

# LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

## Subway Space and Transit Aesthetics in Valeria Luiselli's *Faces in the Crowd*

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### Abstract:

By examining the subway as a spatial structure informing the narrative and aesthetics of *Faces in the Crowd* (*Los ingravidos*)—the debut novel of Valeria Luiselli—this article argues that transitional spaces such as the subway, designed primarily for movement and exchange, function in contemporary literature as reflective loci for aesthetic questions, and that they mediate an evolving debate on the changing conditions of artistic practice in a globalized world. In the novel, the subway, and the New York City subway in particular, is highlighted as a space for literary encounters and exchanges between Latin American and Northern American literary tradition. Furthermore, the material space of the subway and the practices of subway riding infuse the form and structure of the novel. With perspectives from Henri Lefebvre and critical literary geography as envisioned by literary critic Andrew Thacker, as well as from current discussion on aesthetic responses to globalization, it shows how the subway, with its double potential to function as an abstract, rational space of flows as well as a meaningful and situated location, mediates an aesthetic of movement and transit in Luiselli's novel, interrogating some of the challenges facing literature in an increasingly global world.

**Keywords:** Valeria Luiselli; subway; metaliterary space; Henri Lefebvre; critical literary geography; aesthetics.

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### Globalization, Mobility, and Aesthetic Forms

What effects does globalization have on aesthetic forms? An important task for current cultural theory is to outline new conceptual frameworks to critically unfold the various

responses of contemporary art to changes brought about by the last few decades of economic, political, and cultural globalization. Some observations for further discussion can be found in the work of literary scholar Ottmar Ette and of art critic Nicolas Bourriaud. In *Writing-between-Worlds* (2016), Ette calls for a critical vocabulary for the various directional movements in contemporary literature that often cut across national as well as linguistic borders. ‘Literatures without a fixed Abode’ (‘Literaturen ohne festen Wohnsitz’) is Ette’s suggested term for literature and writing practices that could not easily be territorialized or ascribed to a singular culture, and which are defined by their lack of a particular dwelling place or ‘fixed abode’ (2016: 7-11). Inspired by mathematics and physics, Ette uses ‘vectorization’ to describe transtemporal, transareal, transcultural, and translingual patterns of movement explored in literatures without a fixed abode. A general characteristic of this literature is its ‘bouncing back and forth between places and times, societies and cultures’ (7). By insisting on this oscillation, Ette points to an emergent nomadic mode of literary writing which he understands as an aesthetic response to current geocultural and biopolitical changes.

Bourriaud’s *The Radicant* (2010) similarly identifies a need to grapple with the fact that contemporary artistic practices are growing increasingly mobile and wandering, and he relates them to a style of living and thinking emerging in a world of ‘migratory flows, global nomadism,’ and financial globalization (2010: 52). Borrowing from botany, Bourriaud describes contemporary creativity as ‘radicant:’ Similarly to ivy, for instance, a radicant art ‘grows its roots and adds new ones as it advances’ (22). The radicant artist is more preoccupied with itineraries and destinations than with rootedness, belonging, and origins, and subsequent aesthetics center on heterogeneity, cultural exchange, translations, and transcodings.

Despite being preoccupied with different art forms, Bourriaud and Ette unite in pointing out movement, mobility, and direction as prominent features of contemporary aesthetics entangled in processes of globalization. This article aims to contribute to the discussion on aesthetic responses to globalization by looking closer at a single work which addresses such themes in creative ways: Valeria Luiselli’s (1983–) *Faces in the Crowd* (2012; originally published in Spanish as *Los ingravidos* in 2011 and translated by Christina MacSweeney).<sup>1</sup> As observed by several critics (Cardoso Nelky 2014: 80; Pape 2015; Booker 2017: 274, 278; Raynor 2019: 147), movement in time and space as well as mobile and transitory characters and themes of migration and travel are recurring features in Luiselli’s writing, as are crossings of literary and linguistic borders. Many of these characteristics are prominent already in her debut novel.

*Faces in the Crowd* tells the story of two protagonists functioning as first-person narrators, both Mexican intellectuals and both depicted in two stages of their lives. Living and working in different times, they both spend significant parts of their lives as expatriates in New York City. The first protagonist is a young, unnamed woman, confined in a house in present-day Mexico City as a mother of two small children and with a marriage falling apart, trying to find the time and space to write a novel, while pondering her previous life in New York when she worked as a translator for a small publishing house specializing in Latin American literature. The second is a real, historical person, Mexican diplomat and writer Gilberto Owen (1904–1952), old and sickly, divorced from his wife, separated from

his children and working as honorary consul in Philadelphia around 1950, who remembers his life as a young aspiring poet on the outskirts of the Harlem Renaissance in New York in the late 1920s, and ruminates on a novel he would like to write. Aphoristic and fragmented, the narrative of *Faces in the Crowd* is structured around brief textual segments, oscillating between the two protagonists and their various moments and movements in time and space, giving the reader an impression of continuous exchange between different parts of the story. Working with repetition of phrases and thematic parallels and playing with the elusive boundaries of fiction and reality, Luiselli points to numerous similarities between Owen and the woman, to the extent that their stories begin to converge. This conflation is intimated also on a diegetic level, resulting in a short circuit or narrative collapse: Gilberto Owen is the protagonist of the novel that the woman is writing, and later on in the narrative, it is revealed that the woman is the intended protagonist of the novel that Owen is making up in his mind. Continuous reflections on the writing process also mark the novel as an example of metaliterature.

