

Geographies of Trust: Hitchhiking from Gateshead to Calais

Marijn Nieuwenhuis (Department of Geography, Durham University)

“Trust is the most joyous kind of bond with another living being. But isn't it true that whenever we enjoy being with someone, there is [both] a factor of risk there, and also a factor of trust, which gives our enjoyment an edge of rapture?” (Lingis 2004: x). Trust is akin to a permeable border, solid but skin-thin, that makes possible connections between Other and self, self and world. A hitchhiker exercises trust when surrendering to another but, as a prerequisite to a successful journey, also submits to indeterminacies and ambiguities of chance encounters. Trust is openness, but also an acceptance of risk. Whilst on the road, it is impossible to know who you will travel with next. Trust guides and draws lines and dots on the map. Trust determines the length of waiting times at petrol pumps; it regulates feelings of safety; and shapes geographic contours. Trust is an emotion that welcomes becoming. In contrast, a lack of trust impedes the friendship necessary to move the hitchhiker's body; provokes feelings of danger; and, inevitably, will hamper the fluency of lines on the map. Trust is the fundamental stuff of hitchhiking. But, what is trust? How does it look like, feel like, how is it evoked, and where is it located? Does it have a colour, a gender? Drawing insights from the phenomenological work of Alphonso Lingis and my own personal experiences being-on-the-road, this contribution analyses geographies, feelings and the sensing of trust associated with and experienced in hitchhiking.

Keywords:

Hitchhiking , Trust , Autoethnography

“Trust is the most joyous kind of bond with another living being. But isn't it true that whenever we enjoy being with someone, there is [both] a factor of risk there, and also a factor of trust, which gives our enjoyment an edge of rapture?” (Lingis 2004: x). Trust is akin to a permeable border, solid but skin-thin, that makes possible connections between Other and self, self and world. Drawing insights from the phenomenological work of Alphonso Lingis and my own personal experiences being-on-the-road, this auto-ethnography explores geographies, feelings and the sensing of trust associated with and experienced whilst hitchhiking.

What is trust? It is plural. It is possible to speak of institutional trust, trust in government and the practice and working of governance, trust in objects, colors and symbols — yellow gold, blue passports, green traffic lights — trust in technology, progress, trust in the expertise and the competency of your GP, trust in the intentions and character of your neighbors, trust in theory, trust love, trust yourself, trust that “everything will be alright”, trust in the good, trust that “the good” exists and, for some, maybe even a trust in a God among a great number of other trust relations between human and non-humans alike. Depending on context, time and space, such relations share different features, evoke different affects, but they all constitute important components in the workings of politics, the economy, science and other fields of knowledge that built and maintain the structures of everyday lives. When trust is taken away, its robustness dented by doubt, these once solid-looking building blocks, which themselves originated from it, start to crumble like Berlin Walls leaving behind decaying ruins, nostalgia and other expressions of collective memory.

In this paper, which covers the first part of a hitchhiking journey, I am not interested in building abstractions of trust or in the possibility to deduct general principles from its working, rather more what I want to explore is trust's geographic and

phenomenological manifestation.ⁱ More specifically, still, this paper is concerned with relationships of trust between strangers whose paths accidentally and momentarily intersect in the space and places of the motor road. I am the hitchhiker, the one whose possibility for movement is dependent on and determined by the other, the driver, who is willing to share with me their mobility. Our bodies meet, relate to and impress on one another through spontaneous and voluntary acts of kindness, opening-up to affecting and affective encounters, materialities and unspoken agreements, all collapsing into shared moments, long and short, which, it must be remembered, unfold in and are shaped by social historicity, imaginative geographies and relations of power, because, as Sara Ahmed (2000: 16) reminds us, the stranger “is produced through knowledge, rather than as a failure of knowledge.”

