globalisation process has brought about an imbalance that has resulted in a high degree of foreign ownership of tourism facilities and subsequent financial leakage as profit is returned to the home country.

Despite this, tourism is nevertheless a vehicle for economic growth and an important source of foreign exchange earnings and GDP contributions. Many of the countries in which tourism is an important economic sector are among the poorest and least developed in the world and the tourism industry can be a viable source of growth and export earnings. The nature of the tourism product means that it draws on the natural, built and cultural resources of a country, and the desire of international visitors to experience for themselves a way of life, traditions and spectacle that they have encountered only through the media.

For those who travel purposefully with a desire to seek traditions and customs that belong to a place and a people that mark them out as special and distinct, there is much to discover. There is a growing awareness of a world-wide, rich, cultural mosaic of individuality and local identity and behaviour. Globalisation has fostered an awareness of a world-wide system of cultural differences which attunes us all to an idea of 'otherness' defined in cultural terms. As what was 'exotic' becomes commonplace, travellers are drawn to the 'truly' exotic.

Some tourists seek to immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of the 'other'- to experience for themselves unfamiliar customs and traditions and to move away from the tourist bubble, hoping to encounter authenticity and cultural diversity and to make personal social contacts with local people. They can sometimes be disappointed when faced with familiar brands and symbols of western consumption. This familiarity is extended to urban and suburban locations, sites that sometimes actually lack both local context and subsequent historic and social ties. These pseudo non-places can be found around the globe, in particular in down-town areas and city centres, and with their skyscrapers and office blocks are frequently deficient of geographical presence and indigenous values.

The similarities and differences brought about by globalisation ensure that the tourists' gaze is drawn to scenes that are both recognisable and alien, strange and yet familiar. Whilst some may argue that globalisation has created a homogenised world, travel enables us to seek out and witness for ourselves the extraordinary richness of cultural identity still to be found in our global world.

TOKYO

MARAKESH

SINGAPORE

SAO PAULO

NEW YORK

KATHMANDU

LONDON

LOS ANGELES

ISTANBUL

A WRITER'S JOURNEY
MARTIN BUCKLEY

Why do we journey? To disrupt the repetitious banality of our lives. The true object of travel (like art) is to free us from our chains. And yet, we don't have to go on those self-indulgent holidays that occidental salary slaves call travel. We could take alcohol, or marijuana or LSD, all of them holidays from ordinary consciousness. Or we could let someone travel on our behalf, simply stay at home and watch it all on DVD. Michael Palin and the protagonists of road movies travel so that we don't have to…

Yet something in us yearns for an authentic journey—a quest. It is, as Jung saw, hard-wired in us. The quest for meaning is universal—but so is quest itself. We aren't all Lancelot or Luke Skywalker, but we long to be—right from childhood, waving our Arthurian plastic swords or 'light sabres'. But when we sit in the gloom of the cinema, we embark on a journey whose ending is known. There's safety in the dark. That's why we must venture beyond art, and why artists who haven't lived produce second-rate art.