*Faces in the Crowd* is oriented around movement in many respects, some of which will be explored in this article. The author, likewise, embodies mobility: daughter of a diplomat, Valeria Luiselli was born in Mexico City but has lived in Costa Rica, South Korea, South Africa, India, Spain, and France. She currently resides in New York and has been marketed as a writer moving between the local and the global (Booker 2017: 274). Educated mainly in English, she spoke Spanish at home, and because of the ‘linguistic duality of her childhood’ (Booker 2017: 290) and her formative years of wandering, she has intimated that she feels she does not truly fit anywhere (Vanden Berghe and Licata 2020: 168). Consistent with her biographical mobility, Luiselli’s writing is on the move in several ways, transferring between genres and styles (Licata 2019: 166-67), but also between languages. A case in point, her latest novel, *Lost Children Archive* (2019), her first written in English, demonstrates her continuing engagement with questions of globalization and mobility by taking the form of a road trip from New York to Arizona, interspersed with essayistic ruminations on the current child migration crisis, Native American history, and the disintegration of a particular family. Oscillating between languages and cultures, Luiselli’s work exemplifies the translingual movements that Ette posits as a feature of literatures without a fixed abode (2016: 34). Writing about immigrants, exiles, and urban wanderers, Luiselli also provides some of Bourriaud’s generic ‘figures of contemporary culture’ (Bourriaud 2010: 51) with particular life stories. In Bourriaud’s sense, her work demonstrates a radigrant aesthetics, since it is not so much preoccupied with the tradition from which it comes as with the path it takes between that tradition and various traversed contexts (2010: 51; see also Licata 2019: 167-69). Reading *Los ingravidos* in the context of Bourriaud, Maria Pape has described the novel as a staging of an encounter between Latin American and North American literary tradition in which neither has the singular power to define the work (2015: 191).

### **The Aesthetic Potential of the Subway**

Unfolding in the movement between three major cities of the Americas—New York City, Philadelphia, and Mexico City—*Faces in the Crowd* nevertheless treats New York City as a

particularly important locus for the exchange and interaction between the woman and Owen, whose experiences of expatriation and of being in-between languages, literatures, and cultures are reflected in various events taking place in this city. Previous research on *Los ingravidos* has argued that the novel differentiates the spaces of New York and Mexico City by associating the former with lightness and movement and the latter with responsibility, motherhood, and confinement (Vanden Berghe and Licata 2020: 163). As Patrick O'Connor observes, Luiselli makes a strong distinction between woman and public space in Mexico City, since the female protagonist barely steps out of her home in these parts of the narrative (2018: 217), while during her years in New York, she seems to spend more time in the apartments of others and in public spaces than in her own flat (Raynor 2019: 142-44).

A public space serving as a particularly prominent meeting point for the two protagonists is the New York City subway, enabling them to transgress their respective time frames to observe and recognize each other as individual faces in the subway crowd. While Owen appears to the woman as a specter from the past, he catches sight of the woman as a haunting presence from the future, and they both spot the other through windows of subway cars or at particular platforms. Different historical moments thus coexist in the same geographical location, but a location foregrounding transfer, transit and flux. In my reading of *Faces in the Crowd*, I focus on the aesthetic potential of the subway as it is explored in Luiselli's novel. By repeatedly being associated with weightlessness, movement, and literary encounters, the subway, and the New York City Subway in particular, mediates an aesthetics of transit which, I will demonstrate, is expressed in content as well as form.

A recurring spatial formation and more or less uniform system of rapid mass transportation of metropolises throughout the world, the subway is also subset of a local urban space, blurring traditional distinctions of *space* and *place*. Drawing from cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, Sunny Stalter-Pace suggests, in a discussion on the New York City subway in American literature, a rough distinction between space as a 'location through which one moves' and place as 'a location in which one stays' (2013: 28). Stalter-Pace discusses the subway primarily as space and as a system of transport, and her argument is oriented around 'subway movement' (3) as it is explored in various literary texts. I would like to add however, also with Tuan, that space can turn into place as we 'endow it with value' (Tuan 1977: 6). Unlike space, which is often seen as more abstract and associated with areas, volumes, and geometry, place tends to be aligned with lived experiences, memories, and emotions (Hubbard 2015: 42). A condensed definition of place of use in this context, suggested by Tim Cresswell, is 'meaningful location' (2015: 12), stressing also that a place is (normally) located somewhere and has material form.

I propose that it is the spatial ambiguity of the subway—its double potential to function as an abstract, rational space of flows as well as a 'meaningful location,' situated *somewhere* rather than *anywhere*—that marks its obvious attraction for Luiselli and other contemporary writers with a 'radicant' bent or operating without a 'fixed abode.' In a more specific sense, I argue that transitional spaces such as the subway, designed primarily for movement and exchange, function in contemporary literature and art as reflective loci for aesthetic questions and that they mediate an evolving debate on the changing conditions

of artistic practice in a globalized world. This is implied by Bourriaud, who suggests that ‘airports, cars, and railroad stations become the new metaphors for the house, just as walking and airplane travel become new modes of drawing’ (2010: 57). In other words, a contemporary aesthetics in Bourriaud’s or Ette’s sense, enrooting itself in ever new soil, or bouncing back and forth without dwelling in particular places, still has need for spatial perspectives since they help clarify how an aesthetics of motion is reflected in spaces of transit. I contend that in *Faces in the Crowd*, the spatiality of the subway is connected to specific, spatially infused ideas of literary aesthetics and that Luiselli explores the potential of the subway to serve as a metaliterary space, diverging considerably from more private and domestic spaces reflecting literary productivity and artistic creation in the past, such as the house or home (cf. Brodkey 1987; Hendrix 2008). Below, I discuss and exemplify the various ways in which the subway as a spatial structure is activated within Luiselli’s novel, and I illustrate how subway space as a metaliterary space conveys an aesthetic of movement and transit, interrogating some of the challenges facing literature and art in an increasingly global world.

In my reading, I take inspiration from *critical literary geography* as outlined by Andrew Thacker (2005; 2009; 2019). Drawing from spatial theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Michel de Certeau, Thacker suggests that ‘to think geographically about literary and cultural texts means to understand them in material locations, locations that can and should be examined historically and with an awareness of how diverse spaces can reflect, produce or resist forms of power’ (2005: 60). Just as important as the analysis of literary representations of material spaces is the study of the ways in which literary form respond to social and material space. Thacker’s concept of ‘textual space’ refers to the interaction of material space and spatial form within literary texts, expressed in literary representations of material and metaphoric spaces as well as in the shape of narrative, its style and imagery (2009: 4, 40). In the case of *Faces in the Crowd*, relevant questions from the perspective of Thacker’s critical literary geography would concern content as well as form: How is the subway (and the New York City subway) represented in the novel, and what is the relationship of the literary subway to its material counterpart? How is meaning attached to this particular space and in what ways does it mediate wider aesthetic questions? Could the narrative form and the literary style of the novel be seen as responses to a geographical encounter with material subway space?

