Virtual Globalization

Virtual Spaces/Tourist Spaces

Edited by David Holmes

London and New York

Virtual Globalization

What do the Internet, virtual environments and tourism have in common?

This book examines the interrelationship between telecommunications and tourism in shaping the nature of space, place and the urban life at the end of the twentieth century. As agents of globalization, tourism, with its virtualizing gaze, and the Internet, as the support for computer-mediated space, reveal logics which converge in a remarkable number of ways. The book is divided into two sections:

Urban space, cyberspace and global space

- Examines the multiple interrelations between computer-mediated space and contemporary urban space.
- Argues that virtual realities are already embodied in everyday technologies, such as freeways, television and the shopping mall.
- Discusses how the consumption of urban sites is increasingly removed from the experience of locale.
- Explores the new relations between selves which are enabled by technologies of extension and virtual worlds.

Tourist geography as virtual reality

- Examines the significance of the privileging of tourist world-spaces in late capitalism.
- Examines the way cities refashion themselves in terms of tourist geographies.
- Analyses the implications for local communities when the local habitat becomes redefined as a 'destination'.
- Discusses how the aesthetic reception of the 'environment' in post-industrial societies is becoming culturally transformed.

This work will be of essential interest to scholars and students in the fields of sociology, geography, cultural studies and media studies.

David Holmes lectures in Sociology at the University of New South Wales, Sydney and was recently a Senior Fellow with the T.R. Ashworth Centre for Social Theory at the University of Melbourne. He is author of *Communication Theory: Media, technology and society* (Sage, forthcoming) and editor of *Virtual Politics: Identity and community in cyberspace* (London: Sage, 1997).

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First published 2001
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Virtual globalization : virtual spaces/tourist spaces / David Holmes.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Information society. 2. Information technology–Social aspects. 3. Globalization. 4. Tourism. 5. Virtual reality. I. Holmes, David, 1962–

HM851 .V57 2001
303.48'33–dc21

2001019305

ISBN 0–415–23673–8 (Print edition)
ISBN 0-203-46912-7 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-77736-0 (Adobe eReader Format)

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Acknowledgements

The primary inspiration for this book could be located on the Gold Coast, Australia, a post-suburban intersection of so many of the virtualities discussed in this book, as well as a place I lived and worked in for five years. For the reflection that is undertaken of such a place, I have been fortunate to be able to exchange analysis, both urban and the philosophical, with my colleague and friend John Mandalios, who understands the Gold Coast so well. Michael J. Ostwald and Mark Nunes provided encouragement and enthusiasm at the early stage of the project, as did Bryan S. Turner. I would also like to thank Diana Barnes, Cath Clarke, Jim Cormack, Aaron Cross, Gordon Fletcher, Dee Gill, Geoff Lowe, Sharon Montague and Mary Panagopoulos for various kinds of assistance as well as the T.R. Ashworth Centre for Social Theory at Melbourne University for providing me with the means of escaping Gold Coast hyperreality and a place to think differently. Thanks are also owed to the Humanities Research Program at the University of New South Wales for the support it offered towards the book's production. The greatest share of personal debt for the book's sub-editing must go to Murray Wilson for the detail and care he took over the manuscript. During the latter phase, I have greatly appreciated the kindness and support of Kaye Alford and Ellen Holmes in completing the project. Special thanks are due to all of the contributors for their enthusiasm for the book concept and their collaborative spirit. Above all, I wish to thank Vasilka Pateras for her thoughtfulness and love.

Previously published work

Brian Morris' chapter was published in *UTS Review* (Sydney) 5, 1 (July 1999): 70–93.

Stephen Graham's chapter was published in *Cities* 14, 1 (February 1997): 21–9.

The chapters by Mike Crang, David Holmes, Hille Koskela, Nicola Morelli and Gordon Waitt are revised versions of the following previously published journal articles:

Crang, M. (2000) 'Public space, urban space and electronic space: would the real city please stand up?', *Urban Studies* 37, 2: 301–17.

Holmes, D. (1998) 'Tourist worlds as monoculture: learning from the Gold Coast', in D. Rowe and G. Lawrence (eds) *Tourism, Sport, Leisure: Critical perspectives*, Sydney: Hodder Headline, pp. 13–22.

Koskela, H. (2000) ' "The gaze without eyes": video surveillance and the changing nature of urban space', *Progress in Human Geography* 24, 2: 243–65.

Morelli, N. (1999) 'Future configurations for remote work', *Foresight* 1, 3 (June).

Waitt, G. (1999) 'Playing games with Sydney: marketing Sydney for the 2000 Olympics', *Urban Studies* 36, 7: 1055–77.

Virtual globalization – an introduction

David Holmes

As a now firmly established metaphor for social change, 'globalization' has rapidly made its way into an exclusive, but endangered, list of terms which risk emptying themselves of definition by their reckless application. At once, globalization – defined as a largely *economic* process – has been held responsible for the termination of the nation-state, the death of history (Fukuyama 1992) and even the 'end' of the social itself (Rose 1996; Touraine 1998).

For the journalist and the politician, globalization is sometimes portrayed as a tear-away condition: cause for a new moral panic over the ability of nations to regulate and control a post-industrial marketplace. Along with the dot.com frenzy of the 1990s the spectre of globalization has been at the front line of a *fin-de-siècle*, *fin-de-millennium* ferment which persists today.

This fetishism of globalization as an exclusive kind of 'label' by which corporate and media cultures exalt and advertise themselves[1] has attained such proportions that social thinkers of past eras are to be admonished because they overlooked 'globalization' as a word. A recent commentary by Oliver August in the *Times* of London declared any links that are alleged to exist between the prophecies of Marxism and globalization erroneous because, he claims, 'Marx and Engels never used the term globalization' (31 October 2000: 20). At the same time nation-bound citizens are expected to stand to attention when stock-market and currency movements occur, as global comparisons of financial performance figure more prominently in daily news services.

From the horizon of the nation, the new metaphysics of globalization encourages protectionism by governments around the world who respond to the media-generated panic among their constituents with the now familiar restrictions on migration and refugees, and the scrutiny of tariffs and trade relations. Of course, such panic is only to the benefit of nation-building politicians in times of peace, providing, as it does, a convenient justification for governmental restructurings of finance policy.

Yet, despite the obvious ideological investments in promoting the idea of 'tidal-wave' globalization, there has appeared a range of texts in recent times which adopt varying strengths of the thesis that the nation-state is being overtaken by this new kind of globalization (Ohmae 1995; Martin 1997; Greider 1997; Elazar 1998). Where each of their arguments comes unstuck, of course, is

in pointing out a very simple historical fact – it was globalization which produced the modern system of nation-states in the first place.

A second and even more significant historical observation is that *economic* globalization has existed for a very long time, carried by way of military, political and economic imperialism unevenly throughout the world since the sixteenth century. As Immanuel Wallerstein, an established writer on globalization, argues, capitalist processes of globalization – what he calls the modern world-system – are not at all recent phenomena (Wallerstein 1974, 1999). The extent of world trade, world production and the movement of persons and commodities since that time have been integral to the shaping of the modern world. Wallerstein points out that 'transnational commodity chains were extensive from the beginning of the (modern-world) system and global since the second half of the nineteenth century' (Wallerstein 1999: 59).

As Hirst and Thompson (1996) have suggested in *Globalization in Question: The international economy and the possibilities of governance*, the peak of economic globalization could be periodized between 1870 and 1914. They suggest that it was precisely at the time Marx and Engels were writing about 'the universal interdependence of nations' and of the constantly expanding need to find markets 'over the whole surface of the globe' (Marx and Engels 1967: 83), that the conditions for economic globalization were so much more favourable than they are today.

This was a time when, unlike the chaotic adjustment system of today, a universal gold standard existed under *pax Britannica*, and an intercontinental telegraph system provided an entirely adequate system for the communication of financial transactions which facilitated a genuinely globalized, as opposed to inter-nationalized,[2] economy. Hirst and Thompson also point out that today, unlike the nineteenth century, the peripheral and semi-peripheral regions of the third world remain marginal to direct foreign investment. While every nation might be on the planet, not every nation is part of the global economy, as trade and investment flows are today concentrated in the group of three (G3), Europe, Japan and the US, which together can significantly steer global trends rather than be subject to them. Finally, they point out that in the nineteenth century, when people travelled and migrated without passports, national borders, worldwide, were very open indeed.[3] Such was a time when both capital and labour were able to move freely. Today, only capital retains this mobility, as it scans the globe for ever-cheaper sources of labour and ever-larger markets for commodities, while mobility for labour is restricted to consumerism and status systems, tourism, buying commodities whose cosmopolitan character is tied to status, or being on the Internet – in other words, partaking of other regions of the world in every way but permanent residence and citizenship.