Our journey is unavoidable—and a one-way ticket. But as the mythologist Joseph Campbell recognized, the epic hero's adventure is a distilled, heightened version of ordinary life. The epic hero travels, suffers, is ultimately transfigured and reborn. Life poses all of us the same questions: can you—*will* you—journey, suffer, learn, find (as Campbell would say), bliss?
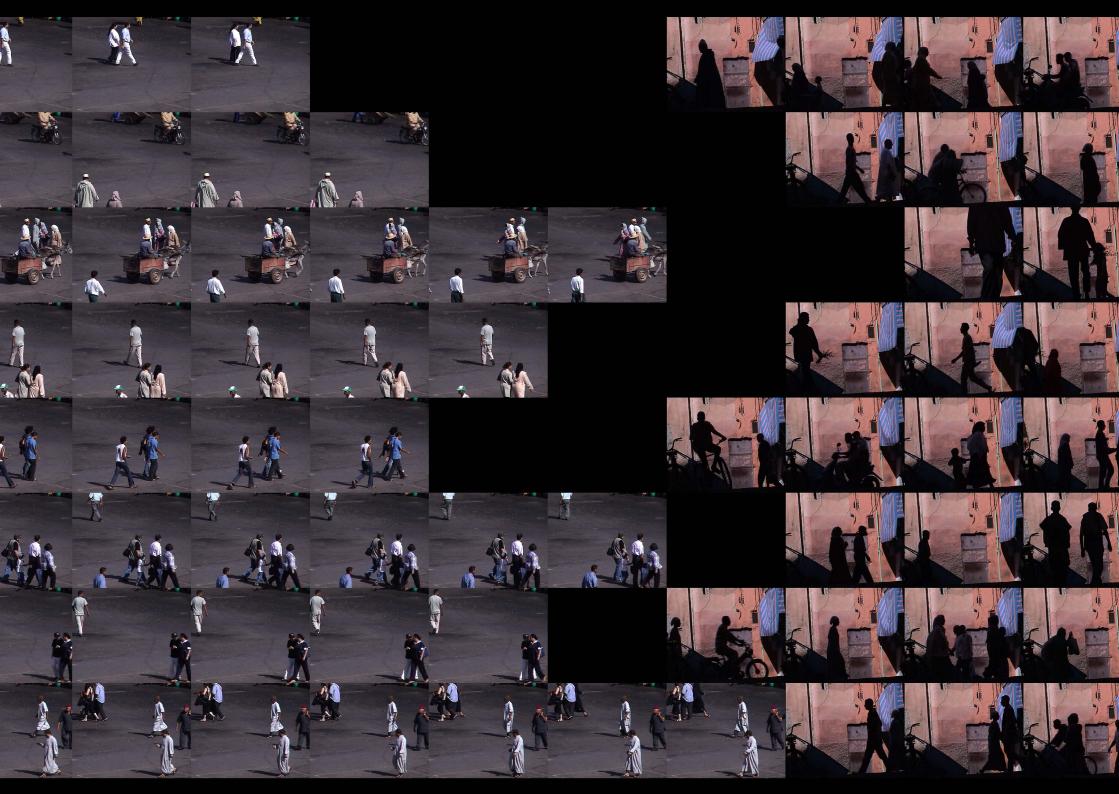
Embarking on a journey, we are mildly uneasy with an intuition of the unknown dialects, undefeated microbes, unreliable police officials and unpredictable nature towards which we are borne by our plane (in itself an epic form of transport, capable of failure on a Wagnerian scale). The unfamiliar is going to test us, we know it. Despite the reassurance of travel insurance and a return ticket, we feel an uneasy thrill. Travel simulates life's longer journey, telescopes it: the Eros of the open road, the knowledge that thanatos may lie around the next unknown bend. That's the plot curve of the road movie—so many of them end, like life, in death. Symbolically, perhaps, the easy riders' or Pierrot's plume of flame, Thelma and Louise's leap into the void, may symbolize a satori, or transformation into spirit. But the mythic hero is transformed by the journey—and *returns*. Travel should provide meaning to the rest of our lives.