Trust, as an emotion and relation, has an innate ability to permeate and flood the borders of the “rational community” (Lingis 1994), which is the community that shares and is built around logos, but it can also make explicit the distance that always already exists between strangers. Upon his experiencing of me, as a stranger, the driver will find in me both a version of herself and an uncanny other. Trust confirms the distance between us, one that can never be bridged fully, but it also is the evidence of a possible conduit through which we can communicate our nakedness to each other. This channel of communication, which uncomfortably sits alongside the formal discourses of the world, makes possible what Alphonso Lingis (1994) describes, in his book that shares its beautiful name, as the “community of those who have nothing in common.”ⁱⁱ

Trust opens and closes, trust is a distance and its distances. The auto-ethnography, which, trust me, will follow shortly, describes and analyses the affect, emotion, feeling, atmosphere and mood of a road geography that is mapped by and experienced through relations of trust. Now, it is important to acknowledge that my experiencing of

the road, its texture, sounds, objects, smells, air, mood, dirt, light and, of course, its animals, cars and peoples, should not be taken as an attempt to reach some sort of universal sensibility. The account is, after all, a personal reflection on the mobility of my own white, male body. I decided to expose myself to trust's capriciousness and biases; others do not have that privilege. For them, trust is not a matter of choice, but a necessity, a means of last resort.

Mobility is never neutral. Highway 16 is a 725 kilometers-long road in Canadian British Columbia. It connects different indigenous communities across a vast and sparsely populated space. Failing and lacking public transportation combined with low car ownership means that for many Aboriginal women hitchhiking is the only means to get to work and school, to meet friends and access medical facilities. The historical rendering of hitchhiking as a morally "wrong" mode of mobility (especially for women) set in a postcolonial context, which systematically oppresses indigenous communities, resulted in a decades-long silence of the many Aboriginal women that either disappeared or felt victim to murder whilst being on this road. Their stories and lives only made visible with, through and after the disappearance in 2002 of the young Nicole Hoar, a white female woman who, according to local authorities, "did not fit the same profile" (McDiarmid 2019: 134). The event set in motion a geographic shift from hitherto politically anonymous "murders on Highway 16" to a postcolonial "Highway of Tears". Writing about the intersections of hitchhiking between race, class, gender and mobility, Morton (2016: 306) explains that "[a]long the Highway of Tears, violence defines boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, personhood and exception, colonizer and colonized."

My ethnographic experience inevitability is shaped by the historicity of my body (its gender, race, tongue, age and class) and the emotions and affect it evokes in

encounters with other bodies, including those of fear, apathy, surprise, disgust, excitement and empathy. Hitchhiking bodies encountered on the road are never equal, but instead layered, plural and contextual (e.g. McGuire 2017, Pazhoohi and Burriss 2016). This means that “affective registers have to be understood within the context of power geometries that shape our social world” (Tolia-Kelly 2006: 213). It should be obvious, but it is important to reiterate, that my white male body will express and instill trust differently than other bodies.

Trust, therefore, operates both backwards and forwards in time and space. It can propel certain bodies onwards to other and new places, moving temporalities outwards, but it also has the ability to arrest and cancel the movement of other bodies, fixing them to the ground, waiting, waiting for that fortunate moment to move on. Hitchhiking, to be sure, speaks to freedom, not as a universal mobility, but as a specific manifestation of trust delimited by historical relations of power, forces that are beyond my control but that propel my own body forward while arresting others’.

Despite its relevance in today’s context, wherein the concept of strangeness and distrust are synonymous in the making (and hurting) of others, there is not really a lot of discussion in the discipline of geography about the space and place of trust. In those rare occasions when trust is invoked, placed centrally as a subject of significance, it seems often left without a space or place of its own. Relegated and made subordinate to a range of other concepts, affects and spatial processes, including “organization”, “identity”, “security”, “social capital” among others. Instead, I ask the simple question: *where* can we find trust? Where is it located? What kind of spaces does it produce? What I want to learn is what a geography of trust looks like and, importantly, feels like.

I do not conceptualize trust as a transaction or an agreement, although these issues inescapably are a part of the practice of trusting, but here I am more interested in the ways that trust, as well as the feelings, moods, emotions and the affect that it evokes, manifest and operate geographically. These qualities are diverse, fluid and ambiguous, depending on how, when, where and through whom trust is called into being, experienced and shaped. Moral philosophers, some of whom have described trust as an “emotional attitude” (Lahno 2001) or an “attitude of optimism” (Jones 1996), seem to be in agreement that trust shares certain interpersonal and intentional dimensions that distinguish it from similar and associated phenomena (such as loyalty, friendship, reliance and attachment). It acts on the basis of a capacity to evoke, which makes it a category accessible only through emotional and affective mediation, but it also anticipates a specific set of associated feelings, including love comfort, gratitude, but also resentment, risk, betrayal and sacrifice. Trust is a promise, and a leap of faith in truth, with which it shares a complicated relationship. It enjoys a high level of relationality in its expression of courage and a willingness to accept vulnerability. Trust appears fragile and strong at the same time. It connects bodies (not only human), but it also interweaves emotions, moods and affects.

