



# **From fallow imaginaries to imaginaries of fallows.**

Four ways social groups exist through derelict spaces in Liège and Montreal.

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## Context

- Architect, sociologist, 4th y. PhD candidate
- Centered on **practises of transmission and transformation of social imaginaries of places**
- Framed trough an **anthropology of enchantment**
- Based on **2 field studies** (Bavière, Cdp)  
Archival work, interviews, observation and ethnographic approach



## What is a fallow?

- (1) Usually cultivated land that is **allowed to lie idle** during the growing season; (2) The state or period of being fallow (Merriam-Webster)
- By extension: an (involuntarily) **abandoned piece of land**
- Better eng. translation for the common french “Friche”  
(than wasteland, brownfield, urban void ... → agricultural reference)

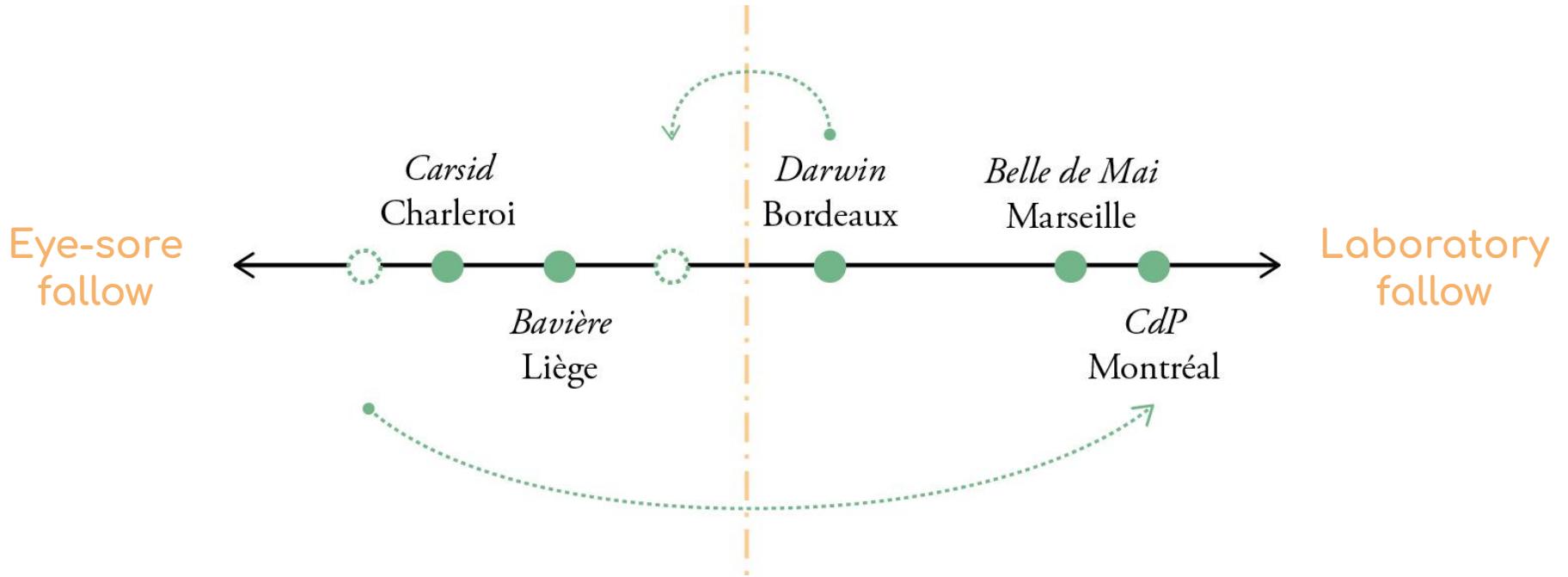


*Bavière, Liège*



*Champ des Possibles, Montreal*

# The simplifying meta-narrative of fallows





## ⇒ A fallow is an enchantement

i.e. a simplification of reality we allow ourselves to believe to navigate the complexity of the world