From cultural globalization to virtual globalization

The aforementioned means of attaining a kind of 'virtual' citizenship figure prominently in modern global culture. The cosmopolitanism that distinguishes the culture of globalism is a direct consequence of the intermixing of centres of

cultural diversity which results from migration and from exposure to the *content* (rather than the mediums or forms) of information and communication technologies. On an increasingly global scale it is becoming quite unremarkable for individuals to travel to other places and be visited by other peoples, whether this be by locomotion, MTV or 'travelling' on the Internet.[4] Taken together, migration, commodity exchange, global media, tourism and telecommunications have emerged as the most powerful agents of what Roland Robertson has described as 'the consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson 1992: 8). Robertson's definition is as much about the expansion of a global consciousness, simultaneous with a compression of the world in which that expansion has to occur, as it is about an enlargement of the sphere of normatively binding relationships between people as well as closer global interdependence. In his book *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918*, Stephen Kern explains how, in the nineteenth century, communication, transportation and the growth of literacy

> made it possible for more people to read about new distant places in the newspaper, see them in movies, and travel more widely. As human consciousness expanded across time and space people could not help noticing that in different places, there were vastly different customs.
>
> (Kern 1983: 34)

While it is possible to think of cultural globalization as the bringing together of many cultures, enhancing the appreciation of regional difference and diversity, there is also a sense in which it is a process which displaces 'culture' in its ethnically framed, regional or national sense. The agents of cultural globalization are means of exchange, but they are also cultures unto themselves. Significantly, they spectacularly contribute to the standardization, homogenization and routinization of contemporary world-spaces. The screen (television or computer), the airport, the arcade, shopping mall, freeway, tourist precinct, theme park, resort and the modern city itself are all expressions and outcomes of this effect of cultural globalization. Insofar as they represent an abstract culture of homogeneity which encircles the globe, they form a mutually reinforcing, interlocking system of world-spaces which displaces the geographies of space 'as a "fact" of nature' (Harvey 1989: 249) which preceded them.

In looking at a variety of new 'spaces' which sustain communication, consumerist and tourist cultures, this book also explores how cultural globalization significantly 'outruns' economic globalization as a force in global transformation. In doing so it discusses the interrelation between two of the most prominent agents of globalization – telecommunications and tourism – by specifically looking at the way they have altered the perception and fabrication of contemporary 'world pictures'.

However, telecommunications and tourism should not merely be viewed as industries, as this only diverts our attention from their status as agents of global cosmopolitan culture.[5] Both are at the forefront of facilitating the most central characteristic of modernity – movement, whether of persons or information.

They are at the centre of the processes by which, as Zygmunt Bauman has argued, 'globalization creates the ephemeral' (Bauman 1998: 78).

By way of its ephemerality, global culture asserts its own peculiar culture system, rather than a system for connecting and serving 'fixed' regions of economic and nationally defined stability (cf. Nunes below). A consequence of this is that there can no longer be considered to be any 'natural borders', 'only ones created by socio-technical systems' (Bauman 1998: 77). Such terms as the 24-hour society (Moore-Ede 1993), time-space compression (Harvey 1989), and so-called 'technological space-time' (Virilio 1997) such as 'cyberspace time' (Nguyen and Alexander 1996; Lee and Liebenau 2000) have all been advanced to address the disjuncture between the local and the global. As Bauman points out, such division is expressed most acutely in the polarization between two classes of mobility – tourists and vagabonds. He describes two polarized worlds, the world of on-the-move elites and a world bound by locality.[6] In each, space is experienced very differently.

> For the first world, the world of the globally mobile, … space has lost its constraining quality and is easily traversed in both its 'real' and 'virtual' renditions. For the second world, the world of the 'locally tied', of those barred from moving and thus bound to bear passively whatever change may be visited on the locality they are tied to, the real space is fast closing up.
>
> (Bauman 1998: 88)

For Bauman, those deprived of the world of mobility may have access to virtual means of achieving such travel by way of the display of travel exploits on television – forced to accept the '*virtual* accessibility of distances that stay stubbornly unreachable in non-virtual reality' (1998: 88; italics in original). This is because persons in the second world must live with the dull compulsion of 'heavy' and resilient 'space' in which, except for the virtuality of television, 'nothing ever happens' as they endlessly channel-search for ways to 'fill the void' and 'kill time' (Bauman 1998: 88–9). For tourists, especially the growing 'international middle class' (MacCannell 1999: 13), space does not matter, since spanning every distance is instantaneous. They live in *time* rather than space – a 'perpetual present' in which, unlike the residents of the second world, they are constantly busy and 'time poor'. Bauman's ideal-typical classification of these two kinds of cultural identity proclaims also that there is a logic which draws all individuals into one or the other of them. Paradoxically, each admires the world of the other; the second world yearns for mobility, whereas the first yearns for home.

As Pico Iyer declares in *The Global Soul*, 'never before in human history … have so many been surrounded by so much that they can't follow' (Iyer 2000: 28). These 'nowherians', as he calls them, 'live in the metaphoric equivalence of international airspace (the human version of cyberspace, in a sense) …. [Their] memories might be set in airports that look more and more like transnational cities and cities that look more and more like transnational airports' (Iyer 2000: 23).[7]

Because 'space' in its binding, historical forms is of no value to the tourist and traveller – whether those that travel by locomotion or on the Internet – it is made over in terms of the demands of *time*. This shrinking of space to the demands of time often annihilates the sharing of space in the pre-virtual register – signified by the need to specify 'real-time' or ask which time-zone a communication event is occurring in. But in *virtual* spaces, spaces of instantaneous time, time is no longer lived as a constraint. Such spaces are valued for their convenience and global familiarity (see Friedman 1999; Iyer 2000). Their virtuality is less an outcome of what they *look like*, and more to do with the fact that they exist on a global plane of interlocking space. They are spaces which *seemingly* allow anything-anywhere-anytime (cf. Graham, this volume), such as: cyberspace itself; the autonomy of mobile telecommunications; the way that the combination of the motor car and the freeway are so compellingly viewed as an embodiment of personal freedom; the 24-hour cultures of airports; casinos; fast-food chains and hotels and tourist enclaves within travel destinations of all kinds. Telecommunications and tourism are marketed on the basis of 'convenience' – either you never have to leave home; you never have to leave your hotel resort; or, if you do have to leave, transfers have been prearranged. Such marketing necessarily produces standardization. At the same time, familiarity demands that 'cultures of convenience' reduce themselves to a limited number of styles, as is evident in the popularity of 'chain' retailers, or the establishment of a limited number of browsers on the World Wide Web (cf. Ritzer and Liska 1997).

Taken individually, the urban and technological forms associated with 'virtualization' may be seen to be fragmenting the experience of geographic community, as Pico Iyer suggests. However, at the same time, the convertibility between these forms produces a standardization of experience which can itself become a centre of attachment – a kind of ontological security we find wherever we go. As Walter Anderson suggests, we live in an age of 'open community systems' which are not merely reducible to a monocontext like cyberspace but relate to the potential for mobility in general (Anderson 1999). To commute or communicate – both terms being etymological cousins of *communis* – is to realize community by some form of exchange, no matter how abstract that community is.

Whether we are on the World Wide Web or trekking the path prescribed by a tourist brochure, familiarity overwhelms what differences we might perceive. Such 'virtualized' spaces themselves become the destinations of culture in a way that overtakes an appreciation of regional, national or ethnic culture. We arrive at a destination to find that the kinds of worlds we had just left have followed us.

The preference for 'sights' over sites, and the ceaseless packaging of historical identity, are made all the more exotic in the face of the disappearance of sites that are not able to be commodified, or have already been replaced by a virtual landscape.

However, the virtualization of space – urban, tourist and global – cannot be reduced to the world of media and representations. This opposition between the virtual, as referring only to media, and the non-virtual, as places which are

visited in embodied form, only limits an appreciation of how the spaces of the tourist/leisure class may also be considered virtual spaces, spaces which have remarkable continuities with media-generated kinds of virtuality, a matter that is worth exploring in more detail.

Theorizing virtual spaces

The distinction between space, as a place to which individuals are bound, and spaces, which provide an experience of open and autonomous mobility, is central to this volume. The fact that, increasingly, the places which are visited by members of Bauman's first world are fabricated in ways which annihilate the sensibility of the local is instructive here. This is true whether we are speaking of immersion in cyberspace, as a global place inhabited every day, or of the phenomena of mass tourists being channelled into theme parks, casinos, resort-worlds and shopping malls. There is much to learn from the architecture and geography of these worlds in order to understand the culture of globalization, for in studying them it is possible to uncover a logic which connects virtual space to the globalization of capitalist culture.

In contemporary cyberculture literature, the idea of virtual space is most commonly confined to an understanding of the computer-mediated management of the body's senses (see Rheingold 1991; Sherman and Judkins 1993; Benedikt 1991).[8] In being restricted to the relation between an individual and a computer-generated immersive environment, such an account of virtual reality (VR) does not allow for the possibility of more than one person existing and interacting in VR at the same time – a condition which has been given the name cyberspace (cf. Benedikt 1991). Unlike solipsistic VR, however, cyberspace can be a place where persons meet, but at the same time it does not have to be *totally* immersive. For example, in a virtual community it is true that each person is immersed in the same medium which structures the kind of information that can be sent and received, but there is also a large number of 'unprogrammed' sources of information, namely from other human beings who are constantly acting and reacting within a composite of technical/human, programmed/unprogrammed information (cf. Nunes and Crang in this volume for explorations of social interaction as an articulation of cyber/urban worlds). Moreover, cyberspace is composed of computer-mediated worlds in which predominantly text-based communication can occur. Thus the medium itself only allows immersion in the processing of flows of typographic information.

The analogue of the computer as facilitating the solipsism of VR and the virtual communication of cyberspace is indeed an important one, as we shall see, for it reveals the importance of the mathematization of space – be this architectural, locomotive or audio-visual – in which it excels in producing simulations.

Computer-generated simulations have been hailed as such a 'pure' example of VR that they have been advanced by one proponent as a benchmark by which to re-acclaim non-virtual space. A.R. Stone ventures 'reality' as very wide band-

width, because people who communicate face-to-face in real time use multiple modes simultaneously – speech, gestures, facial expression, and so on (Stone 1992: 614–15).

