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.


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.