// Belin: “to make the hypothesis of a kind world plausible”



# The anthropology of enchantment

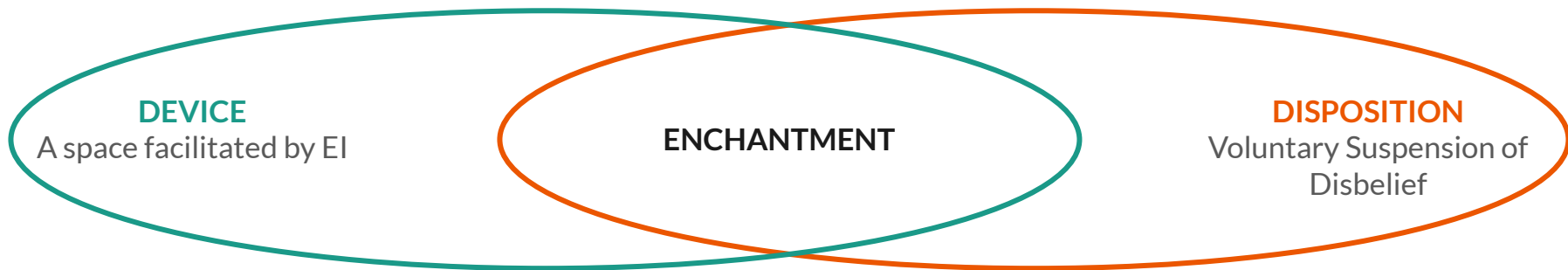
Study of the enchanted experiences and their conditions of success

Disneyland, temporary urbanism, interspecies communication, ...

See Winkin 2023, Servais 2023, Lallement 2017, ...

→ Application to places, in the context of urban fallows





« An **enchantment process** is triggered when a certain **device** meets a certain **disposition**. Most often, this device is based on a **venue staffed by "enchantment engineers"**, who welcome **participants whose disposition is summed up by** Coleridge's famous formula: "**the voluntary suspension of disbelief**". These participants let go, saying to themselves "I know, but still" (Mannoni). They're not fooled: they just want to be fooled.»

Winkin 2023, p. 15



## **But the fallow is only one of many enchantment of places**

→ Diversity of social imaginaries:

Bavière is an hospital, an urban void, a modernist heritage to be saved, an economical asset, a dangerous squat, a precious refuge, ...



## **Bavière and the CdP are the objects of multiple enchantments**

Some act “as if” they were an abandoned, polluted land, a fallow

→ That allows them to produce development, depollution and densification plans

Some act “as if” they were a precious urban biodiversity reserve, or an important heritage

→ This allows them to defend their preservation and forbid some uses

Some act “as if” they were a space of freedom, an heterotopia

→ This allows them to escape, play, create, infringe on rules



## Different attachments for different social imaginaries

Those enchantments articulate different bodies (non/human) and values to give a specific order to the world → **Imagined communities** (Anderson 1983)