I recently published a travel book, *Indian Odyssey*, that took as its point of departure—indeed its route map—the Indian epic *Ramayana* by the poet Valmiki. The *Ramayana* is India's best-loved story by far, an extraordinary fusion of epic adventure and holy scripture that has become, bizarrely, modern India's principal focus of Hindu-Moslem conflict. The journey made by its hero Rama from northern India to 'Lanka' gave me an itinerary, but the myth itself gave me an archetypal framework saturated with subconscious motives and cultural reflections—notably a striking parallel between Rama and that archetypal European hero who gave us the word odyssey. It is just conceivable that Valmiki knew Homer's tales (though in truth, neither 'Homer' nor 'Valmiki' probably really existed, both names are more likely shorthand for the anonymous authors of what were, for centuries, oral traditions). Perhaps the elements the epics share are archetypal, notably the quest to return a kidnapped princess. Certainly, the *Ramayana* is a virtual blueprint for the hero-quest described by Joseph Campbell in his *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Wounds, wise elders, villains, helpers, hubris, shape-shifting females, atonement, revelation, return—it's all there.
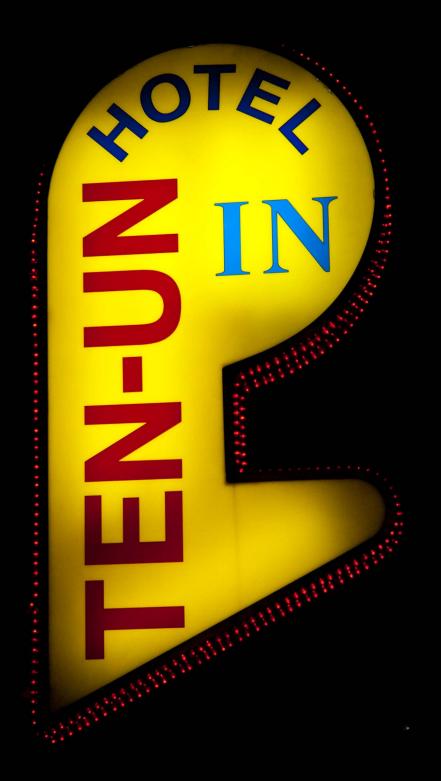
My book contained a shortened reworking of the *Ramayana*, juxtaposed with the autobiographical narrative. Achieving this mirror structure required some creativity, but not, I hope, deceit. As a counterpoint to the story's early eroticism I described my youthful adventures in India. Rama's quest found an echo in the many explorations I undertook—an actual journey (I travelled by motorbike, an Indian-made Royal Enfield) but also a series of quests into history, archaeology, politics, personal and cultural memory. The mythic *Ramayana* climaxes with a war, and a real war was underway in Sri Lanka as I reached the island towards the end of my journey. An archetypal hero is tested; I was tested at times, by various vicissitudes, even encounters with death. The mythic hero finds revelation; so, in a way, did I. How much, the critic asks, was this real, and how much an author knowingly plotting his mythic curve?

But consciously or not, we plot our journeys like myths. Travelling, we court danger, we seek out wisdom. We are not always *in control*. Enlightenment, when it comes, sometimes strikes like a sword. The real journey has this purpose: to lead us to that moment of stillness where an encounter with the exotic, the strange, brings us to an awareness of that which is even stranger, yet which is always imminent inside us; which is closer than another's flesh or the inhaled molecules of an odour can ever be, yet which for most of us, most of the time, remains remoter than a rainforest. That inner space, that sketchily-charted continent of meaning… the destination Campbell called, evoking Hindu and Buddhist holy scriptures, bliss. Innate in us all is the search for that corridor of light, the womb to which we long to return—transformed, turned inside-out, made expansive, shedding light, making everything, at last, make sense. Of course, the light fades, the meanings blur. The quest must be continuous. It may be trite to call life a journey, but the life that is not a conscious journey is no life at all.

CALL

ORDINARY WORLD

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

CROSSING THE

TO ADVENTURE

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR

APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE

THRESHOLD

ORDEAL

THE

ROAD

BACK

REWARD

RESURRECTION

RETURN WITH THE EXILIR

A GOOD TRAVELLER HAS NO
FIXEDPLANS
AND IS NOT INTENT ON ARRIVING.
LAO TZU

HOTEL
IN
TEN-UN-UN

CULTURAL DISSONACE
DR CAROLYN MAIR

"A good traveller has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving." Lao Tzu

Tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. In 2005, 806 million people engaged in international travel, many to developing countries. Arriving in a novel environment can result in feelings of anxiety, surprise, uncertainty confusion and difficulty in knowing what is appropriate behaviour. These feelings might be termed cultural dissonance, derived from the psychological concept of cognitive dissonance in which a person simultaneously holds contradictory ideas. Cognitive dissonance theory predicts that people are motivated to reduce dissonance by changing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, or by justifying them. By the same reasoning, cultural dissonance can be reduced by justifying these differences as 'otherness' or conversely, by assimilating into the new environment.