Subway space is here understood in line with Lefebvre’s conceptualization of space as socially produced and transformed by human practices, and as reflecting the mode of production of a particular society. In *The Production of Space* (1991), Lefebvre suggests that space is produced in dialectical tension between three constitutive elements: *material space* which is space as experienced, perceived, and practiced in everyday life; *representations of space*, meaning space as conceived, conceptualized, and represented in abstract forms such as maps or urban planning; and *spaces of representation*, referring to space as lived and remembered, attached to emotion, imagination, and meaning (1991: 38-39).<sup>2</sup> Lefebvre’s perspective is helpful since it offers an interpretative model for the complex interrelations of spatial levels in the production of space. Like other subway spaces throughout the world, the New York City subway cannot be reduced to an abstract space, supported by maps and an infrastructure of tunnels, stations, and tracks; as a material and social space, it also

‘exhibits a much less easily mappable network of practices and experiences’ (Pike 2007: 13), including the rhythms of commuting and the social and personal histories and memories attached to that space. In my analysis of *Faces in the Crowd*, Lefebvre’s spatial dialectic will be used to illustrate how subway space as perceived, conceived, and lived are in constant tension in the novel and how this dialectic similarly contributes to a particular aesthetics of transit.

Below, I will look first at the processes by which meaning is attached to subway space in Luiselli’s novel, followed by a discussion on the spatial dialectics of subway space. In the subsequent sections, I focus on the literary encounters taking place in the subway and their function in the narrative and ask what an aesthetics informed by subway space would look like. I conclude by suggesting that Luiselli’s novel, in its playful treatment of subway space, addresses more general questions on movement, space, and aesthetics in an increasingly global world.

### Meaning, Place-Making, and Subway Space

In her article on place-making in Luiselli’s novel, Cecily Raynor observes the extent to which Luiselli’s story poses a challenge to conventional notions of shared and public urban spaces and its supposed functions: ‘Indeed, the narrator [here referring to the woman] inhabits public spaces in ways that are [...] nontraditional; she imbues them with a depth of meaning conventionally assigned to places. Elevators, subways, park benches, public bathrooms, all become her zones of occupation, realms in which she has significant encounters or to which she assigns value’ (2019: 143). I would add to Raynor’s observation that for subway space in particular, literature serves as an important tool for place-making. For instance, the young woman makes use of her extensive reading to make New York public spaces less unwelcoming—in actual fact turning them into places or ‘meaningful locations.’ Copying and memorizing a selection of British and American poems, she repeats them when she passes particular public spaces:

I had a theory, I’m not sure if it was my own but it worked for me. Public spaces, such as streets and subway stations, became inhabitable as I assigned them some value and imprinted an experience on them. If I recited a snatch of *Paterson* every time I walked along a certain avenue, eventually that avenue would sound like William Carlos Williams. The entrance to the subway at 116th Street was Emily Dickinson’s. (Luiselli 2013: 17)

The tendency to make urban spaces meaningful by associating them with literary quotations can be related to an ambition in the last few decades among transit authorities in big cities to display poetry in advertising spaces of public transportation. In New York City, a collaboration between the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Poetry Society of America resulted in Poetry in Motion, an arts program beginning in 1992. Putting literary quotations on view to make experiences of public transportation more pleasant was in the interest of public authorities in New York of the early 1990s, since images of the subway as a space of violence and crime prevailed after a period of decline.

As Michael W. Brooks puts it, changing the ‘semiotic environment’ (1997: 223) of the subway was just as important as was the cleaning of trains, efficient air conditioning, and convenient schedules. Martha J. Nadell however suggests that the display of poetry in subways and buses in effect results in a dismantling of public experience: The reading commuter is encouraged to imagine a ‘private aesthetic place’ (1996: 40) within the social and physical space of commuting, removed from the moment of riding, from fellow passengers, and from the city.

In *Faces in the Crowd*, the Mexican woman’s singling out of particular British and American poems to help make urban spaces more familiar and meaningful could to some extent be interpreted as a privatization of public space in line with observations by Raynor (2019: 143) and Nadell (1996: 40), but I argue that this place-making be seen as part of an aesthetic project as well, and that this aesthetics of literary encounters is mediated by urban spaces such as the subway. Additionally, it could be understood as vectoral in Ette’s sense (2016: 4), since it repeats a specific pattern of movement, spatially and physically from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere, culturally and linguistically from a Latin American to a Northern American cultural context, depicted not only in the woman’s part of the narrative but also in the story of Owen’s encounter with European and American modernism in the late 1920s. Gilberto Owen was part of the Mexican modernist movement *Los Contemporáneos*, whose aim was to open Mexican literature to a new universalism through exposure to literary experimentalism in Western Europe and the United States (Clark D’Lugo 1997: 25). Owen’s poetic encounter with the New York City subway, expressed in ‘Autorretrato o del *subway*’ (1930), exemplifies a widespread interest in the subway among various modernist movements, and in modern mass transportation as an aesthetic venture more generally (Stalter-Pace 2013; Conley 2014). In *Faces in the Crowd*, Owen’s poem is tightly linked to Ezra Pound’s short-poem ‘In a Station of the Metro’ (1913), to which I will return below.

A particular instance of subway space serving as a mediator for place-making literary encounters in the novel is the station at 116th Street on subway line 1, close to Columbia University. When it is first introduced in the novel, Luiselli quotes a poem by Emily Dickinson that the woman repeats at the subway entrance (Luiselli 2013: 17). That she chooses a poem by Dickinson (‘Presentiment – is that long Shadow – on the Lawn’) may be related to the fact that Owen himself translated this particular poem (Luiselli 2015: 339). Since the female protagonist becomes obsessed with Owen’s life and writings during her time in New York, to make Dickinson represent a subway station is, in a way, a repetition of the Latin American encounter with Northern American tradition experienced by Owen in the late 1920s.

Subway line 1 and 116th Street Station represent the interweaving of the two life stories and experiences of being expatriate intellectuals in other senses as well. It is on this line that the woman recognizes the ghost of Owen (Luiselli 2013: 37, 61), and 116th Street Station is frequented regularly by the younger Owen as he takes the subway to work as a clerk at the Mexican consulate (66). At this station, Owen once catches a glimpse of Ezra Pound’s face in the crowd at the platform (87), and here he checks his weight on a weighing machine every morning, noticing a steady decrease: ‘I was disappearing slowly inside my little unloved bureaucrat’s suite’ (69). The sense of weightlessness accentuated in Owen’s

story and in his subway weighing routine, also intimated by the original title of the novel, *Los ingrátidos* ("The Weightless"), points to a shared sense between the two protagonists of being insignificant and invisible as outsiders in New York's cultural circles, articulated metaphorically also in their recurring assertions that they experience themselves as urban ghosts, unstable and transitional, dying repeated deaths in Manhattan.