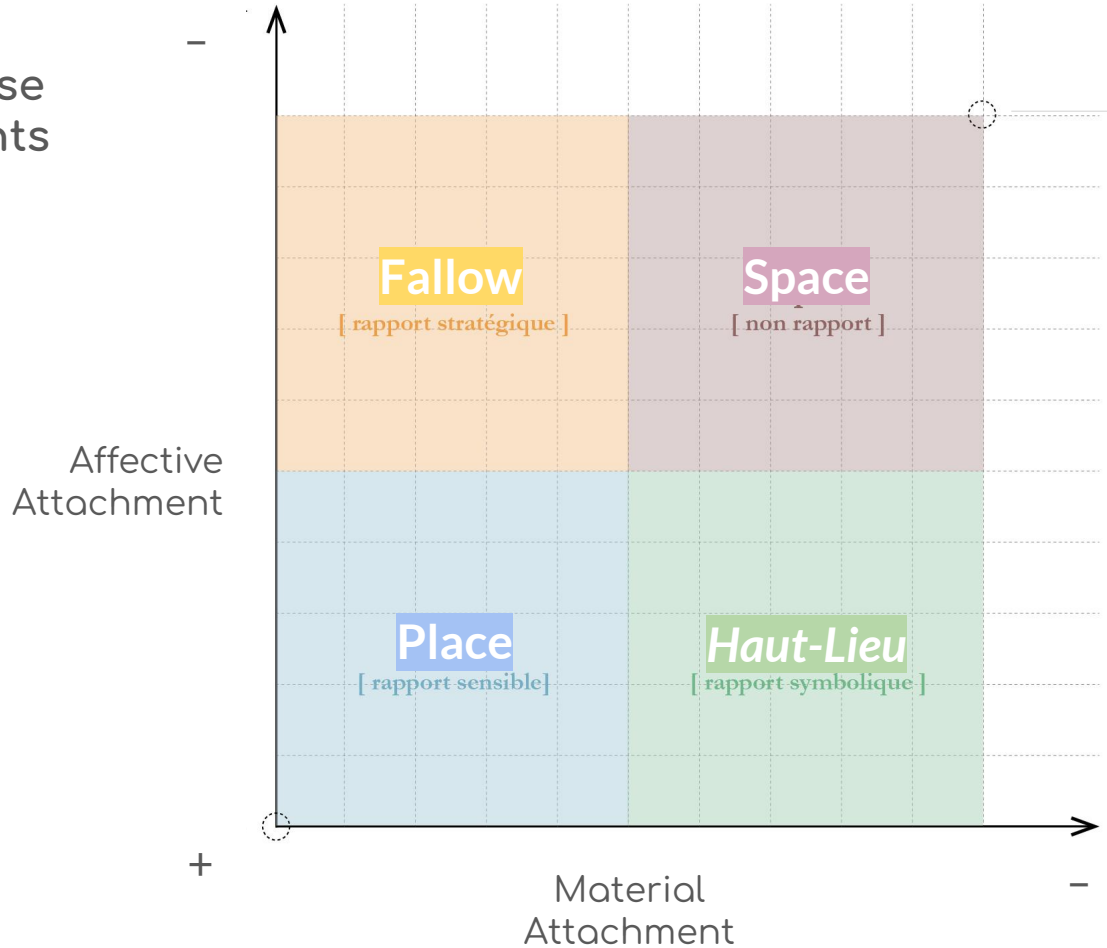
Significant difference: the type of **attachment** (material/affective) that ties them together  
// Latour (1996, 2000)

