Feeling at Home in Starbucks: Revealing Transient Urban Interior

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This paper argues that by looking through the ephemeral and transient interiors, represented by the non-places, we could reveal the domestic life in the city. Such interiors, which usually lacks of social construct and historical background, have never been considered as the reflection of urban domestic life. This argument is based on the shifting idea of the domestic interior which is extended beyond its association with the life within the houses and expanded into the urban realm of the city. Domestic is now referring to a set of felt emotions “at home”; it suggests the feelings of familiarity and intimacy in space that are important for the development of individual and collective identities, which is essential to cope with the harsh urban life. This study takes on Starbucks as a case study of the global non-places interiors, to discover how they act as the domestic hubs in the urban realm. While Starbucks usually face criticism regarding its gentrification on its interior setting, we argue that Starbucks and other similar non-place interiors would not only reflect the glimpse of urban life but also act as a frontier that bridge the realms of the familiar and the unfamiliar in the city. This study explored several settings of Starbucks that have different characteristics, contexts and cultures to discover their roles as the transient urban interiority by looking through the connection between the system of setting and the system of activities in its urban context.

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