

Only Within

Mark Pimlott



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Neuss-Hombroich D 1993 © Mark Pimlott

The idea had come from a desire for liberty, but even that was a deception. In fact, at the root of it all was an ambition to dominate. Nature and Man alike, uncouth and untamed, would be obliged to submit, and this was to appear at once as manifestations of revolution and the natural order:



Vevey CH 1994 © Mark Pimlott

The wilderness was called to order by a statesman and landowner with a mind for calculation and the cause of emancipation. He devised a grid, with which claims, divisions and clearings could proceed regardless of that which might be encountered. Those circumstances that were unexpected were destroyed, their features obliterated. Everything was to be known.



Madrid E 2003 © Mark Pimlott

The unknown was present to those who recognised its otherness, and were willing to meet it, its space and respect its difference. In doing so, something of the self might be lost, but something of the other might be won. However, such perspicacity was superseded by the projections of a remote self, and the vast territory made way for his machinery, which displaced, replaced and assumed the identities and domains of all that was other.



Stansted GB 1993 © Mark Pimlott

Waves of migrations, claims and possessions washed over the territory, creating frontiers ever further away from the centres. Distant, tawdry catastrophes and atrocities became the material of myth. The territory was tamed and became interior, a process of subjugation and domestication which could be reflected upon with some pride at the end of the day, when one's dominion could be contemplated from the comforts of the hearth.



Porto P 1989 © Mark Pimlott

In a popular imagination that desired an infinite field for self-realisation, the other did not exist, and would be obliterated in fact. Distinctions between the self and other were similarly erased, and this held for the territory: that which was without was now within. Absolute description had yielded absolute control, which, in turn, had yielded an all-over condition of equilibrium, equivalence and interiority.



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The condition of interiority was dependable, predictable, useful. Places were assigned for individual yeomanry, in which hard work and competition held the promise of freedom and entitlement. The environment contained a potentially infinite number of adjacencies, and a corresponding infinity of antagonisms. In the great interior, there came to be an infinity of interiors.



Bruxelles B 1993 © Mark Pimlott

The ambition of the interior was to contain everything and render all else irrelevant. Ideally, the distinctions between large or small, close or distant were to become obsolete. As the idea of the supreme condition extended itself into every sphere of activity, it became necessary to connect everything, everywhere, so that this could be achieved and so that one need not distinguish home from office, car from home, office from mall, mall from airport, landscape from freeway, freeway from playground, childhood from adulthood.



Roissy F 1993 © Mark Pimlott

All incidents became equivalent to each other, and all were connected to each other, eliminating differences, collapsing all features, relations and perspectives onto themselves. Whether in open space, suburbs or the centres of cities, an aura of congestion and its attendant claustrophobia came to epitomise the prevalent condition. The interior became ever more extensive and labyrinthine, suggesting endlessness.



Łódź PL 1994 © Mark Pimlott

The interior's language, gestures, tools and ephemera – its address to the individual and its claims upon the individual – became universal, making it possible for the interior to be used and known regardless of its location. Within – and now, there was only within – all possible anomalies were ingested and absorbed, as though by the processes of a natural system. Yet the interior's system was artificial, designed to be highly predictable for its nourishment. It crafted its own nature, which became ever more adept at accommodating and incorporating shifts, alterations, and events that arose unbidden: it embraced the effects of naturalism.



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With all effects, topographies and representations universally prescribed and codified, it seems there is no alternative to this environment; this close, demanding, yet comforting, continuous interior. Yet, a departure is necessary so that another arrival, and another beginning may be possible, wherein another order of identity and independence, and of association and relations may be realised. Might a true meeting with the other and the World, finally lead us outside ourselves and toward somewhere else?