However, Stone's bold equation of 'reality' with communication from the standpoint of the virtual problematically reduces communication itself to interaction between only two interlocutors. Secondly, it assumes that communication is the only significant event which might occur in such virtual environments. What Stone and a number of other theorists of virtualization tend to overlook is the fact that, increasingly, virtual spaces are not simply places for pre-given individuals to find communion – they are themselves places which transform behaviour and identity (see Meyrowitz 1985). Indeed, we can take lessons from communication theory itself, with the recent adoption of medium and 'ritual' theories of communication (Carey 1988; Liebes and Curran 1998; Rothenbuhler 1998) which argue that individuals do not interact with each other through communication technologies, as 'transmission' models imply, but with mediums themselves. Whether this be in our anxiety to download our e-mails; our need to keep a television on in the background; the desperation we feel when our car has broken down and we are 'off the road'; or when something goes wrong on our holiday and, separated from the networks we are accustomed to in our domicile, we panic; these are all examples of the need to be 'plugged' into a network. Being able to flow in these networks and mediums is extremely important as, to be denied travel and movement in any techno-social context, is to be outcast from the sociality of these mediums, a sociality which must be practised all day, every day, for integration to be secured.

In interacting with mediums and networks of flow it matters little whether such mediums are architectural/locomotive, audio-visual or digitally based. As recent cyberspace literature has shown, the *intensity* of interacting with digitally generated mediums need not be any different from other contexts of interaction (cf. especially Turkle 1995). The idea of 'practising' an engagement with physico-mathematical or electro-magnetic mediums rather than 'Cartesian' space is a theme central to ritual theorists of communication from Innis and Carey to Meyrowitz and post-McLuhanist theorists. However, in my view, the formulation of Michel de Certeau, that '*space is a practised place*', is invaluable for thinking across physical and virtual spaces (de Certeau 1988: 117). Such a formulation allows us to think how interaction with electronic medium spaces is just as tangible as interacting with physical 'Cartesian' space.

Given his argument, introduced by an analysis of the nature of walking and *flânerie*, it is a short step to realizing the continuity between this kind of interaction and interaction with virtual mediums. In other words, we may well relate to our physical environment by practising routines of traversal in our everyday life, but we also do this in our navigation of 'media-spaces'.[9]

Nowhere is this uniformity and security more powerful than in the personalization of media spaces which are also *highly mobile*. The Walkman and the

mobile phone are apposite in this regard. Everyday wearable technologies like these mark a reversal of the prominence of physical over media spaces. They suggest an intensity of association which is amplified by the fact that they are used in 'public spaces' but completely privatize the space of the user (Chambers 1990).[10] Only the user can associate the physical with the media-space (the manner of this association may itself be a practised place, as when individuals choose to select certain kinds of music according to their physical location). They can also be agents of the 'reterritorialization' of that space – in which the disembodied immersion provides the dominant space of attachment, making physical location less relevant or irrelevant.

De Certeau's analysis of space opens up the realization that the most important feature of space, whether it be virtual or Cartesian, is how individuals interact with it, not whether it becomes a place in which individuals *visibly* interact with each other. The way in which icons on computer screens, or the look of desktops for Internet browsers, are configured can be just as sacred and important to individuals as the security that might be offered each day in our commuting when we find landmarks have remained fixed in our environment. Moreover, in practising the same 'pathways' of travel to get to their destinations each day, individuals construct their own space, just as they do by tuning in to the same media programmes every night (where the presenter announces 'it is good to be with you' or 'thanks for joining us'), or visiting the same chat rooms, ICQs or IRCs on the Internet.

From the foregoing examples it is possible to see how journeying within virtual environments is just as 'real' as journeying within non-virtual ones. Indeed, for some, they may be more 'real', insofar as non-virtual environments are vulnerable to endless physical change. When physical environments change so frequently around us, either because of the flow of capital in 'development' of all kinds or because we ourselves are moving through them as travellers, electronic environments may, in fact, offer more stability and familiarity as places to practise.

Here, de Certeau's definition of space becomes all the more pertinent. The more difficult it is to make sense of the physical world, the more an imperative exists for the routinization or institutionalization of the practising of place. This is true whether we are speaking of the virtuality of electronic society or of the globally mediated space of the traveller.[11]

While de Certeau's formulation allows us to distinguish the difference between virtual and real space, we ought not overlook the fact that such 'practicings' are also stratified in systems of status and power. Networks of flows offer mobility to those who are otherwise denied it in their economic or political circumstances. Bauman claims that ' "access to mobility" … has been raised to the topmost rank' among global factors of stratification (Bauman 1998: 87). This observation is supported by Pearce's argument that there has recently emerged in tourism the idea of a 'career ladder' in which travellers distinguish themselves with their own status system (cf. Pearce 1996 and also Ryan 1998). Indeed, consuming spaces that provide mobility are among the most prized

items of global status – being on the Internet, being able to recount impressive travel stories, obtaining the newest communication device, mobile phone or PDA (personal digital assistant) are, for many, new avenues for collecting cultural capital.[12]

The formation of homogenous world-spaces through technologies of globalization make possible newer subjectivities, like Iyer's 'nowherians' (who might also be called 'everywherians'), who are defined by their mobility over large, borderless distances. The 'tourist citizen' (Morris 1990), the Net citizen (Star 2000), the recreational consumer and the abstract cosmopolitan (Rojek and Urry 1997) can be distinguished from traditionally 'internationalized' subjects like the traveller, the *flâneur*, or the financier of modernity.

While many studies have been undertaken of the singular relations between technologies of globalization to different kinds of space, their convergence in the production of new kinds of world-space is relatively under-theorized. Particularly relevant to the understanding of emerging urban and fabricated space is the exploration of the manner in which information, communication and transportational forms converge to take on the qualities of global or abstract virtual environments rather than local and concrete 'Cartesian' ones (Ostwald 1997). This is itself indicated by the fact that the contemporary individual finds it difficult to 'cognitively map' (Jameson 1992) his or her geographical and social location, as the individual is said to achieve a greater sense of place by belonging to a virtual community (Rheingold 1994).[13]

Another difficulty that the individual has with cognitive mapping is created by the instability of meaningful cognitive and social environments. Certainly we can see this with the rapid transformations in information and communication environments[14] when, in something as simple as having to learn an upgraded computer program, we soon become caught up in the imperative for change, rather than realizing the use-value that the computer might yield. Such is true of tourism also. As Rojek and Urry have recently pointed out (Rojek and Urry 1997), not only do people tour culture, but cultures themselves, and the objects and processes which compose them, are increasingly in a state of migration and flux. Urry has recently argued that, at the end of the twentieth century,

> The sheer density and velocity of signs and images have taken a quantum leap. One effect is that places and cultures are instantaneously communicated around the world, both intentionally through place marketing and more generally through the economy of signs.
>
> (Urry 1999: 85–6)

The touring cultures thesis has become a central plank in accounts of cultural globalization, be they theoretical (cf. particularly Bauman's 'Moving through the world vs. the world moving by', in Bauman 1998), or ethnographic. As our fellow-traveller Pico Iyer sees it,

> what complicates the confusion of the Global Soul is that, as fast as we are moving around the world, the world is moving around us; it is not just the individual but the globe with which we're interacting that seems to be in constant flux. So even the man who never leaves home may feel that home is leaving him, as parents, children, lovers scatter around the map, taking pieces of him wherever they go.
>
> (Iyer 2000: 27)

Individuals can 'travel' with their body or with the Internet to another place at the same moment those 'other places' are increasingly internal to the place from which we set out to do this travelling. At the same time, individuals become increasingly separated within cities (in the urban reality) and between cities (in the tourist realities) at the embodied level, while re-integrated through the virtual possibilities of (within cities) telework and community Internet networks (see Morelli and Terranova in this volume) or the construction of worlds where, for the tourist, embodied interaction is quarantined to the spaces of the tourist industry – the 'official' guided tour, the theme parks, the casinos, the shopping malls and the resort. The quarantining of tourist space is also a function of the disappearance of public space and, in some regions, the emergence of cities of fear (see Koskela in this volume), indicated by the rise of surveillance and the retreat of populations to the suburbs and to privatized ways of accessing public space, such as the Internet. Meanwhile, in the face of the disappearance of physical public space, utopian dreams of community find renewal in the construction of 'local' online communities, communities which the 'outsider' can also visit, but only in cyberspace (see Carter and Grieco 2000).

But the nature of 'visitation' is problematized in a telematic world when 'local' constructions of place are increasingly achieved through global technologies like the Internet and architectures of entertainment. The confrontation of 'difference' and otherness (be it in virtual travel or embodied travel) is emptied out when we arrive at a destination to find that the object-worlds we had just left have followed us.

In the face of such homogenizing tendencies the specificity of culture and the identity of the local easily become revalued, signified by the recent widespread establishment, at universities, of Heritage studies, Museum studies, CD-ROM archive projects and the reclamation of regional studies in numerous guises as primary signs that the objects of these domains are less available to cultural experience unless via institutionalization. Here the local reconstitutes itself in the face of the global; heritage reasserts itself when urban change attains abstract and virtual forms; aesthetics are revalued in the face of spectacle; and even ideas of cultural authenticity are revived in environments saturated by postmodern appropriation.