Trust can work blindly, it can also blind you, it requires cultivation, nurturing but sometimes it comes naturally, yet, despite its diversity, trust seems to possess a common potentiality to suspend regular and habitual ways of feeling. Trust as an exposure towards the other is the first step towards the creation of a “community of those who have nothing in common” (Lingis 1994). It *welcomes-in* an affectivity, a willingness to encounter and feel affected, which brings with it a sense of danger and risk that in a similar manner can be found in attitudes or moments of courage. When trust is at play, invested in, the stakes are raised.

Once one determines to trust someone, there is simply a calm that enters one's soul; there is excitement and exhilaration. Trust is the most joyous kind of bond with another living being. But isn't it true that whenever we enjoy being with someone, there is a factor of risk there, and also a factor of trust, which gives our enjoyment an edge of rupture? (Lingis 2000a: x).

By working auto-ethnographically, my objective is to explore the idea that trust is not exclusively an interpersonal relationship, but that it also has, embodies and produces specific geographies. My attempt and approach to spatialize the *affectivity of trust*, if I must choose a category of classification for the term, follows an emerging and evolving trend within human geography that sets out to (re)materialize the spaces and places of emotion, affect and atmosphere (see also Anderson 2004, 2009; Lingis 1998, 2000a, 2000b). I follow such approaches, centered around a meshing of matter with sensory experience, by means of surrendering to chance encounters with strangers and affective materialities on the motor road. This is the first part of a hitchhiking journey from Gateshead to Poznan, which, for reasons I will explain in yet to be written work, ended in Dortmund (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: Planned route from Gateshead to Dortmund (screenshot taken by author, using google maps)

FIGURE 2: Sunday morning in an empty petrol station opposite to the Angel of the North in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (photograph taken by author)

FIGURE 3: Angel of the North (photograph taken by author)

7:55 AM, a rare warm Sunday morning in August, running middle-aged couples were the only pedestrians in sight (Figure 2 and 3). A single bird chirps while a sleepy Northern town wakes up under the watchful gaze of a Northern Angel.

An angel with wings so large that they embrace the North from both sides. There are few places more inspiring to start a journey. It is early, earlier than I can remember waking up on a Sunday morning. I am anxious, but ready, or at least I feel ready. It was difficult falling asleep last night. I was worried, nervous that I would not be able to catch a lift, not be able to get out of England. It has been over a decade since I last hitchhiked. It was not particularly long. “Thumbing” from Paris to Rotterdam, or was it the other way around? I no longer remember the details, but it took me a full day and night, that I can remember. What I can recall more vividly are nightly petrol stations, barbed wire fences, sounds, smells, faces, stories and the extensive range of emotions I felt: exhaustion, frustration, fear, but also hope, laughter and surprise. I always believed, no, I trusted, that everything would turn out to be alright. Trust operates differently than belief. Although it “is as compelling as belief”, trust is “not produced by knowledge. In trust one adheres to something one sees only partially or unclearly or understands only vaguely or ambiguously” (Lingis 2003: 179).

This time, however, I am almost 15 years older. I finally have money, a job with stability, less time and a specific destination, a hotel reservation and an academic conference meeting that I have to get to on a more or less set day. There is more I could have done, should have perhaps, to prepare myself for this trip from the northeast of England to the west of Poland. I should have left a day earlier, maybe even two, but I did not, thinking that 48 hours and a bit would be enough time for me to traverse the 1,700 kilometers. I prepared my cardboard the day before. “South”, on one side, “France”, on the other (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: Hitchhiking cardboards (photograph taken by author)

I might not use them, but I feel more confident with them. They act as “shields” against the sun, and they make my body feel less exposed. I use them as extensions of my thumbing body, letting people know in which direction I want it to move. They are attempts to create encounters, allowing me to induce glimpses of trust expressed in single-worded languages written on brown Aldi cardboards in big, bold black letters: “Duitsland”, “France,” “Belgique” or simply “South”. Open artwork invitations to those who are willing to read my body and form an enabling part of its movement’s machinery. I take two black markers with me and two more stripped cardboards (large enough for the names of four different locations or directions). When hitchhiking, I also always carry a pen to write and, if need be, to strike.

