

A space beneath a bridge holds a special place in the imagination: a potential *un-homely* house, with missing walls: a home to trolls and vagabonds; a place disregarded by the world above.

The partial containment of space beneath a bridge invites reveries of inhabitation, that are common to all in-between spaces that have no immediately clear use: from the forgotten spaces between hedgerows in Geoffrey Household's *Rogue Male*, to William Gibson's squatter housing, nestling in the gaps in the structure of the Golden Gate Bridge in *Virtual Light*. At the Medway crossing, three major bridges run alongside, defining an expanse of fragmented space that makes possible the imagining of almost a world in parallel.

There is a strong sense of openness here that contrasts with the rigid lines of movement at the upper level. Choices of meandering routes exist down here: it is a highly permeable space of crossing paths, terraces, slopes, promises and dead ends. All structured by the repetitive but different rhythms of the three bridges above.

It feels an incredibly remote place, by turns peaceful and menacing. Like Ballard's *Concrete Island*, thousands pass above in each hour, all oblivious to the presence of the (slightly) quieter world beneath. You could be murdered here, incarcerated, found a new kingdom: none of them would be even remotely aware.

In fact this is the site of a monumental burial, known only to a few: Jezreel's Temple, built to echo the proportions of the Temple of Jerusalem, and a highly visible landmark in Medway from the 1880s until its demolition in 1961, lays here beneath the ground, providing the foundation stones for the motorway bridge built the following year, itself a monumental witness to Britain's post-war *New Jerusalem*. The air is filled with the hum of transport projecting from the concrete, the remains of the old temple below, vibrating in sympathy and transmitting its forgotten Jezreelite hymns into the air above Medway.

Along the river can be seen the cement works of Snodland and the remains of chalk quarries. If concrete could ever be a *local material* and belong in a place, it's here. The concrete bridges feel at home on these river terraces. Like them, the Temple itself made extensive use of the same material. The massive piers of the motorway bridge and its trabeated structures feel almost ancient and frame the space in a heavy and measured way that resonates with the massive monumentality of the lost temple, which was said to be cursed; to be indestructible; and which took the life of a man before it finally gave up its struggle with gravity.

Wandering beneath the bridges, you enter a world of the sublime, dwarfed by the great scale of the structures, which are indifferent to the human activities around their feet and any meanings these might confer: whether dog walking, dogging, the practice of neo religious semiotic arousal, hunting or motorcycling. Yes there are traces of all these activities, but still the place remains remote, and the default role for humans who venture beneath the bridges is of Robinson on his island, pacing it out, attempting to find order in it, but always confounded: it remaining a truly uncategorisable place that you are ultimately destined to leave.

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