Adjustment to the novel environment usually begins with disorientation and a loss of emotional equilibrium brought on by unfamiliarity with the cultural environment and boundaries. This 'culture shock' arises from loss of the familiar, and although considered unpleasant, the transition back to 'normality' can be valuable for personal growth. During the transition the visitor may become more confident and independent, and develop an understanding of or even empathy toward those recently considered alien. Otherness, or alterity, occurs when we exchange our perspective for that of the other. Otherness is never more apparent than when we travel to unfamiliar places.

Even in novel environments, globalisation makes the dissimilar similar. Do we seek out experiences that afford learning, empathy and development, or do we want the familiar, but with sunshine? Although when we travel we are the 'other' in the 'other' place often we choose to stay in multinational hotels. Doing this means we are not exposed to the other, but protected from it.

"…the consuming grip of globalisation, … mobilize alterity as an intrinsic part of our humanity, a gesture that transforms memory from a phagic site of exclusion to a creative process of ethical intervention, acknowledging simultaneously the otherness of the self and the selfness of the other." [1]
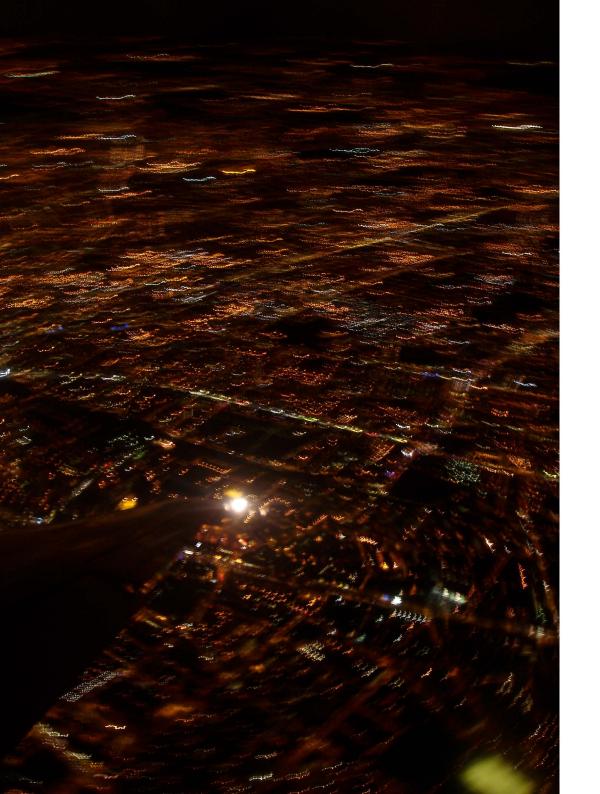
Gap-year travellers commonly follow predetermined routes, going from one back-packer hostel to the next. They meet other travellers, but do they meet locals? In Thailand, travellers hang out on Khaosan Road, the world famous backpacker ghetto and interact with similar backpackers. Perhaps for the same reasons: security and temerity, people return to the same destination year after year, staying in familiar global hotel chains. Risks may be reduced, but so are opportunities for new experiences and broadening of the mind. Regardless, experiences make people happier than possessions. Travel provides us with unlimited experiences, psychological, physical and physiological. We remember experiences especially when they are novel, and experiences also offer a sense of being alive which we can recreate by reminiscing.