Before I leave, I have a quick look at the weather forecast in continental Europe. It will be warm, at least 30 degrees. I take my partner’s black baseball cap with me, a large bottle of water, a few sandwiches, a comfortable trouser and a casual blazer. A blazer, because, regardless of the state of the weather, clothes are one of a series of important “hitchhiking techniques” to instill trust (McGuire 2017). I learned this from my previous experiences, but a number of drivers on this journey confirmed the validity of this insiders’ wisdom. Looking “scruffy” does not get you far, one driver explains to me. You look “trustworthy”, his partner agrees, as she look at me: “That’s why we took you on board.” Of course, trust is embodied in more than one way, but what you wear seems especially important when drivers only have a split second to decide on the trustworthiness of a stranger. “The hitchhikers strive to appear trustworthy, and the drivers make their decisions” (McGuire 2017: 162).

Trust is engraved in a face. Trust has a face. Emotions and intuitions unfold in the “second brain”, or what scientists call the “enteric nervous system (ENS)”, which is located in the gut. A few have argued that there is an “actual neurobiological basis...

[to] the popular statement that somebody has made a decision based on gut feeling” (Mayer 2011: 10). Other scientists, this time from the politics discipline, remark that elections are increasingly decided by “gut feelings.” Politicians appear taking pride in trusting and acting on their gut, “saying it as it is”. Maybe that is why times are so shit. The blazer was despite the heat a good decision.

A friendly Moroccan-Flemish driver with an accent too soft and sweet for my Dutch ears smirks when I ask him if he thinks “Moroccans” stand a chance to get anywhere hitchhiking. The man, proud father of two successful daughters, had hitchhiked himself more than half a lifetime ago in Morocco. “People are suspicious of immigrants here.” The night before, somewhere between Dover and Calais in a dark and emptied parking lot, flicking through the news on my phone and seeing pictures of Johnson flirt with Trump at the G7 of “responsible” states, I remember thinking that “here” is both a concrete place and a diagnosis of a historical condition. Trust between strangers in an atmosphere of fear works though different bodies differently. Its spatial ontology shaped by dichotomous inside/ outside borders, policed by men with silly haircuts playing golf on other planets, their affects felt and played out in the microcosms of everyday life by “ordinary” people. The only way to challenge and redraw the border of “here” is to trust not more but different bodies.

Further on, at the Dutch-German border, I ask a middle aged woman for a lift at an empty petrol station. She hesitates and answers in German with an air of guilt in her voice. “I have never taken a stranger in my car, how do if I know if I can trust you”? I do not know how to respond and start to stumble over my words.

Is it right to expect the other, who is compelled to start from a position of distrust, to persuade us of their innocence? “Do not trust strangers” ranks high among the earliest

lessons of my own life. A stranger is always already guilty, even though those closest to us have the capacity to hurt us more. Is trust something that can be won, is it something that should be “earned”?

“I, I, I work at a university and this is part of my research... never mind, I don’t want to cause you any trouble.” My talent for false politeness, acquired over a long period living in England, gradually takes control over my limbs and movement. I withdraw my thumb, my body retreats, a border ascends... the world suddenly feels a bit smaller. Her husband, tall, white and skinny, intervenes on a deliberate masculine tone, acting as if trust was a vulnerability, a cavity that needed to be secured, walled off. “We are not heading in your direction, we are on our way down south. Good luck.” A sigh of relief escapes from her and my mouth. “Ooof, that was close.”

Trust feels a bit like diving from a high platform, a risky endeavor, a lot to lose, but maybe also a lot to win. Trust is instinctive, emotional, relational, open and opening, and in tension with, and maybe even juxtaposed to the “safe” walls of fear. Can we know whom to trust? Should trust really be an issue of knowing, anyway? Can we talk still about “trust”, as a thing, an emotion, an instinct even, if the first reaction to its calling is an expectation to prove good intentions, innocence and commonality?