The virtualization of global space

> Cyberspace, I want to suggest, did not simply appear fully formed at a point in the second half of the 1980s. Rather, it has its origins in nineteenth century attempts to speed up circulation time, and has taken on a new importance with the globalization of consumption oriented capitalism.
>
> (Stratton 1997: 254)

In his essay 'Cyberspace and the globalization of culture' (Stratton 1997), Jon Stratton, following James Carey, argues that it is the telegraph, invented in the first half of the nineteenth century, which should be hailed as the precursor to cyberspace. It was the telegraph which, more than any other technology, first marked a 'decisive separation of "transportation" and "communication"' (Carey, cited in Stratton 1997: 254).

> It is … not the introduction of computers which marks the beginning of the production of cyberspace, but the increase in the speed of communication over distance to a point where the time taken for the message to traverse that distance reduces to a period experienced by the sender and receiver as negligible.
>
> (Stratton 1997: 254)

The transport of bodies and messages by the wheel, sail and steam was, for the first time, challenged by the transport of messages at speeds dramatically different from what had previously existed.

Until that separation had occurred it was the speed and nature of transport which had governed the subjective perception of space-time. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch suggests of the nineteenth century, 'Transport technology is the material basis of potentiality, and equally the material base of the travelers' space-time perception' (Schivelbusch 1979: 44). It is less a matter of how transport or telecommunication 'shrink space' than how the relationship between distance and potentiality influence individual perceptions and, equally (following Durkheim), social norms and expectations about space.

However, the most important feature of the telegraph was that it also relieved the railways of their uncoordinated efforts at setting time zones on national and intranational bases, by which travellers could meet arrivals and departures. Stephen Kern argues that, in fact, it was 'the scheduling requirements of railroads that directly necessitated the institution of World Standard Time' (Kern 1983: 2). Whereas the invention of the mechanical clock in the fourteenth century enabled the recognition of a *uniform* public time within national frameworks, the telegraph beckoned the development of a *global* standard time – realizing Newton's projection of a mathematic, objective linear time.[15] Through

the telegraphic broadcast of universal time, combined with the colonial application of Euclidean maps to peripheral regions, the world becomes a homogenous spatial zone with a common reference.[16]

It was at this decisive period in global change, resulting largely from European developments, that the culture of the *longue durée* which had characterized European feudal society was to come to a swift end (see also Mattelart 2000). The permanence of cities, of seasonal agriculture and of maritime activity as the defining conditions of feudal existence were to be replaced by the formation of global systems of integration. The *longue durée* is usurped by speed and movement, hitherto derided. As Stefan Zweig (1964: 25–6) accounts for the unhurried and secure world that preceded 'end-of-the-nineteenth-century' Austria,

> Speed was not only thought to be unrefined, but indeed was considered unnecessary, for in that stabilized bourgeois world with its countless little securities, well palisaded on all sides, nothing unexpected ever occurred … The rhythm of the new speed had not yet carried over from the machines, the automobile, the telephone, the radio, and the airplane, to mankind; time and age had another measure.
>
> (cited in Kern 1983: 127–8)

Significantly, since the telegraph, and via telephony and radio broadcast, the speed of communication has always outrun the available means of transportation. Consequently, expectations about the degree to which, and the speeds at which, persons should travel were, by the turn of the twentieth century, raised to unprecedented levels. The movements of Taylorism, Futurism and the stream-of-consciousness novel were all reflections of the new 'need for speed'. And today, the spectacular rise of global travel indicates a normalization of such a culture, and an acceptance of the 'world as a whole' and what we described earlier as the ephemerality of place in which there are no natural borders. These expectations about speed and the proxemics of global geography have been central to crashing through the *idée fixe* of a singular spatial register to everyday sensibilities about the role of perception in the production of space.

The history of globalization has certainly been marked by the 'overcoming of spatial barriers' between city states, between regions and continents – which is the conventional understanding of globalization discussed earlier. In this conventional view, modern telecommunications, facilitated by optical-fibre and satellite communication systems, are but more sophisticated extensions of features that were embryonic in the telegraph; the differences between old and new telecommunication systems are regarded, in this view, as a matter of degrees of time-space compression *within* telecommunication mediums. But nothing can take away from the telegraph the fact that it was the first global communication medium to break away from transport as the means of carrying messages.

However, a more radical thesis than the genealogy of overcoming spatial barriers is the proposition that space, itself, is a kind of barrier – something

which turns our attention to *mediums* rather than what they mediate. In this view, it is not 'singular space' (Lefebvre 1991) which is somehow modified and acted upon instrumentally by technology (cf. Feenberg 1991); rather, hitherto 'lived' space is overcome by the production of new spaces (Harvey 1989: 258).

As Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis were able to demonstrate, techno-spatial contexts take on a kind of virtual quality when they radically depart from the mediums out of which they have grown (McLuhan 1994; Innis 1964). Implicitly, McLuhan's work contains an early theorization of virtual space. This is because, for him, mediums are not just communicative but involve any eotechnical apparatus which can extend the body's senses and biological capabilities (psychic or physical). Such a capability earns the status of media which, in its broadest and most recent forms, may be mechanical or electric (cf. McLuhan 1994).[17] 'Media, by altering the environment, evoke in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act – the way we perceive the world. When these ratios change, men change' (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 41).

Arguably, a most visible incidence of such change which is supportive of McLuhan's claims was occurring in Europe precisely when changes in transport, architecture and image technologies were most concentrated in time. As early as 1881 George Beard, in his *American Nervousness*, had blamed the telegraph and railroads for intensifying 'competition and tempo', attributing to this an increase in the incidence of a host of medical and psychological problems. Beard held that, in these circumstances, individuals were only capable of so many sensory impressions per unit of time, which, in Beard's America, had reached a super-critical level (Kern 1983: 125). The beginning of the twentieth century in Europe and America was one marked by a freneticness and disorientation resulting from changing time-space conditions. The new technologies produced a radical change in consciousness and perception. As Crary explains, 'Over the course of the nineteenth century, an observer increasingly had to function within disjunct and defamiliarized urban spaces, the perceptual and temporal dislocation of railroad travel, telegraphy, industrial production, and flows of typographic and visual information' (Crary 1990: 10–11).

Significantly, a number of parallels can be drawn between the impact of defamiliarization at the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the twentieth. McLuhan's 'age of anxiety' (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 8–9), which has culminated in the dot.com frenzy and globalization shibboleth of today, can be viewed as a *fin-de-siècle* repeat of the 'age of nervousness' (Kern 1983: 126) which characterized Europe and America after the 1880s.[18]

Today, the Internet is viewed by some theorists, like Kroker and Virilio, as spawning a new empire of space. The 'Internet does not simply lay down a mesh of connections between real-life nodes/computers, annihilating space; it creates and maintains its own simulated world to replace the physical world of spatial distances' (Nunes 1997: 166). For some it is the site of 'hyper-deterritorialization' (Stratton 1997: 724) and technofear (Jordan 1999), inhabited by nowherians who have, in some measure, forfeited identities they might have had

in the physical world of space that has been left behind (Iyer 2000). Given the ferment implied by these contemporary developments, it not surprising that the work of McLuhan has recently seen a dramatic resurgence in the light of the rise of digital culture (see Bukatman 1993; Dery 1995, 1996; Nguyen and Alexander 1996; Smart 1992; Meyrowitz 1995; Jordan 1999; Levison 1999; Jones 2000; Wark, 2000).

As McLuhan suggests, 'as we continue to associate a uniform, connected, and visual order with the "rational" we find ourselves in an "electric age of instant and non-visual forms of interrelation … at a loss to define the rational" ' (cited in Smart 1992: 116). Barry Smart argues that this disjuncture between the mechanical and the electric makes it possible to follow McLuhan in mounting an explanation for postmodern culture. The deterritorialization of institutional power relations, demise of grand narratives and decline of modernity as a project of rational unity can be read through McLuhan's claims that, today, we take as our yardstick for everything the 'rational' templates of the age of print, broadcast and the mechanical/mimetic reproduction of reality. Because the contemporary digital self hasn't quite let go of the uniform, continuous and sequential forms of 'reason with literacy', the electric age appears virtually synonymous with the 'irrational'. Certainly the popular and academic reception of complexity and chaos as motifs within advertising, as well as *fin-de-siècle* monographs, testifies to this.

Where mechanical technologies are based upon partiality and fragmentation, visual separation and analysis of functions, explosion and expansion, electronic technologies are 'total and inclusive', synonymous with 'implosion and contraction' (Smart 1992: 116–17). A parallel explanation is advanced by Crary, but in terms of a transition from analogue to digital culture. For Crary, computer-generated imagery, and its fabricated visual analogical 'spaces', is 'radically different from the mimetic capacities of film, photography, and television'. Digitally derived imagery provides for techniques that are 'relocating vision to a plane severed from a human observer'. Increasingly, 'visuality will be situated on a cybernetic and electromagnetic terrain where abstract visual and linguistic elements coincide and are consumed, circulated, and exchanged globally' (Crary 1990:1–2).

As we shall see, this new digital ontology contributes to urban and mobile settings which exhibit much more 'total' forms of virtualization than 'primitive' virtual realities. Such virtualization is expressed in the appearance of new kinds of distinctively global forms of space wherein the world is revealed in a certain way.

The globalization of virtual space

As suggested in the previous section, it is possible to advance two versions of the 'conquering of space through the production of space' thesis. The first version says that communication and transportation technology and other agents of globalization, like tourism, produce a new condition – namely, the shrinking of

the world – the production of a 'global village'. Then there is a second version: space is indeed 'conquered' by the production of new spaces, but this is mainly by way of the construction of artificial and virtual worlds, 'sealed' world spaces which, to varying degrees, *displace* older organizations of space and the manner in which they are 'lived' as a 'state of nature'.

