

An aerial photograph of a cityscape. In the foreground, a large, light-colored, classical-style building with a triangular pediment and multiple windows is visible. To the right, a prominent church with several large, golden domes and arched windows stands out. In the background, modern high-rise apartment buildings are visible against a clear blue sky. The overall scene suggests a blend of historical and contemporary architecture.

состояние души в архитектуре

Transl; soul state in architecture

Soul state in architecture.
Graduation essay, with as a case study
terrain vague and the city of Yekaterinburg.

Borders and Territories.
Emerging border conditions in Eurasia,
MSc3/4 program
AY 2020/21
AR3B0100
Student: Bas van Lenteren.
Student number: 4981456
Tutors: Nishat Awan, Filip Geerts and Marc Schoonderbeek

Abstract

In western modern cities there are these spots that still possesses objects of events that where once before. These objects are alienated objects within the modern city, they can take the observer to a place former to them. The topic of the terrain vague got my interest as the leftover of the industrial, within most industrial areas certain parts are redundant due to progression and have been left there to be taken over by nature. Terrain vague, a Term introduced in Anyplaces by Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio. (Davidson, 1995). Ignasi de Sola-Morales talks about these spaces as not being colonized by architecture. They are left over spaces or literary translated by its Latin words; vacant terrains. Is this western European term still viable within the context of a condition within the city of Yekaterinburg? What is the Russian terrain vague? How can the understanding of the Russian culture help to redefine the term in a way that it applies to cities where more places have the nature of the vacant place than the one of colonized architecture? Morales explained the terrain vague as a place to escape the city. Can the terrain vague be a place to escape the pressure of the city in a mental space, a space of seclusion? The state of the city resembles the nature of the Russians, an melancholic almost depressing state. But where does this come from and how can this search for the Russian emotion help to better define the Russian terrain vague? Looking at linguistics, the Russian emotion comes much more from the soul. Russian see the emotion much more as a state of the soul someone is in. Can this mental terrain vague express the soul state of the Russians? This depressing nature of the Russian leads to another understanding of the term terrain vague. It is much more within Russian context about a place which can take you away from a bad place. This turns around its premise of something that was un-colonised by capitalism towards a place where there are these archipelagos of freedom from the depression. Which then within Russian context are these capitalist non-places, creating a paradox which result back to the terrain vague that was mentioned by Ignasi de Sola-Morales?

Key words- Terrain vague, Yekaterinburg, Soul state, Non-place, Russian emotion, mental space, linguistics, cubism, The Ducha

Content

1. Preface	5
2. European terrain vague	6
2.1 The terrain vague	6
2.2 Terrain vague's capitalist precedence	7
3. Emotional Russians ?	8
3.1. The Dusha	8
3.2. The body and the Mind	9
4. Physical or Mental	10
4.1. the sadness in Geometry	10
5. Russians terrain vague	12

1.Preface

In western modern cities there are these spots that still possesses objects of something that was once before. As they are alienated objects within the modern city they can take the observer to a place former to them. The topic of the terrain vague got my interest as the leftover of the industrial.

In the Netherlands these places of industrial left overs or historical events that have been neglected, are scarce since every square meter is regulated and looked after. When a project is renovated these left over objects are given almost a holy status. Not as severe as in city's as Rome, but still are considered to be valuable enough to be saved. As most of the modern cities have lost these objects that take you to the place they once belonged. Within Russia there is almost no culture of preserving objects that belonged to events, as they are just left in the landscape. This way of treating these objects relates very much to the term of the terrain vague as Ignasi de Sola-Morales described.

While researching Yekaterinburg I looked at the movie stalker, a Russian movie from 1979 by Andrej Tarkovski. In this movie the main character the stalker leads the writer and professor towards the zone, through a dreary landscape. They move through the landscape and come across these left over objects of something that was before, not knowing what or who created them this gave me a uncanny feeling, as if these objects where left by another being. Doing research into John Hejduk before, objects which were called non-architecture got my interest. As it implies to understand them in a different way, not only physical or being able to enter, but more on the mental level which of course is different for everyone else. For as every person that looks at it would bring their own culture or background into these objects. For me Hejduk did this with his Hanover masque, giving numerous objects which he called characters. He only gives a vague description in order to let the reader find its own inspiration. I believe architecture has to do the same in order to accommodate the differences that dominate the modern debate. Can something that speaks and inspire every one bring them together? In order to find this I try to imply it within the Russian city of Yekaterinburg, our case study. But before this can be done the Russian context has to be understood.