Located on the border of Upper West Side and Harlem in Manhattan, 116th Street Station serves as a junction for the stories of the woman and Owen in another timely sense, intimating the spatial significance of Harlem in the narrative (cf. Huxley 2019). As Stalter-Pace asserts, the development of Harlem as a 'capital of black culture' (2013: 142) in the 1920s and 1930s was due in part to the extension of the rapid transit network, and she goes on to suggest that the subway 'runs through the history of Harlem and the history of the Harlem migration narrative' (144). After the First World War, a massive population of working-class southern black people moved to New York and other big cities. Stories of this migration abound in the Harlem Renaissance, an intellectual and cultural movement booming at the time of Owen's stay in New York in the late 1920s. These narratives, representing another vectoral movement from the south to the north (see also Ette 2016: 35-36), address transregional more than transnational flows, and in positioning Gilberto Owen at the outskirts of the Harlem Renaissance, Luiselli points perhaps to the extent to which this movement was African-American in orientation. On one occasion, Owen is invited along with Federico García Lorca by Nella Larsen, a major novelist of the Harlem movement, to a social gathering in her apartment. The meeting with Larsen reminds Owen that he and Lorca both aspire in different ways to a 'culture incapable of absorbing us' (Luiselli 2013: 124), and he continues: 'I don't know why I submitted to the torture of those Harlem *tertulias*: I trotted along to them with Federico like a Chihuahua, and was never more than a remote presence who could neither sing nor dance, only translate and dance a little' (124).

As discussed by Sarah K. Booker (2017: 284-85), Owen is portrayed primarily as a translator in Luiselli's novel, denied authorial or artistic credits. The young woman in the New York-part of the narrative is also not a novelist but works as a translator, reading about Owen and making notes for a future novel that is written much later in the house in Mexico City. By converging at a particular subway station in Harlem, the two protagonists experience that they are not alone in their displacement, and that public spaces may support recognition and community even if private spaces do not. The novel then runs counter to a prevalent, negative conception of the subway, in which the only common identity forged by this space is a shared sense of isolation (Stalter-Pace 2013: 111). Portrayed in the novel as a perceived space in Lefebvre's sense through the repeated rides of the two protagonists, the subway is also imagined as a lived space, associated with meaningful encounters with other individuals: the woman with Owen and with her contemporary friend Moby; Owen with Pound, Lorca and with the woman from the future.

### **Spatial Dialectics of the Subway**

The first time the woman catches sight of Owen in the subway it is in 'a station on the 1 line' (Luiselli 2013: 36), as she accompanies her friend Dakota who is singing there to earn



some extra money. Bringing her own chair, the woman sits on the platform, touched by her friend's performance, while observing that none of the people exiting the trains stops to listen. Emerging behind Dakota she sees Owen among the many faces in the subway crowd (37). The observations made by the woman draw attention to the way subway space has been, and still is caught between two sets of opposing cultural imaginaries: on the one hand, as with underground space on the whole, it is often seen as a modern materialization of the underworlds of various religions and myths, representing the realm of the dead or Christian hell, or conceived of more generally as a space for the irrational, dangerous, or more primitive aspects of life that are not seen as useful or eligible above ground (Pike 2005: 5-7). In Luiselli, this conception is intimated in the way the subway is portrayed as a haunted space hosting various ghosts, which function as a reminder of half-forgotten lives and literary texts, and which allows the woman to see Owen in particular.

On the other hand, the subway has been put forward as a purely rational space, an exponent of technical engineering and of the efficient organization and planning of the modern city (e.g. François 2019: 24-25). This more modern conception of subterranean space began to emerge with the building of the underground railway systems in London and Paris, the results of which were ideas of 'an underground that would be bright, clean, and dry, the polar opposite of traditional images of the world below' (Pike 2005: 3). Nowadays, the subway in this imaginary is seen as 'placeless' or as a 'transitional place' (Gebauer et al. 2015: 13), that is, as a highly functional, standardized environment, built and designed for smooth and efficient transportation but devoid of historical identity.

Seen in light of Lefebvre's spatial dialectics, the opposition between the subway as a rational space and as an infernal realm can be understood as a split between the subway as conceived (the subway from the transport planner's perspective) and the subway as lived in the sense that a 'territory of the past' (Welsh 2010: 3) and of cultural tradition is used to make sense of modern technological innovations and their subsequent transformations of space. In Luiselli's account of Dakota's performance, the subway is depicted as a rational space alongside its ghostly visitations, since it is also a space for rushed and target-oriented commuters who do not stay to enjoy her singing. What makes Luiselli's subway setting stand out however is the way she portrays this space as constructed in constant tension between space as conceived, lived, and perceived: subway space is a space for repetitive rituals of commuting and its accompanying sounds, bodily sensations, and visual impressions; it is a space designed and built to make this transportation as efficient as possible; and it is given potential as a vital cultural space, a space for music performances and for spotting literary precursors that may inspire future writing. Yet, since Luiselli underlines that nobody from the arriving trains stays to listen, one gets the impression that conceived space is here having the upper hand: people passing act according to the conceptions of rational subway movement of spatial planners, undermining the potential of the subway to function as a creative space. The literary representation of subway space in *Faces in the Crowd* then seems to confirm Lefebvre's proposition that conceived space—the space of urban planners, scientists, social engineers, architects, and governments—is 'the dominant space in any society' (Lefebvre 1991: 38-39), modifying the 'spatial texture of a city [...] according to certain ideologies' (Thacker 2009: 20), affecting how it is perceived and lived.