Certainly, the contemporary trope of virtual reality stands out as a spectacular challenge to the operation of space as a barrier. VR is merely a more extreme version of the 'programmed' management of the perception of space engendered by comparatively more 'simple' socio-technical environments, environments which are less technologically enclosed. As we shall see, virtual spaces may be electronic, audio-visual and architectural.

Compared to spaces experienced 'as a fact of nature', virtual spaces can be described as highly 'phenomenological' – generated out of perception. They are also very transient and ephemeral. It is the latter property which *invites* individual rather than collective perceptions of virtual space.[19] For individuals engaged with that space, experience is a function of the fact that it is *produced in time* on a *moment-to-moment* basis *by* individuals as much as by socio-technological 'programming'. This temporality is indicated, for example, by the fact that on the World Wide Web such transience needs to be recorded in an individual 'global' history record, recorded on a user's computer, together with the traces of biography left by bookmarks. The extraordinary popularity of wearing portable music devices or Walkmans when travelling, is another example of the 'personalization' of space.[20] The relationship between what is being listened to on this device and the physical environment which is also occupied when an individual is so immersed is unique to that person. While not all sensorial stimuli might be exclusive to one person, the association of the different stimuli, for example aural and visual, is *completely* private.[21] Likewise, the intimacy of being on a *mobile* telephone changes the user's relation to the space around them, as well as that of those who might be physically present but not immersed in such a semi-enclosed space.

The point of all of these means of personalizing space, is that they grant individuals a flexibility and autonomy over how they interact with their environment. It is not so much that individuals really have enhanced choice, it is rather that the operation of a kind of 'choice effect' is central to the experience of this space – i.e., what is sometimes called interactivity. The individual gains an autonomy in such spaces unthinkable in the immutability of the given spaces of the *longue durée*.

Indeed, the fetish quality that has recently been attributed to 'interactivity' is merely symptomatic of the influential growth of the kinds of virtually produced spaces being examined here. So much so that the object-relations which accompany 'interactivity culture' are often made over in terms of it – it is what makes possible interaction with electronic rather than biological pets or even other human beings.[22]

As trope and metaphor for examining the importance of socio-technical spaces there are other features of VR which are worth outlining for how they

can guide us in our investigations. Already we have discussed interactivity, the illusion of control, and the necessary transience of virtual spaces. Three further elements can be listed. Virtual space tends to be sensorially closed (either totally or partially), it is self-referential, and it is easily globalized.

It is instructive that as a *hardware technology* used in medical, military and leisure applications VR is a (mostly) totally sensorially closed environment, where no distraction can occur if the accuracy or control of the surgeon, the soldier or the VR game enthrallee are to be assured. Whether actions within the virtual environment also have synchronous consequences in an 'outside' physical world depends on the application. What is important, however, is that within these environments experience is standardized, serendipity is minimized, and the relationship between means and ends (capacity and outcome) is fixed.[23] Such mathematized environments are most beneficial for achieving narrowly defined ends – attaining a score, hitting a target – but the user should not be distracted by information outside the program parameters of the hardware.

To summarize the key features of 'virtual space', therefore, nine characteristics may be identified:

- it is a sealed reality (architecturally, electronically or audio-visually enclosed or semi-enclosed);
- the closure of VR may be physical or metapsychological (by distraction);
- it substitutes an 'outside' world (which becomes its content);
- it is convincing or stimulating enough to distract the immersee from the displaced 'outside' world;
- it is interactive (in providing flexibility and autonomy as to how the space is experienced);
- it enables an illusion of control (it offers choice of stimulation in a way that is far more flexible than historical reality (a dehistoricization of experience));[24]
- it provides the gaze with much more mobility than a non-virtual world – the opportunity to 'travel' with the mind or the body;
- where virtual technologies are a simulation they offer safety not guaranteed by the 'real thing';
- because they are constructed spaces which service the demands of consumption, communication or mobility (for example, the casino, cinema, and the airport respectively), virtual spaces are easily globalized.

On the last point it is necessary to distinguish between virtualization of global space and the globalization of virtual spaces. As we have seen, the telegraph, as precursor of 'cyberspace', is significant not because it is capable of being globalized; on the contrary, it makes possible cultural globalization in the first place, converging with migration, travel and commodity exchange.

There are yet other classes of virtual spaces which today have a fully developed global existence and reach, and which share various virtual characteristics in ways which continue to find convergence between themselves, while also

becoming disconnected from the local geographies in which they are found. They are also technologies of globalization because they are reproducible anywhere. At the same time the natures and properties of these virtual spaces are not without precedent – rather, they are expressions of practices of looking and listening which are, as Crary suggests, 'deeply historical' (Crary 1998: 1).

The observations advanced here concerning the properties of VR allow us to identify so-called 'primitive' virtual realities (Ostwald 1997) as proto-technical building blocks of the globalization of virtual spaces – track, arcade and cinema.

Track

A precursor most paramount to virtual globalization and the mathematization of space discussed in this volume is the railroad. The railroad, and the sensibility of tracked motion, transformed the experience of travel, the mobility of the gaze, and the nature of practices of representation. The railroad, as Schivelbusch explains, 'puts an end to the intensity of travel … The speed and mathematical directness with which the railroad proceeds through the terrain destroy the close relationship between the traveller and the travelled space' (Schivelbusch 1979: 58).

In his celebrated account of the psychodynamics of railway travel, Schivelbusch details the ways in which the railroad radically transforms landscapes, in a manner which bears remarkable similarity to changes under way by the hand of recent technologies of travel. It is speed which transforms the 'space of *landscape*' into a *more* abstract '*geographic* space'. Following Erwin Strauss:

> In a landscape … we always get to one place from another place; each location is determined only by its relation to the neighboring place within the circle of visibility. But geographical space is *closed*, and is therefore in its entire structure transparent … Geographic space is systematized. The modern forms of traveling in which intervening spaces are, as it were, skipped over or even slept through, strikingly illustrate the systematically *closed* and constructed character of the geographical space in which we live as human beings.
>
> (Strauss cited in Schivelbusch 1979: 58; italics mine)

Most noticeably, a key outcome of the railway journey is to create closures of time-space packets, right in the midst of the landscape. This does not refer to the cabin itself but to the perception of space through the application of speed to the body.

Prior to the emergence of the railroad, geographic connections evolved for the traveller from change in the landscape. From the train compartment window, 'the depth perception of pre-industrial consciousness is literally lost: velocity blurs all foreground objects, which means that there no longer is a foreground – exactly the range in which most of the experience of pre-industrial travel was located' (Schivelbusch 1979: 65). The railroad severed the connection

to landscape and, indeed, to the road. As one European rail passenger of 1844 put it: 'The alternation of high and low ground, the healthful breeze, and all those exhilarating associations connected with "the Road", are lost or changed to doleful cuttings, dismal tunnels, and the noxious effluvia of the screaming engine' (Schivelbusch 1979: 58).

To attain, above all, the linearity of travel, by 'raising the valleys' and 'making the mountains low' (also a central feature of twentieth-century freeway building[25]), is a profound feature of the railroad which altered forever the socio-cultural perception of travel and space, a perception, which today is being replicated by the freeway, bullet train and aircraft travel. Indeed, even in the nineteenth century, the metaphor which made sense to those who were used to traversing landscape was to describe the train as a projectile, inside of which the individual ceases to travel, but becomes 'shot through the landscape … losing control of one's senses' (Schivelbusch 1979: 58).[26]

Schivelbusch (*ibid.*: 60) qualifies this statement by arguing that such a loss relates only to the contemplation of *landscape*, measured by the fact that train travel 'becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity'. This observation of the nineteenth-century writer John Ruskin 'represents the evaluation of railroad travel made by those nineteenth-century travellers who were still accustomed to pre-industrial travel and thus not able to develop modes of perception to the new form of transportation'. At the level of geography, the mathematical linearity of the track is able to 'Realiz[e] Newton's mechanics in the realm of transportation, the railroad creates conditions that will also "mechanize" the travelers' perceptions' (*ibid.*: 59). 'While the railroad causes the foreground to disappear, it also replaces looking at the landscape with a new practice that did not exist previously' (*ibid.*: 66). What is lost of the older order or perception[27] is, in some way, compensated for by a distinctively cultivated tolerance for rapid changes in sensorial impression.

> Increased velocity calls forth a greater number of visual impressions for the sense of sight to deal with. This multiplication of visual impressions is an aspect of the process peculiar to modern times that Georg Simmel has called the development of urban perception.
>
> (Schivelbusch 1979: 60)[28]

Railroad travel can overstimulate the gaze, but it also institutionalizes its 'panoramization'. The increasing comfort provided on trains, in which the traveller could dine, read or consort, utterly transformed what it meant to gaze upon the lands and seas passing by. With complete comfort offered from the semi-private space within 'it turned the travelers' eyes outward and offered them the opulent nourishment of ever changing images that were the only possible thing that could be experienced during the journey' (*ibid.*: 64).[29]

Because the train's velocity dissolves the foreground, the traveller is 'removed from the "total space" which combines proximity and distance … (such that) the traveller becomes separated from the landscape' viewed (Friedberg 1993).

Such an experience was becoming a feature for large volumes of travellers at the same time as the *flâneur* and shopper of nineteenth-century Europe was beginning to shop within ferrovitreous architectures made possible by iron and glass enclosures.