2. European terrain vague

2.1 The terrain vague

To start this essay I would like to introduce a term first used by Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió, the Terrain Vague. This term was used by Ignasi de Sola-Morales in an essay published in anyplace 1995. It was a way to describe places within the city that were not colonized by architecture yet. (Ignasi de Sola-Morales, 1995, P28). He describes these places as un-habited, un-safe or un-productive. They have this kind of primordial way of showing the city as it is. While mostly given a negative notation and always beginning with UN-, Ignasi de Sola-Morales tries to let us see the potential within.

To further explain the terrain vague, its best to start with the translation of this French word, given by Ignasi de Sola-Morales. He starts by explaining the word "Terrain" explaining that in French this word leans more to a urban context instead of the English terrain which acquired more a geographical notion. (Ignasi de Sola-Morales, 1995,). The word terrain does not need much explanation it mostly describes this part of land or part of a city, while the next word with in the term defines this first word "Vague". The word Vague is described as being a Latin word which decants from vacuus. Ignasi de Sola-Morales says that this Latin word can be understood as Vacant or Vacuum with an English meaning of Empty or unoccupied, yet also free, available, unengaged. (Ignasi de Sola-Morales, 1995,).

A second meaning by Ignasi de Sola-Morales for the word vague is the Latin word vagus. In English meaning vague, and describes as indeterminate, imprecise, blurred, uncertain. This explanation of the term creates a paradox in his eye's as it implies this purely negative space not showing the expectation of mobility, free time or Liberty. (Ignasi de Sola-Morales, 1995,).

The fact that the term terrain vague is in itself vague, leads to guess wich place Sola-Moralers meant with his term, it can almost describe any place within the city. This leads to many architects describing these kind of places in their own way here are some terms that have been used to describe abandoned, leftover areas: *"derelict land"* (Barr, 1969; Kivell & Hatfield, 1998; Oxenham, 1966); *zero panorama, empty or abstract settings and dead spots* (Smithson, 1996a/1967; 1996b/1968; 1970, as cited in Reynolds, 2003); *vacant land* (Bowman & Pagano, 2004; Northam, 1971); *wasteland* (Gemmell, 1977; Nabarro & Richards, 1980); *il vuoto (the void)* (Borret, 1999; Secchi, 1989/1984); *urban wilds and urban sinks* (Lynch, 1990); *new, nameless places* (Boeri, Lanzani, & Marini, 1993); *dross* (Lerup, 1994) and *drosscape* (Berger, 2006); *no-man's land* (Leong, 1998); *dead zones and transgressive zones* (Doron, 2000); *superfluous landscapes* (Nielson, 2002); *spaces of uncertainty* (Cupers & Miessen, 2002); *and le Tiers-Paysage and les delaissees* ("the Third Landscape" and, roughly, "leftover lands") (Clement, 2003). Other common terms, among others, *include brownfields, in-between spaces, white areas, blank areas, and SLOAPs* (Spaces Left Over After Planning) (Doron, 2007)." (P.Barron, 2013,P3). Due to the abundance of terms describing the term of the city, I would like to stay with the term Ignasi de Sola-Morales described in his essay.

2.2 Terrain vague's capitalist precedence

While being a good term to describe places of potential within the city, the terrain vague has a bias relation towards the European city. In the essay of Ignasi de Sola-Morales he gives examples of photographers that where dealing with the term within city and most of them being in European or American city's. Looking at these photos, Sola-Morales gives a clear view into what he was meaning with the term. *"The triple signification of the French vague as wave, vacant, And vague appears in a multitude of photographic images. Recent photographers, from John Davies to David Plowden, Thomas Struth to Jannes Linders, Manolo Laguillo to Olivio Barbieri, have captured the condition of these spaces as internal to the city yet external to its everyday use."* (Ignasi de Sola-Morales, 1995,) this quote not only gives clear examples but also the first explanation given by Morales of the terrain vague.