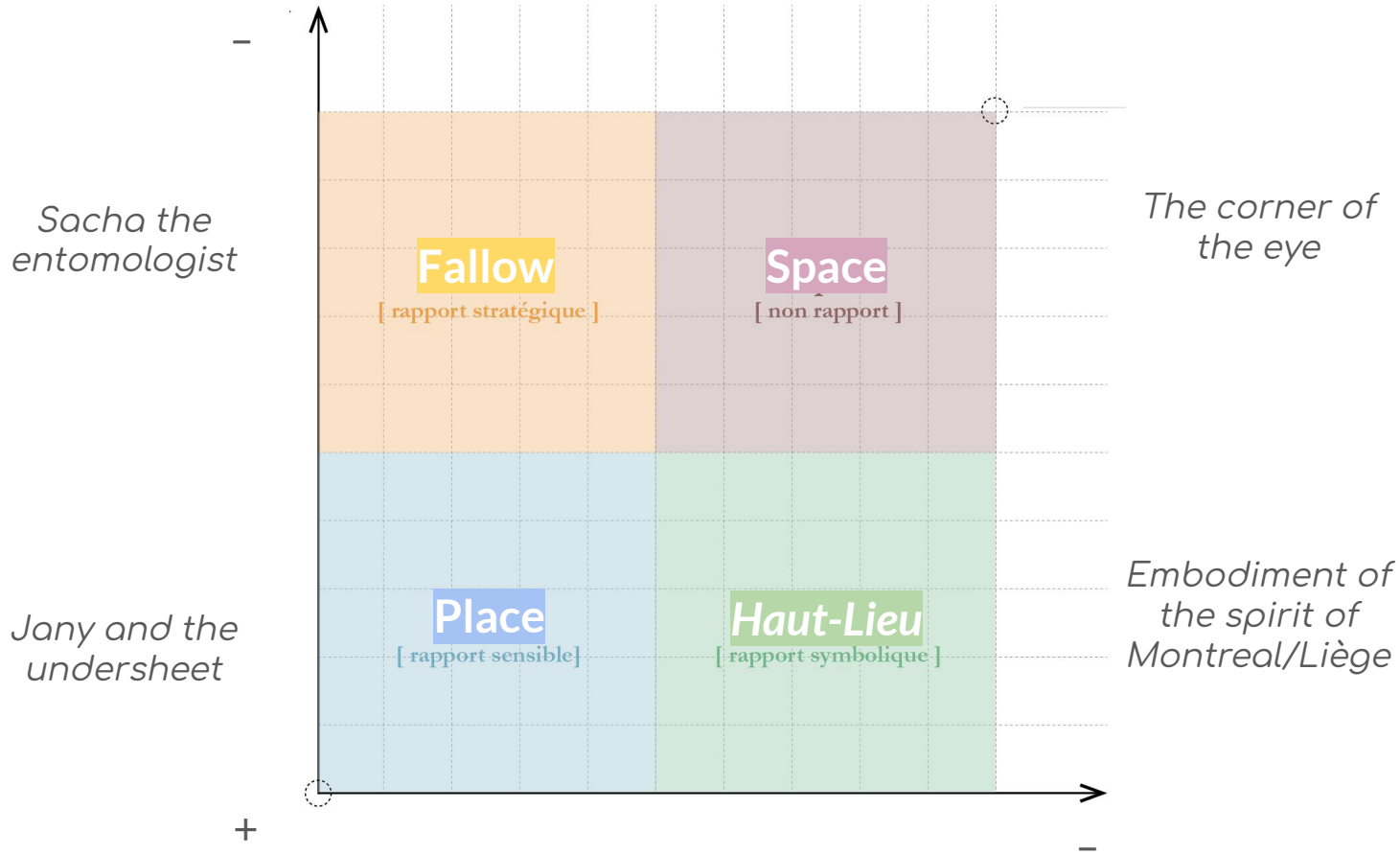
- designates a **bond**: beings are attached to each other, they are part of a whole that unites them and forces them into a form of reciprocal dependence.
- Also refers to a **process of paying attention to**: To be attached to something is to give that being importance, to invest it with a value that sets it apart from the rest of the world.



⇒ **Social groups exist through those enchantments**

A typology of existences through these enchantments







# Equal existences, unequal power of influence

In the process of fallows redevelopments:

- Over-legitimization of material attachments
- Under-legitimization of affective attachments

→ Erasure of many social groups to the profit of the others

→ What social responsibility for the enchantment engineers? (including architects)





## CCL: need for a variety of engineering of places enchantments

In the service of

- different **imaginaries**
- different **social groups**
- different **projects for society**
- different **desired futures**
- different **architectural ethics**

A stage with blue spotlights and a dark background. The stage floor is lit with a warm orange glow. There are four black speakers on the floor. The background is dark with some decorative elements on the sides.

## DISPOSITION

Voluntary Suspension of Disbelief

“I know, but still” (O. Mannoni 1964)

“Each knows, yet doesn’t want to know” (P. Bourdieu 1997)

“As if” (M. Saler 2012)

DEVICE

A space facilitated  
by Engineers of Enchantment

Augé 1992

Disneyland: an enchanted space  
for and by adults

Maybe you are going to do bad  
things. We don't know.