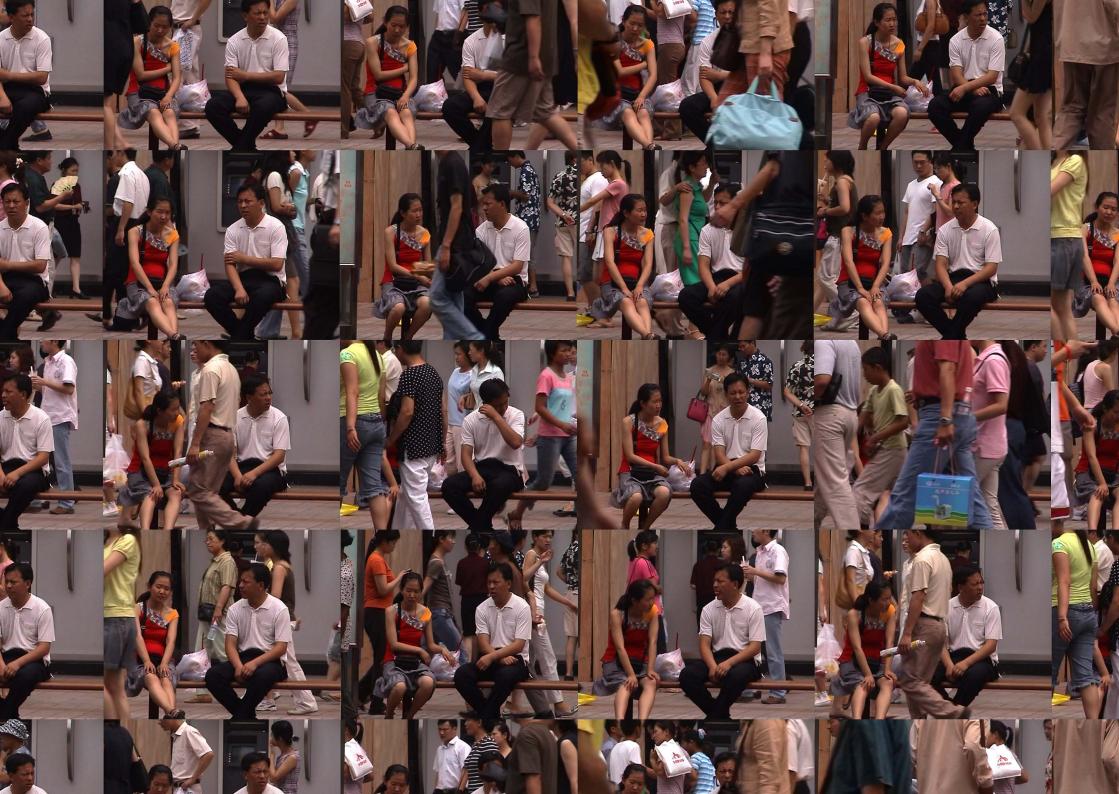Travelling, as Lao Tzu argues, is not about arriving, but about the journey.

What motivates tourists and travellers is a complex interaction of expectations, goals and values. We assume it can be an escape from everyday life, to relax, to experience new cultures. However, empirical research on travel psychology is sparse and reasons given for tourism choices are frequently anecdotal. We have no clear understanding of why people want to travel, how they choose their destination, accommodation or transport. Do we overcome cultural dissonance, alterity? Do we remain the other? We draw conclusions from anecdotes and recollections.

Many interesting questions remain unanswered. Considering the massive impact of tourism on the world economy, empirical study and investigation into this important phenomenon is necessary and overdue.

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[1] Radia, P. (2009). The Golem in the room: permutations of otherness and transnational memory in Dionne Brand's What we all long for and Salman Rushdie's Fury, Double Dialogs, Issue 10. Online: http://www.doubledialogues.com/issue_ten/radia.html (Retrieved 27/01/10)

ALL JOURNEYS HAVE

SECRET

DESTINATIONS OF WHICH
THE TRAVELER IS UNAWARE.
MARTIN BUBER

THERE ARE NO
FOREIGN LANDS.
IT IS THE TRAVELLER ONLY WHO IS FOREIGN.
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

COMPUTATIONAL BEAUTY
GRAHAM COULTER-SMITH

The concept of beauty has been almost totally eradicated from contemporary fine art due to the impact of the postromantic sublime on twentieth century art. This sea change in modern and post-modern art was announced by the first truly 20th-century work of art, Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907. The notion of the sublime is certainly more complex than that of beauty, but to relinquish beauty almost entirely seems to be mistaken. And it is worth noting that we witnessed a return to beauty at beginning of the 21st century in the form of an outstanding work by Olafur Eliasson, *The Weather Project*, 2003, which presented the viewer with the experience of effectively walking into a romantic "painting" that evoked the intense beauty of nature within an urban setting.