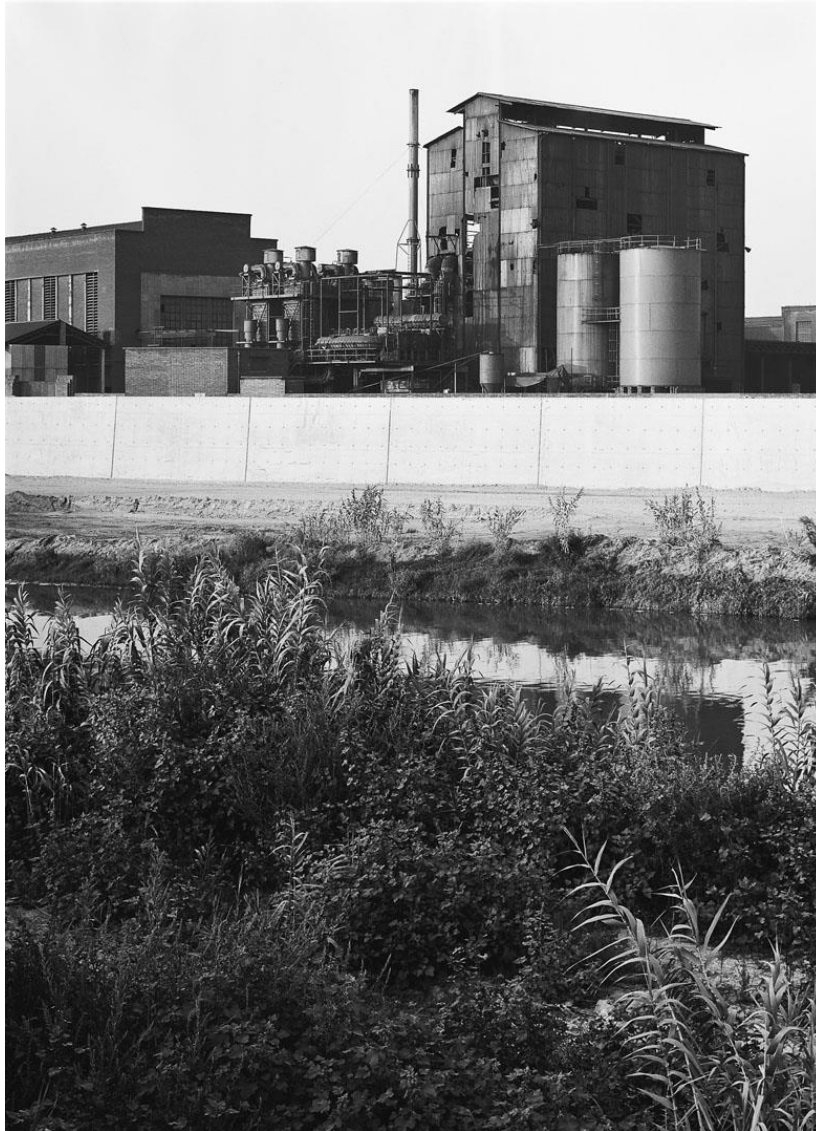


Figure 1 foto series 1977-1986, manolo laguillo

While not doing justice to the whole photographic series, this photo [1] from Manolo Laguillo represents the terrain vague, as it shows the late capitalism and leisure society of the post European era. Left overs of economic powers and where the city is no more.

Ignasi de Sola-Morales tries to explain this late capitalism areas with a sentence of Odo Marquand: "the epoch of strangeness in front of the world". For Ignasi de Sola-Morales this sentence picks up in the theme of the Unheimlich, as these places bring out the Stangers to ourselves. The Term Unheimlich or in English Uncanny, is introduced by Freud in his essay Uncanny 1919. The term uncanny can be interrupted or felt differently for people, but what it has in common is this notion of concealment or hiddenness. An example of this being a mannequin standing in the dark, Not knowing whether it is a human or a doll. This vagueness also sits within the terrain vague not knowing where it belongs to creating this feeling described by Freud. Looking at [1] one can say; is this nature, industry or city. This notion of the hidden factory behind the concrete wall also created this uncanny scenery. Within this photograph [1] your eyes start at nature and slowly go to ward's this almost as a dark cloud hanging over nature, industry.

3. Emotional Russians ?

3.1. The Dusha

Going to our case study; the city of Yekaterinburg, regional city of Sverdlovsk oblast and the third largest city of Russia.

These are only hard facts but do not show the true nature of the city. The nature of Russia has to be defined first. As from a distance it appears to be another city adopted by capitalist, after the fall of the USSR.

Looking towards the city as a person that grew up in the Netherlands. It's hard to understand the Russians. If not only being doused by the fastness of the territory that sits within this region. Whereas you can travel within the Netherlands from the south to the north in only 4 hours, this time would bring you within Russian context only further away from the city into nature.