That this is the case is suggested by the way that the same dominance of conceived space over perceived and lived is repeated in another story of creativity taking place in the subway, a mirror image to Dakota's singing. In this event, it is Owen relating how he, along with García Lorca, creates a translation performance in the subway, based on a fragment from an epic poem by 'Joshua Zvorsky' (a fictional recreation of the American poet Louis Zukofsky). Previously translated into Spanish by Owen, the poem is now declaimed in Spanish by Lorca, while Owen simultaneously translates it back into English. Opposing the idea of constant movement fundamental for the subway as conceived space, Lorca and Owen invite people to stop and listen, but are met with a similar lack of interest as in the Dakota story (Luiselli 2013: 115). Playing with the ambiguity of the verb *move*, however, Owen insinuates that this hurried mobility results in the commuters being 'the most unmovable race on the planet' (115). The only comfort offered in this situation is that he sees the woman from the future, carrying a chair (116), just as she does when she listens to Dakota and observes Owen (37). That the subway is not only imagined as a rationalized space but is capable of fusing together different moments in time, intertwining the stories of Owen and the woman, suggests that literature may call into question dominant views of space, as well as reflect or endorse them (see Thacker 2009: 20). Creative micro rebellions taking place in the subway underline that subway space as lived space has affective and historical dimensions; that is: 'It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time' (Lefebvre 1991: 42).

### Modernist Subway Encounters

In its preoccupation with writers such as Owen, Lorca, Pound, Zukofsky, and others, and in its 'textual recreation' (Booker 2017: 287) of many of these figures, Luiselli's novel exemplifies a contemporary interest in modernist writing on the subway aimed at shedding light on present-day city life. Functioning as an 'urban unconscious' (Stalter-Pace 2013: 165), the subway system of New York mediates the relationship between individual memories and the city of the past. Stalter-Pace understands the nostalgia for earlier moments in New York's history, expressed in contemporary subway writing, as 'a mode of collective identity making' (180), a reflection upon what group one imagines oneself to belong to within that urban past. It is significant, for instance, that despite aspirations to become a novelist, Luiselli's female protagonist orients herself mainly toward a poetic modernist and cosmopolitan avantgarde, outlined in *Faces in the Crowd* as the woman's encounter with Owen's encounter with American poetic modernism.

As observed by Booker, the multiple subway meetings of the woman and Owen are 'reenactments' (2017: 288) of another famous story of a modernist encounter, summarized in Luiselli's novel by White, the woman's employer at the publishing house, as they both wait for the subway train one night: 'Standing on the platform [...], he told me that one day, in that very station, the poet Ezra Pound had seen his friend Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who had been killed in a trench in Neuville-Saint-Vaast a few months before' (Luiselli 2013: 14). White then goes on to tell the woman how Pound, seeing his friend's face buried among other faces in the crowd, becomes so shocked that he slides down to the ground, immediately taking out a notebook to write down his impressions: 'That same night [...],

he completed a poem of over three hundred lines.’ Finding it too long, Pound goes back to the station every day, ‘to lop, cut, mutilate the poem’ so that it be as ‘brief as his dead friend’s appearance, exactly as startling.’ After a month, ‘removing everything extraneous, only two poignant lines survived, comparing faces in the crowd to petals on a dark bough’ (14–15).

Luiselli, of course, is referring to Ezra Pound’s ‘In a Station of the Metro,’ but just as important is the relation of White’s story to Ezra Pound’s own account of the genesis of this particular poem. In the essay ‘Vorticism’ (1914), Pound describes how he ‘got out of a “metro” train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then a beautiful child’s face, and then another beautiful woman’ (1960: 86–87). For Pound, the exit from a Paris metro station during a temporary stay in the spring of 1911 serves as a moment of epiphany, since he describes it as the starting point of a creative process whose result is to become an epitome of Imagist poetry, reduced and revised from thirty lines to a poem ‘half that length’ and finally to a ‘*hokku*-like sentence’ (89).

Pound’s story of origination and composition, repeated and elaborated by the author himself in several instances along with continued revisions of the poem (cf. Chilton and Gilbertson 1990), becomes the subject of playful repetition and re-writing in *Faces in the Crowd* in several respects. Asserting that ‘there are different versions of the story’ (Luiselli 2013: 14), and that the woman prefers the one White tells her, Luiselli alludes to Pound’s own revisions, while intimating that White’s version may be at odds with Pound’s. For instance, White relocates Pound’s moment of inspiration from Paris—a major capital of modernism—to New York. Another apparent change is temporal, since one may infer from the death of Pound’s friend—French sculptor and artist Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who was killed during the First World War in June 1915—that the poem in White’s version is written sometime after that, while it was actually published in *Poetry* in April 1913. Furthermore, in White’s version, the thirty-line poem that Pound himself claims to have started out with has expanded tenfold to ‘over three hundred lines’ (Luiselli 2013: 14). Most importantly, however, the very visual impression that attracted Pound’s attention has changed considerably: From Pound’s succession of beautiful faces, seemingly of unknown women and children, the sudden vision in White’s version is of Pound’s newly deceased friend, suggesting a shift of focus from the beauty of repetition in the distanced crowd in Pound’s story, to the individual encounter and the accompanying feeling of loss in White’s version.

One of several Imagist poets contemplating the subway, Pound’s interest in this space was not so much its energizing speed, as had been the case with the Futurists, but its ability to ‘stage a poetic encounter which could stress fixity amid the vertiginous bustle of modernity’ (Thacker 2009: 86). Thacker has underlined the extent to which Imagist poetry of subway travel and subway encounters negotiate ‘urban *angst*’ (2009: 92), and he understands the response to urban mass transportation among many modernists as an instance of spatial phobia, caused by ‘the crowded density of other people’ (Thacker 2019: 180). Seen from a spatial perspective, Imagist poetry expresses a nascent understanding of the inside of a subway car as being ‘not a retreat from the open street, but a kind of ambivalent public space that enforces encounters, often anxiously, with strangers’ (182-

83). In a poem such as ‘In a Station of the Metro,’ Thacker argues, the beauty of the faces in the subway crowd can only be maintained if kept at perceptual distance, and if the physical jostle of people in the space of urban transit is replaced by a ‘detachment of the gaze’ (2009: 100). This detachment, in turn, results in a transformation of the object of the gaze—the women and children—into a transcendent image for male contemplation (105-06).