Going back, just very shortly, to my Northern Angel, my first driver arrives within an hour. He, white and working class, is a campaigner of the Brexit Party, Nigel Farage’s then still new political faction that emerged at the time of Britain’s last and final round of European elections. He is candid and unreserved in his politics. It is easy to understand why he thinks Brexit would be a good thing for the North East. It is among the most impoverished regions of England and suffers from inequalities unknown in other parts of Western Europe. Many of his concerns stem from the region’s loss of

fisheries. According to him, and I neither know nor judge the validity of his opinion, large and commercial Dutch and German ships have robbed thousands of English fishers from their jobs. The story reminds me of the image of the British Prime Minister holding a kipper in a plastic bag on stage during the Tory leadership election. Still an outsider, I never quite understood why the Conservative Party is more trusted than its Labour rival is. As I said, I think I understand my driver's concerns but I also wonder about the extent in which I, as a guest in his private space, can intervene when he moves the discussion to "Christian values" and the "threat" of "Islamisation". "Well," I start, both "the mayors of London and my birthplace Rotterdam are Muslim and they seem to be doing an okay job?" My driver disagrees and answers with a pause before a slow but steady withdrawal, as if retreating his toes from the cold water in a pool. More silence follows. "A typical English response", a self-defined "cosmopolitan bourgeois couple" later teaches me in a nightly ride from Luton to a (too) busy slip road in London. I feel I belong to neither but I commit and give my trust to both of them in an attempt to move my body forwards. On previous travels, I remember trusting others with my body asleep (always with a pen in my hand).

Getting a ride from the Toddington Service Station on the A1 was especially hard. I used my cardboard shields, as I previously had done before in other service stations in Gateshead, Wetherby, Milton Keynes and Leicester, but they no longer seemed to work here. Part of the problem stems from the infrastructural layout of the station. A confusing composition of arrows forces cars to hesitate, reverse and drive around in all sorts of directions. Choosing a strategic position to produce a long enough encounter to build trust proves a difficult undertaking. After two hours of trying, using different texts ("East", "South" and "Dover"), I decide to introduce myself in a more vocal manner in the adjacent parking lot. With my irredeemable Dutch accent, I start

approaching people directly in-between the cars: “Are you heading towards Maidstone?”, “Going to Dover perhaps?” “Canterbury?” Some people respond with a “no, thank you”. Others, instead, use their hands or other limbs to express the wariness I evoke. Some are rude, many apologetic, a few awkward, one or two aggressive.

A body’s shape and contours are the way that it is held in a space that excludes other bodies and us; a body’s colors are opaque expanses behind which the life-processes are hidden. It is through its feelings, drawing our eyes into their fields of force, that a body emerges out of its self-contained closure and becomes visible. Through the windshield the hitchhiker sees the distrust of the driver of the car (Lingis, 2000b: 17).

I search for their eyes, windows to something that we share in common, but they avoid mine. After two hours of trying to convince that I too am trustworthy, the earlier introduced “bourgeois couple” takes mercy on me. I remove a few papers — no doubt, the same sort I read — and a couple of empty cans so that I can inhabit the private space of their car’s backseat. Frustrated with the long wait at the otherwise busy service station, I cannot help but vent a sense of frustration with Luton. I recall an infographic (Figure 5) I came across a while ago on “hitchwiki”, a website dedicated to hitchhikers, which “statistically” “proved” that Northerners, especially those from the North East, are more likely to pick up hitchhikers.ⁱⁱⁱ It is an entertaining idea, but is it true, fair even, to generalize geographies of trust? Probably not, but why does hitchhiking in certain places appear easier for my body than in others? Is trust a political, an economic, an historical, or, maybe, a cultural attitude, which is felt differently in place and time?

FIGURE 5: "Hitchhiking average waiting times in Europe by regions" (pending courtesy: Abel Sulyok)

My next driver, a witty Durham-trained musicologist, picks me up from a dangerous slip road in East London. He seems to have few problems confiding an absolutist sense of trust in me. He is a catholic and, somewhat abruptly, in a cathartic mood admits: "I never said this to anyone, but I think I might have a fifth child with a woman I met only about a year ago. I never told anyone this." I look up and, rather meaninglessly, reassure him that I will not tell anyone. How could I? I know neither his friends nor his enemies. Sometimes, we trust strangers with greater ease than those closest to us.