The fact that Russia always has been left out in our western gaze does not help to understand it. Maybe my attempt to truly understand them is already failed by this gaze. Nonetheless in order to attempt to understand the Russians I began where the Russians are famous for, besides the stereotypical vodka, or USSR nostalgia. The Russian literature, which is one of the most well-known and had its greatest period during the 19th century. This can maybe help to grasp their nature.

Starting from The Dusha also; the Russian soul which has been used within literature to describe the uniqueness of the Russian identity. Writers as Nikolai Gogol, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky describe the Dusha. The best example for me being Gogol who wrote the book Tale of two ivans. This book describes two landowners by the name of Ivan. First they are neighbors and friends although they are different in appearance. Ivan Ivoanovich is tall thin and well spoken whereas Ivan Nikoforovich is short-fat and cuts to the point. One day Ivanovich notices a rifle that interest him and offers to trade it for all kinds of objects. Nikoforovich who is attached to this rifle does not want to part from it. This trivial squabble derails and from that point on and they do everything to make each other's lives miserable. In the end the narrator goes back to the two neighbors completely worn out and they still believe they are within their own right. The narrator then states: "it's a dreary world, Gentleman"

This last part where Gogol states that it's a depressing world and that everything we do does not matter is a theme throughout his work. It is often about his pessimistic view of the world.

Another example of this Dreary world, sits within a lot of Russian poetry.
For example the next poem by Anna Akhmatova 1919

"Why Is This Century Worse..."

Why is this century worse than those others?
Maybe, because, in sadness and alarm,
It only touched the blackest of the ulcers,
But couldn't heal it in its span of time.

Else, in the West, the earthly sun endows
The roofs of cities with the morning light,
But, here, the White already marks a house,
And calls for crows, and the crows fly.

Akhmatova describes in the first part why this century is worse, sadness and alarm. But the next part is about the west where she describes city's with morning light on the roofs. While in Russia the white marks the roof. The viewing of Russia being sad and with snow, while look towards the west as being light and warm has a certain melancholy in it. Another more contemporary example of this melancholic and miserable state Russia seems to be in all the time is shown in a poem by Boris Ryzhy.

"How the granite is covered in ice..."

There'll be warm station beer,
there'll be a cloud overhead,
there'll be melancholy music –
I'm saying farewell for good.(...)

I was born – even now can't believe it –
in a labyrinth of factory yards
in that dove-like land, divided
between crooks and the nick a thousand years.

Boris Ryzhy lived his whole life in Yekaterinburg, until the age of twenty-six. He committed suicide while being successful and already achieved literal success. (Aleksey Purin, 2005). In most of his work there is much melancholy and alcohol is constantly mentioned.

3.2. The body and the Mind

But why is this emotion so heavily visible within the Russian culture? Anna Wierzbicka a Polish linguist at the Australian National University wrote numerous papers about the Russian emotional expression. In her study of 1992 she tries to understand the relation between the Russian language and the emotions. In this study she describes the Russian as while under a lot of emotional stress and free expression having a high emotional temperature. (Wierzbicka 1992).

She further explains the complexity of the language having multiple words to describe emotions whereas the English language only has one. Russians not only use words to describe emotions but use words to describe if a person has visibly changed by its emotion.

"in Russian, the face, the eyes, and indeed the person as a whole can be described as visibly changed for having cried. In an English translation, the meaning of such descriptions has to be altered, for there are no idiomatic ways of rendering it. For example, the expression zaplakannye glaza is rendered in RECDHB as "tear-reddened eyes," but really means more than that: "eyes visibly changed, showing that the person has cried" (not just "reddened"). (Wierzbicka 1998).

Staying within the world of the arts an, art movement that dealt with geometry and the way space is received was the cubist movement. With main artists being Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Within Russia this movement gained followers with the most well know Marc Chagall but I also want to make plea for Lyubov popova and Olga Razanova who made beautiful cubist works within this Russian culture. For example Raznovas work "The factory and the Bridge" 1913 or "Metronome" 1914. The overall cubist movement tried to not create the perfect perspective of an image. It was more focused on how one would perceive a space. In order to perceive this space, they created multiple perspectives within one painting and thereby created an atmosphere rather than an image of the real viewed image. Looking at [3] Woman in an Armchair, there is almost no clear picture of a woman in an armchair, only an vaguely visible figure and parts of a chair. Instead of this clear image Picasso tries to lure the viewer into the painting and let the viewer create his own feeling. Do you see a lovely picture of a woman in a skirt or the dreadful one of a woman with her intestines out. (Ettinger, T. 1996) This Vagueness within the works of the cubist gave an entry into understanding the space called 'Terrain vague' within the context of Yekaterinburg. By layering different perspective of a space in order to reveal its true atmosphere.