Luiselli’s rewriting of Pound’s story, along with the repeated subway encounters between the woman and Owen, and in one instance between Owen and Pound (Luiselli 2013: 87), suggests that the novel is clearly more interested in distinguishing and acknowledging the individual *face* in the crowd than in the repetition of anonymous faces, which exemplifies as one of several points of departure from Pound. Likewise, the repeated encounters and exchange of gazes between Owen and the woman and their mutual interest in the other suggests a more reciprocal relationship than does Pound’s story of subway creation, since *Faces in the Crowd* focuses on what the two protagonists have in common rather than what divides them (cf. Vanden Berghe and Licata 2020: 172-74). Diverging also from the picture of the subway as a metaphor for ‘urban anomie’ (Thurston 2009: 63) in early modernism, urban public spaces such as the subway are associated with recognition, intimacy, and meaning in Luiselli’s novel, while private spaces such as the homes of the protagonists seem more alienating, since they are depicted as transitory spaces or spaces of confinement (see also Raynor 2019: 142–144; O’Connor 2018: 217). Furthermore, by conceiving the subway as a space for the exchange of glances, Luiselli’s characters can be said to challenge a ‘cardinal rule of subway etiquette’ that ‘thou shalt not make eye contact’ (Chapman Sharpe 2010: 6), while Pound’s poem rather adheres to the visual ritual of seeing but avoiding ‘being seen to see’ (6). It is also evident, however, that the other being seen in *Faces in the Crowd* and returning the glance is not really there, echoing perhaps the absent presence intimated in the word ‘apparition’ used in Pound’s poem (1960: 89).

In imagining the subway as a spectral space, accommodating literary forbears and the ghosts of modernism in particular, Luiselli implies perhaps ‘the hauntological nature of intertextuality’ (Shaw 2018: 17), since the novel repeatedly acknowledges how it is created as a rewriting of other texts and stories. In imagining the subway as a space for the daily habit of commuting and simultaneously a space for encounters with the ghosts of literary tradition, the New York City subway of Luiselli’s novel oscillates between the material and the metaphorical, or, with Stalter-Pace, between *underground* and *underworld* (2013: 28-31). The materiality of the subway as a transportation network (or as underground), vital for the spatial aesthetics expressed in *Faces in the Crowd*, will be commented on in the next section. It is clear, however, that the subway of Luiselli’s novel is also staged as an underworld, affiliated with myth and literature. Despite its differences from the descent narratives of classical and Christian tradition, outlined for instance in the journeys to the underworld of Orpheus and Virgil’s Aeneas, or the travels through Hell and Purgatory of Dante in *Divina Commedia*, subway space in Luiselli’s novel still addresses some of the classical functions of epic stories of descent, such as the search for self-knowledge or for something or someone lost (cf. Falconer 2007: 3). Subway space in Luiselli however serves as a vehicle for reflection on literature in a more specific sense, recapturing the underworld topos in modernist poetry. Michael Thurston has suggested that the descent into the

underworld (*katabasis*), and the invocation and confrontation of the dead (*neknia*), have from early on been ‘interwoven with poets’ concerns about poetry’ (2009: 11). His more detailed argument is that poets make use of the underworld to stage some major conflicts: the poet’s conflict with the literary past and sense of belatedness, the conflicted relationship of the poet to his or her own society, and a conflict over the degree of power and influence of poetry in society (20). In this manner, the underworld in modern poetry—often transformed into subway space—is constructed as a metaliterary space.

Portraying the modernist subway encounter as a series of repetitions, giving birth to ever new stories, which are nevertheless only versions or reenactments of other stories, Luiselli’s subway functions in a related metaliterary sense to the modernist underworld topos, addressing the process of creation as reflection and repetition, but also the potential of literature to give voice to the marginalized or forgotten. A condensed version of this metaliterary subway is implied in the woman’s account of being in a subway car on line 1, looking out of the window, observing Owen passing on a parallel train coming up from behind: ‘I saw him sitting in the same position as me, his head resting against the carriage window. [...] When there was once again darkness outside the window, I saw my own blurred image on the glass. But it wasn’t my face; it was my face superimposed on his – as if his reflection had been stamped onto the glass and now I was reflected inside that double trapped on my carriage window’ (Luiselli 2013: 61). The woman’s face is ‘superimposed’ onto Owen’s, placed on top of his face, mirroring Owen’s like a double. The double image of a face reflected in the other here functions as a premonition of the narrative inversion that eventually casts the woman as a character in Owen’s planned novel. This is suggested since Owen, later in *Faces in the Crowd*, goes into detail about his idea: ‘I want it to be a novel set both in Mexico, in an old house in the capital, and in the New York of my youth. [...] Salvador told me that there’s a young writer in Mexico doing something similar. The bastard went and stole my great idea’ (136). In an adjoining fragment, Owen explains that he wants to use Emily Dickinson’s ‘Presentiment – is that long Shadow – on the Lawn’ as an epigraph to his novel, and he likewise tells the reader that the narrator ‘should be like an Emily Dickinson. A woman who remains eternally locked up in her house, or in a subway carriage, it makes no difference which, talking with her ghosts and trying to piece together a series of broken thoughts’ (138).

Apart from reinforcing the common interest held by both the woman and Owen in Emily Dickinson, the subway is again activated as a metaliterary space: As in the woman’s visual impression of Owen’s face appearing under her own, Owen’s ruminations on his future novel casts the subway carriage as a narrative space, defying established conceptions of domestic, private space as a particularly authentic writing space, prominent also in modernist aesthetics (cf. Brodkey 1987). The subway in *Faces in the Crowd* is not, however, only a spectral space supporting literary encounters but a transportation infrastructure with particular material features. In the following section, I will exemplify the ways in which the narrative form of the novel, as well as its pronounced discussion on aesthetics, could be read as a response to the material space of the subway and to practices of subway riding.

## Transit Aesthetics

Mirroring the subway encounter in which the woman sees her own face superimposed on Owen's is a similar encounter from Owen's perspective. On board a train approaching another from behind, when the two trains are in a parallel position, Owen observes the woman in the other train, resting her head against the window, repeating Owen's posture in the woman's story (Luiselli 2013: 109). Seen in light of the subway as a spatial structure of converging, diverging, crossing, and parallel lines, the stories of Owen and the woman seem to extend as two lines in a subway system, similarly constructed but still separated, occasionally located side by side, so that the two protagonists are allowed a sudden glimpse into the other story before getting on with their commute.