FIGURE 6: A deserted parking lot in the outskirts of Rainham, Essex (photograph taken by author)

Its 10:45 PM, and I find myself in a dimly lit parking lot in.... "Okay Google, where am I?" Rainham, at Junction 4-5 of the M2 (Figure 6). I see no reason to distrust Google. After all, it is reassuring to know that I can trust my phone to know where I am. Google also appears interested in my opinion about the facilities of a nearby Burger King. My trust is worth four stars. I am tired, but also thirsty. I buy a drink, a healthy one, because the wrapping is green. I go outside, it is getting darker still. Rats are scurrying and squeaking nearby, bodies and movement attuned and attracted to the fading light and the day's waning sounds. Food hygiene inspectors must only visit the service station when they are away. Just like the rats, I too trust darkness more than light. I walk, well I trust my feet, because my eyes cannot see the road, towards the only nearby hotel, a Travel Lodge. "Sorry, we are fully booked." I forgot that it is bank holiday, today. "Shit." Now what? I return to the service station, and approach one of the only vehicles

left, a van, left with only one person inside. A woman, white, hipster, scared. I knock on her car window. She looks terrified, I open my mouth, and an unfinished sentence comes out. Her mouth is open as well, but with an expression of shock and fear. She drives off in a rush. Feeling ashamed and guilty, I retreat and sit down on a nearby metal bench.

12:20 AM. What to do now? Sleeping is not an option; I don't trust empty service stations with my body. I see a police car, the people inside see me. Trust is central to policing, but numbers around the Western world show that trust in the police is fading, especially, of course, among bodies of color. A few hours later, another car pulls up and a trustful-looking young man with ginger hair and fair white skin walks out. I must be almost twice his age and weight. I ask him if he is heading to Dover. He smiles, nods and agrees to drive me there, even offering to buy me a cup of coffee. Ben might have been the most candidly trusting person I meet today. He takes me on an hour-long ride all the way to the port of Dover, and it will take him the exact same amount of time to travel back home. It is past 2 AM, when we finally arrive. Ben has two jobs. He comes from a working class family, and knows what it is like growing up and living within modest means. Solidarity is perhaps trust's closest bedfellow. The two are similar but not the same. Warning about "teachings of distrust", the geographer Kropotkin (1914/ 2011: 290) hinted that mutual aid at its base should start with a different practice of trust.

In trust one adheres to something one sees only partially or unclearly or understands only vaguely or ambiguously. One attaches to someone whose words or whose movement one does not understand, whose reasons or motives one does not see... [O]ne feels trust, like a river released from a lock, swelling one's mind and launching one on the way. (Lingis, 2004: 65).

FIGURE 7: Seaside of Devon, fox in background (photograph taken by author)

3 AM. A lonely fox deems it safe enough to venture into the streets of Dover (Figure 7). I walk up and down the port, looking for a place to spend the night. Everything is fully booked and it is too cold to sleep on the iron benches. The sea breeze winds through my thin, cotton blazer, giving me shivers. I start to look out for someone to take me across on a ferry to Calais, but a security guard tells me off politely because I stand on 400-year old private land. The port, since 1606 owned by the Dover Harbor Board, has its own private police force which, according to its website (<https://www.doverport.co.uk/about/police>), does “not have a ‘police area,’” although the movement it polices take place at the territorial intersection of EU Europe and Britain. Confused, I move back four meters to lean against a plastic road barrier standing on the public road.

Right at this moment, an Iraqi man wearing only an improvised life vest made of plastic bottles will try to swim across the channel to the UK. Later that morning, I will read that he was forced to take on this journey “after failing to successfully obtain asylum in Germany” (Info Migrant 2019). His body will be found dead in just a few hours off the Belgium coast. More than 970 people, including at least 80 children, have crossed the Channel in small boats this year (2019), with more than 200 in August (BBC 2019). “England” seems so close from the other side. From Calais, Ous, an Iraqi Kurdish man, explains, “you can see Dover. I was here [on this side of the channel] so much. I come here and think about that. How can I cross this path?” (Ous in Huffington Post 2019).