Figure 3 Pablo Picasso 1913-1914 Woman in an Armchair

5. Russian terrain vague

To conclude, the paradoxical between the physical and the mental sits within Yekaterinburg. Where the physical in Yekaterinburg is this heavy industrialised city in the Urals, where the average temperature is 2C , where there is a constant dispirited melancholic state of the city, with almost no place to escape this nature. The city is currently also in this strange state of becoming a capitalist city within its old Marxist background. While office sky scrapers begin to dominate the landscape Yekaterinburg's back alleys still possess the old nature of the city.

Going back to Ignasi de Sola-Morales terrain vague it can be described as being these moments of seclusion within the context of the modern urban city. Most of these spaces [1] are left overs. But what if these left overs are all over the city and beyond? Can these spaces still be seen as moments of seclusion or a place to escape the pressure of the melancholic Russian culture? Or are the spaces that contribute to this nature be the thing that haunts our western modern city's, the capitalist manifestation of shopping malls or big office buildings. They act within the city as archipelago's of something different than the constant depression. By saying this the terrain vague of to Ignasi de Sola-Morale for me transforms from something physical as a wasteland to something mental or cultural, a place to escape. It is similar to Alexander Brodsky vodka pavilion [4]. He creates this secluded space with a ritual of drinking vodka while not only this small secluded space lets you escape the reality of the outside, also the act of drinking vodka lets you escape the physical state and bring you in a mental state of inebriation. This all in a space conceived out of old white painted window frames of a slaughter house, giving the room a melancholic kind of atmosphere.



Figure 4 Alexander Brodsky, Vodka Pavilion, 2003, Photo by Yuri palmin

The difference between the mental and real world, is displayed as; designing a beautiful capitalist shopping mall in order to escape the depression, resulting in a city which is taken over by this thinking and where there are only spaces left that relate to the western understanding of terrain vague. A place to escape the homogenous nature of the modern west city. It is therefore necessary to find a way to keep the richness of the Russian culture but also to create a place in order to escape the depressing state. This is done by creating a new type of archipelago that functions as terrain vague in the changing nature of Yekaterinburg towards a homogenous western society. The drawing for the design project should explore the part of the city or where the clash of western and Russian state collides. I therefore chose the street Uilitsa Vaynera, which is the main shopping street with its big shopping malls and overabundance of capitalism. In this street, where the back alleys still have the Russian state but the front indicates where it's heading towards. The paradox can be seen in this state where the city is in now. Should it follow our way of thinking by letting us colonize their city or should they follow their Duchas. Exploring the back alleys in relation with the material, program, and history. The drawing for the design project aims at the atmosphere of the place in order to preserve it, like the cubists did with their multiple perspectives.

Bibliography

Auge, M., & Howe, J. (2009). *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (2de editie). Verso.

Barron, P., & Mariani, M. (2013). *Terrain Vague*. Taylor & Francis.

Corporation, A., Davidson, C. C., & Anyone Corporation. (1995). *Anyplace*. Anyone Corporation.

Ettinger, T. (1996). Picasso, Cubism and the Eye of the Beholder: Psychoanalysis and Cognitive Psychology. *NEW DIRECTIONS IN ART HISTORY*, 1, 53–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26304365>

Pavlenko, A. (2002). Emotions and the body in Russian and English. *Pragmatics and Cognition*, 10(1–2), 207–241. <https://doi.org/10.1075/pc.10.1-2.10pav>

Purin, A. (2005). Biography of Boris Ryzhy by well known poet Aleksey Purin. *Music alone*. <https://borisryzhy.com/biography>

Staff, P. A. (1992). *The Lancaster/Hanover Masque* (First Edition). Princeton Architectural Press.

Vidler, A. (1994). *The Architectural Uncanny* (New edition). Amsterdam University Press.

Wierzbicka, A. (1998). Russian Emotional Expression. *Ethos*, 26(4), 456–483. <https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.1998.26.4.456>