Arcade

> In the architectural passage, 'the mobilized gaze found its virtual analog'.
> (Friedberg 1993: 76)

At the same time as the major railroad routes were opening up in Europe, many buildings in the big-league cities were to undergo transformations that were to become the nucleus of the contemporary shopping complex which is currently generalizing itself globally to an astonishing degree (see Morris, this volume).

In a development which was to preoccupy the critical theorist Walter Benjamin, between 1800 and 1850 around 30 arcades were constructed across Paris, providing enclosed spaces for people to stroll and look. Such an architectural space fascinated Benjamin because it so completely challenged the place of the observer, as well as the practice of *flânerie*. Indeed, the arcade could be seen as a threat to creativity and autonomy which characterized *flânerie* in the way in which it instituted a controlled regime of managing commodity consumption and the conventions of visual consumption.

The division between the continuous movement of persons along the arcade and the controlled, opulent display of commodities that could be viewed in shop windows is a metaphoric reversal of the way the speed of the train separates the traveller from the endless motion of the outside space which is contrasted with the unchanging, atmospheric quality of the carriage interior. Indeed this analogy accords with the unique conception of a train-traveller as not merely a spectator but as a commodity, or a living 'parcel' (Schivelbusch 1979: 58–9). The experience of transit transforms the traveller into a commodity. It changes the gaze of the railroad traveller to one stimulated by panoramic display. Lastly, it enables the mass movement of commodities which comprise the panoramic display of the arcades. The cultures of moving through the world versus the world which moves by, come together, in the act of looking.

This is why the arcade – or any virtual space which controls and manages visual consumption – is such an unmistakable associate or 'virtual analog' of environments of travel.[30] To understand this is to link 'activities that transformed the mobility of the gaze', including tourism, consumerism and visual consumption, to the architectural spaces that encourage such consumption (the arcade, the department store, the exhibition hall) (Friedberg 1993: 61).[31]

Even in the nineteenth century such worlds bear a remarkable number of the features that mark the Disneyfied display of contemporary 'supermalls'. As is argued below (cf. Crang, Holmes, and Morris) shopping malls share with large entertainment spaces a need to indulge in 'totality'; the provision of an entire

world of diversity within the one continuous space and, by such provision, displace the outside world referentially, metaphorically and physically. This might mean substituting nature, or the street, in some way by commodifying and interiorizing it.[32]

The introduction of iron-and-glass construction was a singularly important innovation towards the symbolic and physical displacement of those gazes which still contemplated the natural environment. The street, and staged representations of nature, were brought into the confines of public buildings such as market halls, train stations and winter gardens. The widespread construction technique of iron-frame columns and beams, which supported vast stretches of glass, encased a 'seasonless' space, a 'theatre of nature'.

> Under the glass canopy of the winter garden were concentrated all the amusements that had been strung separately along a street or a boulevard: a concert hall, a music hall, a theatre, a cafe, an art collection, billiards rooms, a restaurant, and dance and banquet halls. Embracing all this was a panorama of fountains, waterfalls and galleries with cascades of plants.
>
> (Friedberg 1993: 64)

The most significant feature of the arcade and its successor, the modern shopping mall, is that it is a place for the circulation of commodities. The shopper in the arcade not only acquires goods to be consumed but is also able to travel, in reverse, to the places from which the goods have come, without having to move outside the enclosed space.

Like arcades, shopping malls are terminal points of transport infrastructure, previously situated adjacent to railway stations but today most commonly available at the end of freeway off-ramps and entry shoulders. Continuous also with arcades is the fact that enclosed malls turn the shops away from the parking lot and in towards each other. However, unlike arcades, the sheer scale of shopping malls makes them a 'one-stop' culture, an extension of the convenience of being able to park your motor car once. Paradoxically, once parked, shoppers typically have to walk much further than they would do with street-based shopping. As an architectural manifestation of the freeway, these centres do not allow for 'efficient' shopping practices once the motorist has become a shopper. *Flânerie* takes place inside a completely corporate retail space in which de-realization of place quickly results in the so-called Gruen transfer (Crawford 1992: 14), the point at which intentionality becomes aimless wandering, and the 'determined stride' turns into 'an erratic and meandering gait', something akin to channel surfing on cable television.

Cinema

By the 1920s in Europe and the US, the panoramic function of arcades, displays, dioramas and panoramas were in decline as a development far more sophisticated in its representational power and complexity began to take its place.

Just as the railroad was an optical device which transformed perception, cinema, like the arcade, was a fabulous machine for travelling. We have already seen how the forerunners of cinema – the dioramas/panoramas – were metaphorically linked to the motion of the track. Cinema provided a means of travel, even more easily available to those locked up in the overcrowded prison-world of the metropolis. For Walter Benjamin, 'film ... burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of a tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling' (Benjamin 1968: 236).

Cinema spectatorship relies on an equally distanced contemplation: a tableau, framed and inaccessible, not behind glass, but on the screen. Seen in the context of the following architectural and social history, cinematic spectatorship can be described as emerging from the social and psychic transformations of the arcades – that the consequent mobility of *flânerie* produced.

On a continuum of convenience, cinema – and today television – offers a mobility in which spectators never have to leave their seats. It enables forms of mobility and visitation which its physical analogues, high-speed travel and arcade/mall shopping, make arduous by comparison. The final destination of such a continuum is the redundancy of the body's mobility itself, or at least its retreat into mobility of the hand and eye alone, in the case of the 'remote control' and the computer mouse. With cinema, the country can be brought to the city,[33] and other cities can be brought to the city, through the screen. The remarkable circulation of screens in the public domains of cities is one expression of this. On city buildings and sports stadia or in department stores, but most spectacularly through the renovation of the centuries-old institution of the cafe with the cybercafe and video-cafe, screens have come to dominate urban settings.

The cybercafe and video-cafe, notably popular amongst tourists and commonly located around tourist precincts, are metaphorically and functionally very interesting. They affirm a clear commitment to meeting and exchange, but with an entirely removed ethos of physical distance. For example, few persons meet face-to-face at a cybercafe, as face-to-screen immersion precludes dialogic contact in any form other than electronic. The cybercafe is the physical replica of the on-line cafe which exists only in cyberspace itself. What is interesting is the inversion in operation here. The virtual does not take its referential cue from the physical; rather the opposite is true.

But the kinds of travel involved in such cafes are much more open-ended than the closed environment of cinema. In such an environment there exists a more comprehensive severance of the observer from the space of historical time outside. This latter space is excluded, in the intense relation with the screen, whose virtuality is proportional to its capacity for closure.[34]

We can add to cinema's capacity for virtual closure the way in which it achieves a kind of mechanization of perception. What is revealed at the point of production of moving images is that, not only is cinema an extension of the arcade and the panorama, but its modes of representation have their firm foundation in the railroad journey. That is to say, like railway travel, cinema is indeed

a machine for travel which it even engenders contours of travel which are a direct product of the track.

In cinema, shots like the pan, the swish pan, the tracking shot and tripod-dolly shot are each made possible by the use of camera tracks and orbital control that is possible from tripods. Moreover, the tripod rotation is an analogue of the sensorium of panoramic travel which occurs in vehicles of speed. The panoramic outlook of the railway journey demands the rotation of attention of the observer in order to maintain focus on objects and recover what is being annihilated by speed. These repetitions of time and space are each examples of the mathematization of the line, the orbit and the rotation.

With the track, the arcade and cinema it is possible to demonstrate how, following Crary, the body, most especially the observing body, becomes 'a component of new machines, economies, [and] apparatuses', whether these be social, libidinal, or technological (Crary 1990: 2).

Ways of travelling: ontologies of distraction

As we have seen in the last section, a theme most central to virtual space is the transformation of the contexts of gazing – of how individuals look at things. Observation of the environment – namely, *flânerie* – is replaced with controlled environments of observation.

Globally standardized constructed environments, like the shopping mall, freeway, airport, casino, hotel resort or theme park, increasingly adopt the hallmarks of virtual space discussed above. Such spaces tend to be architectures of entertainment and consumption, which each in some way facilitate mobility – mobility of the gaze or of the embodied traveller.

These spaces, and the rapid globalization of them as virtual spaces, can be seen to be the physical manifestation of the virtualization of global space, discussed earlier, which is made possible by technologies of space-time compression, from the telegraph to the Internet, from the railroad to the jet aircraft.[35]

A second theme that links these spaces together into global world-spaces is that of 'travel' – the way in which both virtual travel and embodied travel are collapsing into each other. Between these two fundamental kinds of travel an inversion of qualities can be observed. Virtual travellers immerse themselves in 'virtual technologies' like cinema and the Internet in order to achieve ever greater scales of 'realism', of powerful representations and windows onto worlds.[36] Empirically, embodied travellers increasingly visit fabricated visual spaces. We know from the culture of 'post-tourism' (see Rojek 1994) that the tourist industry selects such sites for consumption within the travel package or, as Chris Rojek argues, 'tourist spaces attract tourist flows' (Rojek 1998: 35). Studies of the selling of cities to tourists (cf. Waitt below), but also of 'redevelopment' projects in big-league cities such as New York and Tokyo, suggest that urban planners privilege a clientele of tourists/consumers (Cybriwsky 1999; see also Judd 1999). The persistence of heritage tourism is defined almost exclusively by its differentiation from visits to 'non-places' (see Augé 1995; Morse 1998: 102–8;

Morris, this volume) – places that are distinguishable by the way they interiorize visual consumption and derealize their immediate environment. Heritage tourism prospers today almost exclusively by the fact that it elevates 'places of memory' above the ahistorical non-spaces of post-tourism.