Post-Brexit Europe from this side feels now further away than ever. Trucks drive up and down the A20: Bulgarian, Polish, Hungarian and Romanian number plates, a few

drunken student voices from nearby streets fade into the night, as I, a privileged knowledge migrant, look for a way to find a bridge off this island. “France” my shield says. A large truck from a Danish logistics company pulls over. Finally. As I step into the truck, lifting up my left foot for the last time from Britain’s soil, a smiling young Romanian man with plastic flip-flops and bright shorts welcomes me into another Europe, crossing the water that separates trust (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8: View of Devon from the ferry (photograph taken by author)

Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank colleagues and friends at the Geography Departments of Cambridge and Durham University for their comments and questions on earlier drafts of this paper. My thanks goes to Professor Alphonso Lingis for exchanging messages and memories, and to fellow hitchhiker Ábel Sulyok for allowing me to republish his map here. I am most grateful for the trust, generosity and care of the kind people that made this journey possible.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2000) *Strange Others: Embodied Others in Post-coloniality*. London: Routledge.
- Anderson, B. (2004) Time-stilled space-slowed: how boredom matters." *Geoforum* 35(6), pp. 739-754.
- Anderson, B. (2009) "Affective atmospheres," *Emotion, Space and Society* 2, pp. 77–81.
- BBC (2019) "Channel migrants: Man 'drowns trying to swim to UK," *BBC News*. Available from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-49473160> [15 September 2019].
- Huffington Post (2019) "Calais: Life After the 'Jungle'," *Huffington Post UK*. Available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzFi0SP8tdo> [20 October 2019].
- Info Migrant (2019) "Migrant drowned trying to swim to UK," *Info Migrant*, written by Sertan Sanderson. Available from <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/19102/migrant-drowned-trying-to-swim-to-uk> [19 November 2019].
- Kropotkin, P.A. (1914/ 2011) *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. London: Heinemann.
- Lahno, B. (2001) "On the Emotional Character of Trust," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 4(2), pp. 171-189.
- Lingis, A. (1994) *The Community of Those Who have Nothing in Common*. Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press.
- Lingis, A. (1998) *The Imperative*. Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press.

- Lingis, A. (2000a) *Trust*. London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lingis, A. (2000b) *Dangerous Emotions*. London: University of California Press.
- Lingis, A. (2003) "Chapter 14: Trust" (pp. 175-185) in A. E. Hooke and W. W. Fuchs (eds.) *Encounters with Alphonso Lingis*. Oxford: Lexington Books.
- Lingis, A. (2012) "Crossings: A Conversation with Alphonso Lingis," *Mosaic* 45(5), pp. 1-19.
- Jones, K. (1996) "Trust as an Affective Attitude," *Ethics* 107(1), pp. 4-25.
- Mayer, E.A. (2011) "Gut feelings: the emerging biology of gut–brain communication," *Nat Rev Neurosci.* 12(8), pp. 1-30.
- McDiarmid, J. (2019) *Highway of tears: A true story of racism, indifference, and the pursuit of justice for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls*. London: Atria Books.
- McGuire, A. (2017) *Hitchhiking in an Age of Suspicion: Work Techniques and Personal Experience Narratives of Hitchhiking in Newfoundland and Cape Breton*. MA thesis, the Department of Folklore Memorial, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Newfoundland. St. John's: University of Newfoundland.
- Morton, K. (2016) "Hitchhiking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Billboards on the Highway of Tears," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 41 (3), pp. 299-326.
- Pazhoohi, F., and R. P. Burriss (2016) "Hijab and "hitchhiking": A field study," *Evolutionary Psychological Science* 2(1), pp. 32-37.

Tolia-Kelly, D.P. (2006) "Affect – an ethnocentric encounter? Exploring the 'universalist' imperative of emotional/affectual geographies," *Area* 38(2), pp. 213-217.

Marijn Nieuwenhuis (he, him, his) is a Human Geographer at Durham University, Durham, DH1 3LE. Email: marijn.d.nieuwenhuis@durham.ac.uk. His work is driven by a curiosity in phenomenology, conceptual art, disregarded things and elemental experiments. He has written on holes, weather, air, breathing, skin, dust and sand. He discusses these “things” in the context of a variety of different geographies (China, the UK, and wherever else he may).

Notes

ⁱ I hope I will be able to write and publish the second part of this paper at a later stage. It will comprise an account of the second leg of the journey overlaid with segments of a conversation with one of the drivers.

ⁱⁱ “The other community is not simply absorbed into the rational community it recurs, it troubles the rational community, as its double or its shadow... The other community forms when one recognises, in the face of the other, an imperative... One enters into community not by affirming oneself and one's forces but by exposing oneself to expenditure at a loss, to sacrifice.” (Lingis 1994: 10, 12).

ⁱⁱⁱ The website can be found at <https://hitchwiki.org/>