Arguably, the image of parallel lines or tracks, mimicking the material space of the subway (the subway as *underground* more than *underworld*) is used in a more explicit comment on the narrative structure of the writing going on in *Faces in the Crowd*. Sensing that her husband intrudes on her writing by reading and commenting on the files on her computer, the woman in Mexico City decides on splitting her novel-in-progress into two parts, one public and one private, worked upon simultaneously: 'At the end of each day's work, separate the paragraphs, copy, paste, save; leave only one of the files open so the husband reads it and sates his curiosity to the full' (Luiselli 2013: 58). From this moment in Luiselli's novel, Owen is introduced as not only the object of the woman's inquiries and reading, but as a second protagonist and narrator (a narrator, more precisely, within the narrative told by the woman), while the voice of the woman grows steadily more taciturn. The reader of *Faces in the Crowd*, however, is given the parallel stories of the woman and Owen not in separate files but as arranged in short fragments, juxtaposed, told sometimes in the voice of the woman, sometimes by Owen, and sometimes from a position ascribed to neither of the protagonists, intimating a narrator on an extradiegetic level as well. As Pape observes, the fragmented form adds to the sense of mobility permeating the novel: to read it entails jumping from scene to scene, from one city to another, and even one country to another, let alone constantly leaping between the different narrators and time-frames (2015: 173). In highlighting oscillation and constant movement thematically as well as aesthetically, *Faces in the Crowd* exemplifies key features of literatures without a fixed abode in Ette's sense, and it can be read with Bourriaud as well, since he pays attention to the ways that aesthetic forms respond to changes of living conditions brought about by globalization, suggesting that they veer towards fragmentation, non-permanence, circuits, and wandering (2010: 53, 94; cf. Licata 2019).

Commenting on the fragmented form of Luiselli's novel and on the subway as a key image, Pape proposes that singular textual fragments could be likened to separate subway stations, united by the transport network which would then represent the novel as a whole (2015: 174). The material space of the subway and its particular spatial features are thus linked to the spatial form of the text, encouraging the reader to abandon a linear way of reading in favor of multiple trajectories (192-93). Focusing on subway movement in modernist poetry as exemplified by Hart Crane's 'The Tunnel' (1927), Stalter-Pace has similarly pointed to the fragmented experience of riding the subway and argues that the subway is used metaphorically by Crane and other modernist poets as a structure holding

fragments together ‘without imposing a false coherence’ (2013: 81). A ‘textual infrastructure’ (20), the subway functions as a model for the relationship between part and whole, allowing for connection as well as disruption. In *Faces in the Crowd*, I argue, the subway line, or the line as represented by a subway map, mediates the movement of the story (apart from being a spatial anchor point in the example of the subway Line 1 discussed above). The importance of the line is insisted on by the narrator, who stresses in one of many metaliterary comments that one should ‘follow the line of a story [...] Never stray from the line’ (Luiselli 2013: 79). Despite being constructed out of often very brief segments, with constant interruptions and shifts of perspective, the different stories of *Faces in the Crowd*—about the woman in New York and later in Mexico City, about Owen in New York and later in Philadelphia—are clearly on their way forward, resulting eventually in narrative and diegetic convergence, since boundaries of time, space and identity collapse in the last pages of the novel.

The formal response to subway space in Luiselli’s novel can be discussed, moreover, as diverging from a modernist response such as Pound’s ‘In a Station of the Metro.’ Commenting on the textual space of Pound’s poem, Thacker suggests that the uneasiness coming from the modern experience of urban space is replicated in the poem’s fragmentation of people (reduced to faces) and the atomization and spatial arrangement of the text (unexpected spacing between words and punctuation marks) (2009: 101-02). Fragmented and separated yet insisting on connection and forward movement through parallel lines, Luiselli’s subway is rather a space of recognition and connection than of modernist anomie, and the interaction of material subway space with textual form is expressed not only in the idea of parallel tracks, but also in the interplay of verticality and horizontality characteristic of subway space. Commenting on this several times throughout the novel, the self-reflective narrator remains undecided: ‘A horizontal novel, told vertically’ (Luiselli 2013: 61) is turned into ‘a vertical novel told horizontally. A story that has to be seen from below, like Manhattan from the subway’ (123), to be followed by yet another change of mind: ‘Or a horizontal novel, told vertically. A horizontal vertigo’ (127).

The dual directionality of subway space, presuming vertical as well as horizontal movement, is one of the main attractions of the material space of the subway informing Luiselli’s novel. Stalter-Pace points to a shortcoming in previous cultural analysis on the subway due to its focus ‘on ascent and descent at the expense of other forms of movement’ (2013: 6). In other words, the subway as a vertical structure has been foregrounded more than its horizontality, and the subway has been addressed metaphorically, connected to literary tradition and its long line of descent narratives, more than as a historically grounded space. *Faces in the Crowd*, I suggest, expresses an ambition to keep the double spatiality of the subway at play by not choosing one over the other but rather oscillating between them; making the subway a haunted, yet an everyday space, spatially located as well as built from literary representations of such space, both horizontal and vertical, material as well as metaphorical.

The double dimension of vertical and horizontal implied in subway infrastructure mediates yet another notable aspect of a spatial aesthetics in the novel. The narrator’s assertion that the story ‘has to be seen from below, like Manhattan from the subway’ (Luiselli 2013: 123) in fact echoes a comment that the biographical Gilberto Owen made

in a letter from Harlem (Luiselli 2015: 331-43). The phrase from Owen's letter is represented in the novel as a note that the woman makes during her reading on Owen in New York. Owen states that 'New York has to be seen from the viewpoint of the subway. The flat horizontal perspective vanishes in there. A bulky landscape begins, with the double depth, or what they call the fourth dimension, of time' (Luiselli 2013: 37). In the woman's subsequent story on Owen's life however, told by Owen himself as a first-person narrator, Luiselli attributes this idea of subway perspective to Iselin, a female prostitute with whom Owen keeps company: 'Manhattan has to be seen from the subway, she said [...] The people who see it from above, from the Woolworth Building, don't see anything, they live in a mock-up of a city' (123). Piecing together the fragments expressed from different perspectives, the reader then gets the impression that the idea that the city should be seen from below or from the underground originates in Iselin, is elaborated by Owen and picked up by the woman to be part of a meta-reflective comment on the story told by the extradiegetic narrator. Rather than focusing on origins however, the novel insists on writing as circulation, repetition and variation; words and ideas are in transit like a commuter, a response perhaps to the subway as a space of repeated rides and collective mobility.