In the first case there is a dephysicalization (Bauman 1998: 19) of travel, and in the second there is travel to geographical 'non-places'. Interestingly, both kinds of travel involve a kind of split personality – modes of being somewhere without being there at all. In the first case the individual occupies public spaces in which the mind is typically distracted by movement and neurasthenia; in the second, the individual stays at home, but travels the world by channel-surfing with the remote control or in the catacombs of the world-wide network of computers.

This split personality is powerfully analysed in the work of Margaret Morse. Where the gaze finds itself dispersed between an inside and outside world, private/public space, there are interesting metapsychological consequences. The 'outside' is derealized, while the private world is parcelized into what Benjamin called a 'phantasmagoria of the interior' (Morse 1998:109). Morse is able to show how this is true for driving a car on a freeway, shopping at the mall and watching television: environments which she calls 'ontologies of distraction'. Moreover, each activity has psychodynamic qualities which are entirely continuous with each other.

In each of these cases a unique psychological space is created in parallel with the physical space – a 'transportation of the mind in two dimensions'. Either the mind's-eye experiences the body as an inert sensorium traversing the world at high speed, or as immersion in an enclosed space past which the world flashes. In the latter case, the individual occupies 'A "bubble" of subjective here-and-now strolling or speeding about in the midst of elsewhere' (Morse 1998: 112).

The concept of ontological distraction can be applied to many of the phenomena discussed in this volume – interacting with screens, everyday commuting, or being a tourist. Cinema and television are obvious illustrations of this phenomenon: as Friedberg suggests, 'Postmodernity is marked by the increasing centralization of features implicit (from the start) in cinema spectatorship: the production of a virtual elsewhere and elsewhen, and the commodification of a gaze that is mobilized in both time and space' (Friedberg 1993: 179).

The notion of distraction can be related to the condition of neurasthenia which George Beard first coined in the nineteenth century (cf. Rabinbach 1992). A similar condition was named by Georg Simmel, in his classic essay 'The metropolis and mental life', as the blasé attitude:

> There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon which is so unconditionally reserved to the city as the blasé outlook. It is at first the consequence of those rapidly shifting stimulations of the nerves which are thrown together in all their contrasts … [The] incapacity to react to new stimulations with the required amount of energy constitutes in fact that blasé attitude which

> every child of a large city evinces when compared with the products of the more peaceful and more stable milieu.
>
> (Simmel 1971: 329)

Our fellow travel writer whom I have been citing here gives an excellent description of his own experience of 'global' neurasthenia in relation to Los Angeles Airport:

> And so, half-inadvertently, not knowing whether I was facing east or west, not knowing whether it was night or day, I slipped into that peculiar state of mind – or no-mind – that belongs to the no-time, no-place of the airport, that out-of-body state in which one's not quite there, but certainly not elsewhere. My words didn't quite connect, and the world came to me through panes of soundproof glass. I felt myself in a state of suspended animation, five miles above the sea – sleepy, light-headed, unsure of how much pressure to put on things. I had entered the stateless state of jet lag.
>
> (Iyer 2000: 59)

The modern freeway motorist is also subjected to a kind of 'transported immobility' for which the act of travel itself imparts a psychic stasis. In a discussion which contemplates the extension of *flânerie* to driving a car, Mike Featherstone argues that

> The much commented on distracted nature of modern experience … is intensified in driving a car, in which the swings between immersion and detachment, between various insides and outsides occur. Here we can differentiate between the inside as the glass and steel passenger compartment and the outside as the street and road, or the inside as the fleeting thoughts and memories of the driver and the outside as the here-and-now of both these realms of the everyday world.
>
> (Featherstone 1998: 915)[37]

Such an experience of motion is continuous with railway travel, as we have seen, a journey both static and mobile which takes place within a 'closed and autonomous insularity' traversing space 'independent of local roots' (de Certeau 1988: 111). The carriage window, like the car windscreen, allows for the high-speed review of images which are consumed at a distance, something delimited by the speed enabled by the track or road itself. The tourist gaze is merely a cultural variation of such a technical reduction of visual consumption. To return to the screen again: 'The organized spectatorship of tourism – packaging this transported immobility in a narrative of "staged authenticity" – followed a historical development similar to that of the panorama, diorama and cinema where, as the gaze became more "virtually" *mobile*, the spectator became more physically *immobile*. Tourism relied on a more physically mobile subject, whose experiences were preplanned' (Friedberg 1993: 61).

For this reason tourists may arrive at a destination, while not being there at all (see Waitt, Holmes, King and Spearritt below). Seen in this way, the resort becomes a virtual landscaped analogue of such travel. Moreover, if the resort is a replication of the other resorts all over the world, it goes some way towards displacing the sense of place which surrounds it. This is particularly true to the extent that some tourists choose not to leave the security boundary of the resort proper, but generally true of the spatial register from which the resort gets its reference – it addresses other resorts around the world more than the region in which it is located.

The dephysicalization of travel

In the contemporary period, all the destining technologies which demand that urban and mobile settings will be revealed in a certain way (mathematized, chronometric and virtualized) and not another have been brought into the urban home. For example, the necessities of locomotion have been displaced by telework and teleshopping. Just as television brings all kinds of leisure activities into the home – most obviously cinema – the personal computer brings work into the home as much as the possibility of being able to shop without leaving home (see Morelli, Graham and Ostwald this volume). Add to this the rise of so-called 'cybertourism' and travelling on the Internet (Nunes 1997; Rojek 1998) in which 'in the age of the easily replayable, accessible time-shifting' visual culture, individuals have become temporarily mobile 'time-tourist[s]' (Friedberg 1993: 169).

Sherry Turkle, in *Life on the Screen* (1995), describes how main street, the mall and the cafe have been replaced by virtual on-line substitutes. In the US 'We seem to be in the process of retreating further into our homes, shopping for merchandise in catalogues or on television channels, shopping for companionship via personal ads' (Turkle 1995: 235). The potential for public space to be contracted to the home on the basis of digital simulation is remarkable – a kind of electronic enclosure movement (cf. Robins and Webster 1999). In *Times of the Technoculture*, Kevin Robins and Frank Webster persuasively argue that private sacrosanct areas of social life like leisure, child-rearing and domestic activities are today subject to a kind of digital enclosure comparable to the way the European Enclosure movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries denuded subsistence farming, privatized common land and associated means of production. It is not that corporate entrepreneurs directly discern instant profitability from promoting digital products; rather, it is the ability to entangle information commodities in the most intimate domains of social life which, historically speaking, is beneficial for individual companies and for informational capitalism as a whole. Digital technology differs from other kinds of technological mediation in that it cannot relate to the senses except by an interface of sound or vision. Therefore, when it becomes an intermediary in the achievement of goals its functions are more mysterious than those of non-digital technology, in that users are deprived of direct *physical* control of its properties.

The electronic enclosure movement leads to the phenomena of micro-urbanization and personalization where already private spaces become increasingly personalized: the car dashboard, the computer desktop, the mobile phone, the personal digital assistant and the home cinema. The slogans of the corporations which make these commodities perfectly reflect the appeal to mobility and freedom which promises to overcome the constraints of urbanization. 'Where in the world do you want to go today?' reads the Internet advertisement. Alternatively, the new 'packed-with-features' motor car advertisement displays the technically advanced environment of the cabin and dashboard with the car traversing the unencumbered openness of a country road, but seldom depicts the inefficiencies of commuting to work in the contemporary metropolis. The point about this latter scenario is that, insofar as the consumer is in control of their immediate environment (be it a motor car or a screen environment), these are no longer merely transient means to other ends; they are significant 'social contexts' themselves.

This idea was first glimpsed by Raymond Williams with his concept of mobile privatization, advanced in *Television: Technology and cultural form* (1974). Mobile privatization refers to the historical realization that 'at most active social levels people are increasingly living as private small-family units or, disrupting even that, as private and deliberately self-enclosed individuals, while at the same time there is quite unprecedented mobility of such restricted privacies' (Williams 1983: 188). Williams suggests that such privatization provides an excellent unit for global capitalism, insofar as it is abstract and can be standardized:

> The international market in every kind of commodity receives its deep assent from this system of mobile-privatised social relations. From the shell, whether house or car or employment, the only relevant calculations are the terms of continuing or improving its own conditions.
>
> (Williams 1983:189)

Since the time Williams first theorized such a space, the tendencies he described have intensified in industrially advanced societies to a remarkable degree. However, the mobility possible within the private architectures of the motor car, office and home unit has been dramatically extended by a range of information and communication technologies in which it is possible to travel without physical movement. Such movement occurs in the displaced realm of increasingly digital simulation, the realm Lyotard (1984: 194) has called 'the stuff of nature' for the postmodern individual. Within such an environment, virtual consumption radically shifts and dephysicalizes the place of the observer:

> Most of the historically important functions of the human eye are being supplanted by the practices in which visual images no longer have any reference to the position of an observer in a 'real', optically perceived world. If

> these images can be said to refer to anything, it is to millions of bits of electronic mathematical data.
>
> (Crary 1990: 2)[38]

Travelling to and through non-places

Coterminous with the rise of virtual travel, experience of the physicality of the built environment has radically been called into question (Featherstone 1998: 912; Boyer 1996; de Certeau 1988). Just as computer-mediated and audio-visual environments displace the physical world, it is instructive to explore, from a reverse direction, how many of the urban spaces in the real world (shopping malls, freeways, theme parks, museums, etc.) are experienced in ways continuous with the perception of computer-mediated virtual space (cyberspace, the Internet, etc.) (see Morse 1998; Ostwald 1997).[39] Moreover, while disembodied travel is achieved in the virtual domesticity of the home, outside the home architectures of entertainment, consumption and mobility are currently undergoing a remarkable virtual convergence of form.[40]

As we have seen in the discussion of the arcade and the mall, globally standardized shopping malls share with large entertainment spaces a need to provide an entire 'world in a mall' (Crawford 1992) continuous with the features of arcades and fairs from the nineteenth century we have already explored. Los Angeles International Airport is itself an entire city, with 50,000 employees, including a Coast Guard station and a private hospital (Iyer 2000: 41–77). Shopping malls also share with other architectures like airports the function of being nodal points for *circulation*, be this of bodies or of commodities (cf. earlier discussion of traveller as parcel). The shopping mall, the casino, theme park and airport are each examples of spaces which service very large flows of consumers/travellers.

