



Welcome to Roadsides

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March, 2020



The side of a road is a good place for ethnography, we think. One of us owns a field next to a country road. It is a twenty-minute drive from the nearest McDonald's restaurant. Judging from the rubbish Matthäus finds in the pasture,



that is the time it takes to finish a Big Mac and a soda. Even more than a railroad (Latour 1993: 117), a roadside is neither local nor global. Waiting at the side of the road, at any moment, a window can open for a soda can to be discarded, or a vehicle can stop and maybe you can hitch a ride. But more often than not, the cars and trucks swoosh by and leave you covered in their dust, speeding off to that global elsewhere.

Roads connect and separate, they facilitate flow and scatter way points, they serve as vital infrastructures of contemporary life.

By the roadside, we can appreciate how infrastructures come to matter.