Julian Konczak's *J9* can be understood in terms of beauty and emotive engagement. Yet *J9* is a computational video, which allows random access to a database of video clips. We might expect, therefore, that given this hypermodern medium it would be dedicated to the radical modernist/postmodernist doctrine of fragmentation, randomness, and even delirium. But it is not, it is actually a meditative work. There is certainly some degree of randomness: when watching footage of a particular location sometimes footage from a different place becomes inserted in the three channel interplay, but the purpose is not to shock or disturb as is the case in much contemporary art.

Konczak informs us that the core of *J9* concerns our "internal baggage" an "archetypal narrative" that structures our experience when we travel. He is influenced by Carl Jung's notion of the archetypal narrative, which is to say mythic narrative, that expresses the most primal human emotional needs and desires. Travelling is in Jungian terms a mythic journey to find the archetypal self, akin to the journeys we take in our dreams. *J9* therefore is not simply a collage of observational footage from various parts of the world it is also a dream narrative.

The poetic dimension of this work is evident both in the way in which the moving images on the three screens lyrically interweave with each other, and in the use of musical and ambient soundscape. Travel thus represented becomes an experience of drifting in the sense of Guy Debord's psychogeographic *dérive* which stripped of its political and anthropological pretentions was actually a postromantic endeavour to find the wonderful in the everyday in the manner of Surrealism. This is evident when Debord reports on one of his drifts through Paris:

"*A new current carries us slightly toward the left …We are just coming across an extremely powerful energy field that information centers have been unable to identify—the earth with its sounds—One needs time to get used to these night walks … it's in the interior of the labyrinth, at once bland and beautiful, so sumptuous, dilapidated, disorganized, untidily stacked, luxurious and absurd, with rooms and hearts and gardens.*" [1]

This passage is not too distant from Konczak's desire to represent the archetypal narrative, which is to say the mythic, or poetic dimension of travel. The rhythm of the images that weave across the three screens and the music and ambient sounds that accompany them is an attempt to represent the rhythmic and poetic dimension of travelling without specific purpose: and here we can understand the usefulness of the random access offered by computational video. Moreover, as was the case in the Situationist's psychogeographic drift there is an intention in *J9* to use inner sensibility as a way of overcoming the dehumanising and despiritualising effects of modernisation and globalisation. Konczak notes:

"*So much of the developed world just looks the same—'world class' architects dumping the same work across the world with little sensitivity to locality. Our patterns of consumption become homogenized with global branding something Pico Iyer develops in The Global Soul.*"
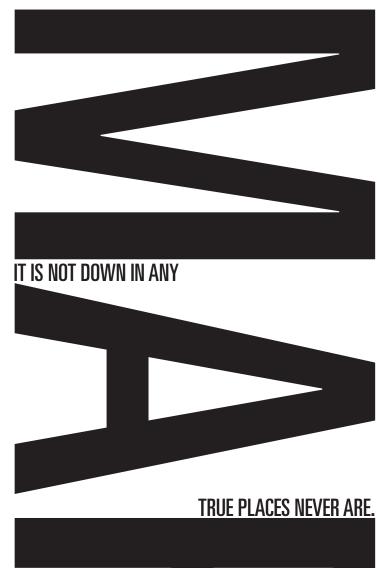
In a sense *J9* is a hymn to difference in a world permeated by the tendrils of a gigantic, posthuman, capitalist machine that threatens to eliminate our sense of self and poetry. We see this also when Konczak intersperses imagery from nature into his urban environments which for him expresses a "psychic release from the pressures of the urban". Encompassed by our workaday urban existences we should not forget nature in the same way that we should not forget the beauty and poetry of everyday experience that Konczak evokes in *J9*. The trick is to uncover a mystery and beauty akin to that of nature within the urban everyday and *J9* is an attempt in this direction. Like Eliasson, Konczak sees an affiliation between nature and what Georg Lukács referred to as "second nature" i.e. human culture. Lukács equated second nature with reification, but this is overly pessimistic in the sense that is it only partially the case. If we understand second nature as a second phase of evolution then it ceases to be entirely antithetical to "first nature". Like natural evolution, the evolution of human culture is a tapestry of chance, beauty and catastrophe. In his earlier work *Cracked Cities* Konczak focused on catastrophe in the form of urban decay but in *J9* he presents us with a more positive vision, one that makes us aware of the infinite depth and richness of globalised humanity.

