

## Special Issue: Elsewhere

Announcement published by Aaron Aquilina on Thursday, November 19, 2015

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

November 17, 2015 to February 29, 2016

Location:

Malta

Subject Fields:

Digital Humanities, Film and Film History, Literature, Philosophy, Sexuality Studies

### **E L S E W H E R E**

The wonder opened up elsewhere. The things we don't do.[\[1\]](#)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth[\[2\]](#)

Thanks to consciousness, am I not at all times elsewhere from where

I am, always master of the other and capable of something else?

Yes, this is true, but this is also our sorrow.[\[3\]](#)

*Find a map and spread it out on your desk. Close your eyes and pick a random spot. Open your eyes and find out whether the place you picked is any better than where you are now. The chances are it isn't, and yet, to think of elsewhere often comes with the unspoken addendum, 'anywhere but here'.*

*And of course, elsewhere is so appealing because of the implicit promise that, elsewhere, there must be something else. To want to leave here is to ask: Is this all there is? Is there nothing else? But this desire or demand can be easily disappointed, either because elsewhere is always inaccessible, or because (and this is not necessarily different), once we are elsewhere, it becomes here.*

\*\*\*\*

Citation: Aaron Aquilina. *Special Issue: Elsewhere*. H-Announce. 05-27-2022.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/97014/special-issue-elsewhere>

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

Though often associated with suspended desire, elsewhere can also, contrarily, be an undesirable possibility kept at bay on purpose, if not an impending peril threatening to defamiliarise the here and now. Our fears and anxieties of what is not (yet) here, however, can become familiar to the extent that they are no less real than what is here already. This is not always a thing of terror. If elsewhere can be the unmappable dreamscape for fantasy and whimsy, the forever-delayed escape, elsewhere can also be a very real and habitable place. If we combine temporal and spatial coordinates, we might find ourselves thinking of someone, somewhere—‘how can the world contain so many lives?’ Jeffrey Eugenides asks. It is rather extraordinary to consider, for a minute, how life necessarily entails simultaneous, parallel, but entirely separate existences, to the point of mutual affirmation. And for each here, there is at least one elsewhere—and all this in one single world.

Elsewhere can be both a testimony to potential and possibility, as well as to the disappointment that there is nothing else. Because elsewhere should, by definition, be other than what is there, its already precarious existence depends entirely on the binary formula of which it is part. The term ‘elsewhere’ must, a priori, be evasive. Otherwise, why would we be interested in it in the first place? And what can be more appealing than elsewhere and otherwise? Conversely, here is definite and definitive. Where else can we be but here? If we were to follow the vague direction of elsewhere, we would never be able to get there. Where is elsewhere? Nowhere, or at least, nowhere in particular.

And so elsewhere opens up the possibility of possibilities, while itself being impossible. What is this impossible heterotopia, and what are its possibilities?

It can be Thomas More’s *Utopia*, or it could be George Orwell’s or Margaret Atwood’s dystopias. But must one only imagine elsewhere? To return to maps, elsewhere is Africa, what was to Marlow’s imagination the ‘biggest, the most blank’ of blank spaces, ready to be made here. Or perhaps elsewhere is the orient as presented in Forster, where ‘India’s a muddle’. Novels like *Things Fall Apart* may evidence the violence of transposing elsewhere. The reality of elsewhere, then, seems also to place an ethical onus on both the notion of elsewhere. And what happens when people from elsewhere come here, as with immigration? Is not their anxiety of displacement simultaneously ours as well? Can elsewhere be demarcated by political borders? If not, is travel and travel-writing even possible, in going from here to here? Elsewhere is another culture. The vagabond, the wanderer, the peripatetic, itinerant, nomadic—how do these figures problematise ideals of settling down into a here and now?

Elsewhere is another now in another time. Can biography, history, or archaeology grasp the elsewhere, and how do they do it? It is the future, too, one we so often meet in fiction, what we realise is not yet present. But is fiction the elsewhere of what is real, or is it its essence? Where exactly are the other worlds presented in science fiction and fantasy, and are they further from the other worlds of Jane Austen or Franz Kafka? What is a parallel universe, and is fiction here, between the covers of this book? Where else?

How far can we stretch the notion of elsewhere? How far does elsewhere extend? And conversely, how local, inward and internalised can elsewhere be? Elsewhere is another feeling. Perhaps all one needs to do is to think otherwise than being. Who is otherwise? Is it the other gender, the other race, the other religion, the other demographic? Elsewhere sometimes speaks back, its discourse being reverse. Is elsewhere only what is different to the same, or am I also, biologically, psychologically,

temporally, philosophically, other to myself? Arguably, you can be elsewhere right here, just a pill away, from the elsewhere of illness to the here of well-being, or from boredom to ecstasy... and back. So how close is elsewhere, really?

In today's world, elsewhere can be very close indeed, as far as the closest cinema. How does film, in all its manifestations from documentary to detective drama, represent other places, other scenarios? Elsewhere can be even closer, as the clicking shutter of a camera. Is photography a representation of elsewhere, or itself? Elsewhere can be at your hands right now: is going to a different website going elsewhere? What about video games? Is the person you are chatting with online elsewhere, just as you are? With GoogleMaps™ perhaps just one click away, what stops us from going to Brazil or Australia?

And so, having come back to maps, we realise how elsewhere can sometimes encourage paralysis, simulate and situate inertia, so that, having gone everywhere, one has gone nowhere.

In light of the above, the editors of *antae* welcome submissions on or around the topic of elsewhere. The authorial guidelines are available on [www.antaejournal.com](http://www.antaejournal.com), and the deadline for submissions to [antaejournal@gmail.com](mailto:antaejournal@gmail.com) is the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 2016. Issues and topics relevant to this publication include, but are not limited to:

- Thinking Elsewhere: Alterity, Ethics, Existentialism, Phenomenology, Ontology and Ontologies
- Elsewhere on drugs
- Elsewhere in Postcolonial Studies
- Writing Time Elsewhere: Biography, History, Archaeology, determinism and fatalism, death
- Elsewhere and International Politics, migration, borders and displacement
- Writing Space Elsewhere: Travel Writing, Science Fiction, Fantasy, heterotopias, the exotic
- Digital Elsewhere: the other spaces of photography, the internet, gaming, technology
- Identities elsewhere: minorities, marginalisation, cultures, myself, friendship
- Elsewhere in Film Studies
- Elsewhere and love, among other feelings
- Quantum elsewhere: parallel universes, exoplanets, terraforming, fictions of space

---

[1] Andres Neuman, 'The Things We Don't Do', *The Paris Review* (Summer 2015), 207-208 (p.208).

[2] See 'The Road Not Taken', in Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken and Other Poems* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993).

[3] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 134.

Contact Info:

Aaron Aquilina, 'Antae' General Editor

Contact Email:

[antaejournal@gmail.com](mailto:antaejournal@gmail.com)

URL:

<http://www.antaejournal.com>