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Take the Elevator to Tomorrow

Mobile Space and Lingering Time in Contemporary Urban Fiction

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Take the Elevator to Tomorrow:
Mobile Space and Lingering Time in Contemporary Urban Fiction

What if, in the encounter between the subject and the city, it is the buildings, the streets, the rooms that are moving and the human beings who are standing still? Inspired by literary scholar Elana Gomel's concept of collapse, where "space folds on time" () and phenomenological philosopher Dylan Trigg's description of place as "between subject and space", this paper looks at two fictional narratives – Xie Xiaohong's 'Mute Doors' and Wu Mingyi's 'The 99th Floor' - in which mobile spaces, such as wandering hallways and occasionally appearing extra storeys, serve to destabilise notions of absolute time and space.

Gomel, Elana (2014): *Narrative space and time, representing impossible topologies in literature*. New York: Routledge.

Trigg, Dylan (2011): *The memory of place, a phenomenology of the uncanny*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Wu, Mingyi 吳明益 (2016/2011): 'The 99th Floor' 九十九樓 in *The Magician on the Skywalk* 《天橋上的魔術師》 Taipei: Xiari chuban.

Xie, Xiaohong 謝曉虹 (2012): 'Mute Doors' 啞門 in Han, Lizhu 韓麗珠 and Xie, Xiaohong 謝曉虹: *A Dictionary of Two Cities, I-II* 《雙城 辭典 I – II》 Taipei: Linking Press.

Astrid Møller-Olsen is a doctoral researcher at the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Sweden. She has previously published on literary drinking cultures, allegorical cannibalism and Daoist commensality in Chinese fiction. Current research focuses on the spatiotemporal relation between cityscape and memory in contemporary urban fiction in Chinese.

