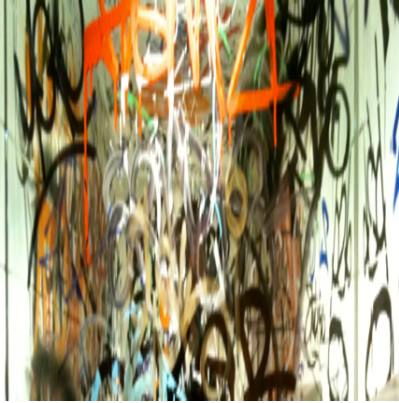




No way logo

Description

It seems that large numbers of youths raided shops for branded sportswear (Adidas, Nike) and electrical goods in the disturbances of 7-9 August in England ([Reuters](#), [Telegraph](#)). If any of them missed the lesson that crime really doesn't pay, the kids at least discovered that certain crimes don't scale up.

Antisocial behaviour and gang riots on the scale presented, abetted in no small part by rapid communications networks, with the less expert joining in, and under the gaze of CCTV and global media ([ABC News](#)), increases the chances of individuals being identified, and provides tangible targets



There are also lessons from the riots about

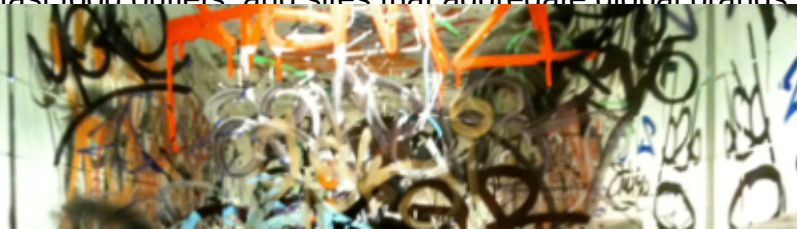
scale, space and global brands.

That the high street can be turned into a no-go zone by looting and arson provides a simple example of the operations of what anthropologist Marc Augé terms 'non-place'.

For Augé, 'The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place,' as if we are always on the precipice of anarchy.

Non-place has emerged as an obvious category to account for environments that are unhomely, alienating, graffitied, derelict, blighted, menacing and generally trashed.

But for AugÃ© non-places are mainly those anonymous spaces on which global capital sustains itself, the kinds of branded spaces that you find everywhere to be the same: airport lounges, shopping malls, fast food outlets, and sites that aggregate global brands, such as most high streets now.

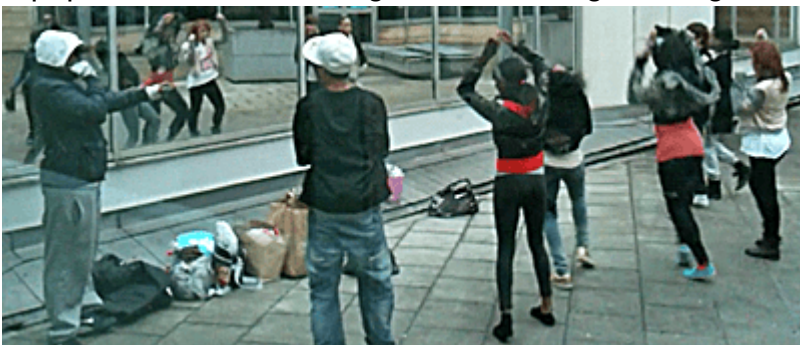


Non-places are also those overly-regulated,

policed, and menacingly forbidding, state-controlled spaces. Think of passport and security control zones at airports, public spaces under CCTV surveillance and a street lined by police in riot gear or with water cannons.

So the theatres in which the riots took place are non-places, spaces in which violence brings about a transformation from one category of non-place to another: the overly capitalised to the anarchic, free markets to the heavily state controlled, sites of global brands to tribal turf.

It seems that non-places also endure occupation from brand victims: slaves to global gangster chic. (See [Guardian article](#) by Rupert Neate et al.) The aspirational styles and cultures of the street, hip hop, rap, parkour, breakdancing, skateboarding, MTV, ghetto grammar: whatever their origins, and however branding.



According to a reading derived from AugÃ©

the common feature of all such non-places is the way they deal with signage (brands, logos, penalty notices, warnings, graffiti). According to AugÃ© non-places are conspicuously weighed down by signage, designed as if to accuse us: this is our brand, don't park here, have your passport ready, this is a quiet zone, this is our patch.

Non-places are those spaces over which the charge of trespass and violation hangs heavy through visible and invisible reproach and censure from whatever quarter. Brands, logos and tags exclude or admit people according to the rules of the tribe.

Non-place is a translation of the French term non-lieu, which is also a term in law: not proven. Not proven has long been an option in Scots law unavailable in the rest of the United Kingdom. In Scotland a judge may pronounce you innocent of a charge, but if the evidence is insufficient for the charge to stick may resort to the third category of not proven. Though the

effect may be the same as a pronouncement of innocence, technically the case can be re-opened by other means.

Non-place carries this sense of uncertainty. We are here under sufferance, and avoid any charge simply by dint of a technicality. Like those hapless youths arrested, charged and convicted for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, we are in non-places on someone else's terms, and ready to be apprehended.

In these respects non-place is the norm, and not altogether aberrant. It manifests itself in many different ways and sometimes through violent transition. We should be more surprised at anyone's claim that uncontested places are in some sense usual.

There's lots of interesting literature on branding, its appropriation, subversion and its complicity in the formation of communities and cities – not least the provocatively titled book by Naomi Klein, *No Logo*.

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Final [report](#) for our project **Orienting the Future: Design Strategies for Non-Place** (completed 2006).
Project [description](#) and [final report](#) for our **Branded Meeting Places** Project (completed 2009).

Category

1. Society

Tags

1. AugÃ©
2. brand
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