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[1]Sadler, S. (1998) The Situationist City. Cambridge Mass. MIT Press.

DESTINATION

IS NEVER A PLACE, BUT A NEW WAY OF SEEING THINGS
HENRY MILLER

MAP

IT IS NOT DOWN IN ANY

TRUE PLACES NEVER ARE.

HERMAN MELVILLE

WRITERS

Martin Buckley

Martin Buckley has worked at the BBC as a producer and presenter for radio and television, he has also fronted documentaries for the Discovery Channel. Martin has published scores of press and magazines articles and three narrative travel books (Random House), most recently *Indian Odyssey* (2008).

Dr Graham Coulter-Smith

Dr Graham Coulter-Smith is the author of *Deconstructing Installation Art* and *The Postmodern Art of Imants Tillers* and co-editor of *Art in the Age of Terrorism* and *The Visual-Narrative Matrix*. He is a Research Fellow at Southampton Solent University and Senior Lecturer in Art Theory at Staffordshire University.

Dr Carolyn Mair

Dr Carolyn Mair is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Southampton Solent University. Carolyn completed Post-Doctoral work at Brunel University after obtaining her PhD in investigations into spatio-temporal aspects of visual short-term memory. Research interests include cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and empirical research methods.

Lisa Power

Lisa Power is a Senior Lecturer in Tourism at Southampton Solent University. Her industrial background is in Tour Operations having worked as a tour manager for both long and short haul tours around the world and in the UK. She is currently completing a PhD on the role of the tour guide in cross-cultural communication.

PRODUCTION

Jeremy Avis

Jeremy Avis writes experimental and vocal music for theatre, radio and large outdoor events. In 2007 he created the world's first live-looped vocal opera, Tongue Tied, for the Firsts Festival at Covent Garden. He is currently writing a new piece, Goalmouth with world music group, Korasong Radio, for performance in the UK and Botswana during the 2010 football World Cup.

Julian Konczak

Julian Konczak is Research Cluster Leader in Interactive Media at Southampton Solent University, he has exhibited work in international festivals and galleries as well as broadcast television. He is currently developing immersive interactive video projects with a number of commercial and creative partners.

Jon Pigott

Jon Pigott is a Researcher and Lecturer in Music Production and Technology at Cardiff School of Art and Design. He is also a sonic artist and musician. He has exhibited and presented his work in Norway (Norsk Kultur Rad 1998, WRAP 2005), Wookey Hole Caves in Somerset (2004), Bristol (Create Centre 2009, Arnolfini Gallery 'Interesting Sounds' 2009) and Bath Spa 'Seeing Sound' Symposium (2009).

Hector Simpson

Hector Simpson is a new media designer creating innovative and immersive user experiences through interaction and interface design. He creates pixel perfect front-end experiences and works with some of the web's most exciting developers to craft and develop useful, innovative and ground-breaking applications.

J9 has shown in Brazil, Japan, Singapore, UK and the USA

The work can be accessed on-line at   www.j9interactivevideo.com

J9 CREDITS

Production   Julian Konczak

Original Score and Performance   Jeremy Avis

Sampling and Audio Treatments   Jon Pigott

Interactive Authoring   Hector Simpson

CATALOGUE CREDITS

Editor   Julian Konczak

Design   Isaac Konczak

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