A conspicuous feature of the circulation, recycling, and reworking of already existing ideas and stories in Luiselli's novel is that these subway-infused operations are openly cast in terms of copying, theft, and forgery. Following Bourriaud, Luiselli's novel touches upon a radical aesthetics in the sense that writing and literary creation tend to be defined 'in terms borrowed from the world of criminal vagrancy' (2010: 98). Added to this, however, is a playfulness of tone: 'It wasn't my habit to take things that didn't belong to me,' claims the woman at one point, only to continue: 'Just sometimes, some things. Sometimes, quite a lot of things' (Luiselli 2013: 23). Possibly, it is not a coincidence that the woman's first encounter with her friend Moby is on the subway (18), since Moby is a counterfeiter, forging and selling copies of rare books that he produces on his own printing press, later intending to lure 'well-to-do intellectuals' (7) to buy them at unreasonable prices. The woman meeting a forger who is to inspire her own creative forgeries during a subway commute is only one of many innovative ways in which Luiselli activates the subway generally, and the New York City subway in particular, in her novel.

## Conclusion

Establishing an intimate relationship with modernist subway writing while also diverging from some of its features, Luiselli's novel makes use of a space that resonates in many previous writers and works. It could be argued that modernist experiences of urbanization and new technologies of transport and subsequent transformations of aesthetics anticipate, in some respects, contemporary subway writing, and that the treatment of the subway in Luiselli's novel functions as a repetition of previous descents into the subway as a haunted underworld or alienating rational space. I suggest, however, that the subway is more actively and self-reflectively posited as a metaliterary space in contemporary literature such as Luiselli's novel, linking writing to movement and to transfers in material as well as metaphorical ways. The subway seems to invite reflections, for instance, on the blurred



boundaries and changing functions of public and private spaces, on the effects of accelerated mobility on writers and writing practices, and on the extent to which contemporary writing is defined by the circulation, transfer, and translation of already existing texts (cf. e.g. Perloff 2010: xi). Situating writing and creative practices in the subway helps mediate those reflections, as illustrated by Luiselli's many versions and parallel lines. This is particularly striking, since the subway is often conceived as a *non-place*, or one of those uniform spatial structures that multiply around the globe as a consequence of global capitalism. Exemplified by various transport infrastructures, hotel chains, supermarkets, and wireless networks, non-places are built primarily for rational and efficient circulation, consumption, and communication of people, goods, and information. As outlined by anthropologist Marc Augé, the non-place (*non-lieu*) is negatively defined in contrast to what he calls 'anthropological place:' 'If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place' (2008: 63). Discussing how non-places deprive us of identity and meaning, Augé suggests that a person entering a non-place goes likewise into anonymity, since he or she is cast as a passenger or customer and is expected to act according to those roles: 'The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude' (83).

While enlightening in other ways, Augé's discussion on non-places does little to explain the attraction of such transitional spaces to contemporary artists and writers. Seen from the perspective of Lefebvre's spatial dialectics, Augé's description of non-places seems to emphasize primarily the rational and abstract dimensions of space captured in Lefebvre's 'conceived space.' That is, Augé considers non-places primarily in keeping with their conception by transport planners, and he observes its spatial practices accordingly, while understating their meaning-making potential. (It should be noted, however, that Augé has portrayed the Paris Métro as more similar to an 'anthropological place,' associating it with personal memories as well as with the communal history of Paris, see Augé 2002.) *Faces in the Crowd*, however, through its repeated imagined visits to the New York City subway, from entrances at particular stations, via platforms to cars and tunnels, explores the constant interplay of perceived, conceived, and lived in the production of subway space. That subway space is turned in the novel into a *place* in the sense that it is imbued with meaning, history, and serves as a site for vital encounters in the search for identity, inspiration, and community can be read as a playful tactics of resistance against the rationality and anonymity of the subway as conceived by city officials, architects, and transport planners (cf. Ziegler 2004), a tactics which, likewise, subverts any imagined distinctions between 'places' and 'non-places.' Something similar could be said about Luiselli's tendency to make the subway serve as a major inspiration for a spatial aesthetics. Not chiefly construed as a modernist space of anomie, subway space and its various functions in Luiselli's novel undermines—albeit on a symbolic, discursive level—the planned uses of the subway through means provided by the subway environment itself (cf. Ziegler 2004: 288). In appropriating the spatial features of the subway system—its parallel lines and junctions, its vertical and horizontal directions, its fragmenting rides—*Faces in the Crowd* makes use of the very means of material subway space to explore the aesthetic potential of rational, conceived space.

By foregrounding the aesthetic and metaliterary possibilities of subway space, Luiselli's subway corresponds more to the non-place as understood by Bourriaud, since he acknowledges various transit spaces as vital aesthetic spaces in contemporary culture, inspiring new creative practices focused on flows and circuits. Bourriaud suggests that the very neutralization of spaces reinforced by globalization makes possible a cohabitation and jostling together of cultural differences, and in this process of 'creolization' (2010: 73), Bourriaud recasts non-places as 'radicant' spaces, particularly apt to mediate what is at stake in contemporary aesthetic practices (74). Luiselli's *Faces in the Crowd*, I argue, animates the subway to become such a radicant space. Through its repeated commutes and literary encounters, the novel suggests that intellectual recognition can be found in the midst of a subway crowd, that it is possible 'to dwell in a movement of round trips between various spaces' (Bourriaud 2010: 57), and that an increasingly significant strand of present-day literature is formed in perpetual oscillation between spaces and places, cultures, and languages in search of appropriate aesthetic forms for interweaving differences without homogenizing or neutralizing them (Ette 2016: 208). *Faces in the Crowd* is a seminal example of what a transit aesthetics could look like, and thus offers some fruitful perspectives for further discussion on the possibilities and pitfalls of globalization for various art forms in the near future.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This reading of Luiselli's novel is based on the English translation, and translation is here considered a source of creative production, in line with recent critical discussion on translation as 'acts of making' (Walkowitz 2015: 26). Working closely with her translator, Luiselli made significant revisions in the English translation of *Los ingravidos*, resulting in some 'substantive differences in the content' (Raynor 2019: 150). Translation is a recurrent topic in the novel as well (cf. Booker 2017).

<sup>2</sup> I build here on Harvey's (2019: 30) suggested terminology for Lefebvre's spatial dialectic, which differs slightly from Nicholson-Smith's translation of the terms from *La Production de l'espace*.

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