The magnitude of these flows is all the more remarkable given the extent to which they occur privately owned in built environments – thereby being subject to the demands of commercial rather than public provision of services. These include the need to commodify such spaces as much as possible as well as to provide security services and panoptic surveillance to regulate their use. Such world-spaces are at the forefront of how 'traditional public spaces are increasingly supplanted by privately produced (though often publicly subsidized), privately owned and administered spaces for public aggregation, that is, spaces of consumption … most commonly malls' (Flusty 1997: 51). In such 'post-public' spaces 'access is predicated on the ability to pay'. These are places of exclusivity which require 'high levels of control necessary to prevent irregularity, unpredictability, and inefficiency from interfering with the orderly flow of commerce' (Flusty 1997: 52). As Hille Koskela and Brian Morris show in their chapters below, these managed environments police and normalize consumption by the placement of security cameras, but they also disorient consumers in the very form and structure of their architecture. Each is capable of the Gruen transfer and neurasthenia.

On a physical level these world-spaces can also be thought of as non-places, the architectural equivalent of the dephysicalization of travel which is achieved through heightened scales of visual consumption. They are places of ephemerality which have no history, and little that can be related to at a physical level (cf. Augé 1995: 77–8). On a virtual level, of course, these places are extremely familiar to the global self – or, as Iyer relates in the language of the journeyman, 'everywhere is made up of everywhere else' (Iyer 2000: 11). What they may lack in stylistic singularity they more than make up for in their global repetition.

To the extent that the physical appearance of these consumption places is without stylistic idiosyncrasy, lacking all endowment with an unmistakable style that characterized modernist aesthetics (cf. Jameson 1983), they are given the name of 'non-places'. Non-places can easily be identified by the fact that they can't be photographed. That is to say, in a culture in which, as Susan Sontag suggests, 'everything exists to end in a photograph' (Sontag 1979: 24), non-places are remarkable for their placelessness. One shopping mall looks the same as all other malls, or, at least, what differences there might be are so banal compared to their similarities that photography is pointless.

A second way to identify non-places is to assess their amenability to *flânerie*. Paradoxically, non-places, which are foremost places of consumption, encourage nothing but *flânerie*. They are controlled shrines to the practice of walking and gazing which take advantage of urban and tourist contexts in which *flânerie* has been removed from the street – because of the danger that is found there – or of the replacement of the street with the freeway. As Buck-Morss points out (Buck-Morss 1989) the *flâneur* is not a pedestrian but an advertisement-consumer. Being seen by other *flâneurs*, who are themselves each ritualizing their practice of consumption, affirms the one-dimensionality of the architectural surrounding. Interestingly, however, where the street has been removed *flânerie* is tightly quarantined and the gaze is turned inwards.

The banishment of the *flâneur* from public space instructively points to the centrality of locomotion in social life. Where new transport systems of train, bus, tram and car have driven corridors of speed through urban landscapes, the *flâneur* and public space are driven into controlled sites of walking. The separation between the interior of these safe-houses for walking and the outer world is extreme. On the outside, the carriages of locomotion provide transport but they also provide protection from the speed that is demanded of the mechanized body. In places where corridors of speed dominate, the abolition of the pedestrian is total. As Jean Baudrillard has suggested, in freeway-saturated metroscapes: 'If you get out of your car … you immediately become a delinquent' (Baudrillard 1988: 58).[41]

The weightless speed of locomotion (see Urry 1999) which brings the pedestrian to the halls of walking can be contrasted with the time-absorbing neurasthenia of such halls, the same kind of neurasthenia that can also be found in kind in cybertourism where the street is placed on the screen, where the electronic *flâneur* (Featherstone 1998: 912) is able to daydream (Rojek 1998: 41). The

screen is less like a city square, as Paul Virilio (1997) suggests, than it is like a fabricated and regulated world-space.

Shopping malls, in particular, are designed to maximize the act of consumption (by encouraging lengthy stays or the need for rest and refreshment). At the same time, as the 'logical extension' of the movie theatre (Friedberg 1993: 120), they actually minimize the quality and frequency of embodied interaction. Public and private are perfectly inverted in shopping malls. They concentrate bustle while paradoxically abolishing communion. Such complexes are also spaces of totalizing *displacement*. Without being able to reference a co-ordinate outside the shopping mall, the individual's understanding of place is confined to the self-referential mapping of the complex itself, which becomes its own reality. The displacement achieved by such technological worlds often rests on appeals to function over aesthetics: for example, the advertized convenience of shopping in a concentrated space, or the diversity of experiences that are possible within the one theme park.

The reason why shopping malls are more extensively discussed than other global world-spaces (like casinos and airports) as universal non-places is because they are destinations for urban commuters as much as for travellers and tourists. In bringing all of these social types together in a virtual 'nowhere', shopping malls abolish the possibility of meaningful heritage and produce maximal levels of neurasthenia.

These transformations in urban and tourist settings can be usefully approached by looking at the interrelations between urban spaces, tourist geographies and cyberspace.

Urban space, cyberspace and global space

> The circuited city of the future will not be the huge hunk of concentrated real estate created by the railway. It will take on a totally new meaning under conditions of very rapid movement. It will be an information megalopolis. What remains of the configuration of the former 'cities' will be very much like World's Fairs – places in which to show off new technology, not places of work or residence. They will be preserved, museumlike, as living monuments to the railway era.
>
> (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 72)

From many directions, and at astonishing speed, a host of forces – of population, of technology and of politics – find their intersection in the contemporary global city. In a few years the globe will contain twenty cities with populations of over 20 million.[42] The forecasts of the early 1990s that globalization and information technology are agents of the dilution of cities as centres of power and wealth have proved mythical.

Certainly, developments in communication and transportation technologies have radically changed the way the city is lived, but they have not led to a

diminution of its power. Instead, the idea that information and communication technologies decentre the distribution of populations has occurred *within* urban centres, as the sprawl of *suburbanization* typifies large cities everywhere. Physically and temporally, city-dwellers are more and more segmented in their round of life by the kinds of spatializing technologies we have already explored. In turn individuals are reliant on technologically extended social relations in order to overcome this segmentation.

These technologies also go hand in hand with the globalization of the city, through the now intense circulation of bodies, people and information. There is a two-edged process here: the geographical segmentation of populations within cities, and at the same time a growing solidarity with a world-system of cities. By being lifted into these flows and circuits, cities have in fact grown in size, while losing their capacity to provide the normativity, the sense of concreteness, that they might have had in the nineteenth century.

The city is being less and less lived as constraint and more and more as a terminal of tourist and information flows. Individuals are increasingly separated from an appreciation of the city's compositional aspects as they take up the consumption of global virtual spaces. Nevertheless, in post-industrial nations it is the information economy which feeds the spectacular growth of cities. As Graham (1999) notes, cities compete for telecommunication infrastructure like they do for tourists. To this extent they partake in a global space of referring to each other, rather than to the nations in which they are geographically located.

Drawing on a study, conducted with Simon Marvin, of the relations between telecommunications and the city (Graham and Marvin 1996), Stephen Graham's chapter in this volume attempts to dispel myths about the virtual city and of the power of telecommunication as an agent of the anywhere/anytime society. For Graham, the future of telecommunications is clearly centred on cities. He addresses in turn myths about urban dissolution, the universal access to the powers of mobility and communication that cities can offer, the fallacy that telecommunications are simple replacements for transport technology as well as the claims that local or 'glocal' culture has been simply overpassed by telecommunications. Graham's observations are central to understanding the interrelationship between wheels and wires, transportation and communication, which, rather than being a relationship of substitution, are mutually constitutive in various ways.

For example, the technical as well as metaphorical links between the motor vehicle superhighway and the so-called information superhighway are extensive (see Jones 1995: 10–11; Nunes 1997). With freeways, like the electronic media, an intensification of the cellular aspects of the suburbanization process follows, which contributes to the further ghettoization of distinct settings of workplace and home, as well as concentrating shopping and consumption into fewer and fewer zones.

The motor car and dependence on telecommunication are two sides of the same coin: where our social world becomes geographically fragmented we increasingly rely on an electronic assembly of some kind to overcome urban

atomization. In extreme post-urban, post-geographical settings like Los Angeles, this relative isolation brings fear of incursion from imagined 'undesirables', leading to the so-called militarization of urban life. In such cities we can also witness the development of security suburbs and gated communities with their own electronic surveillance and personnel to exclude those who are unable to attain such a lifestyle of architectural seclusion. As the cycle of fear towards strangers created by such isolation grows, and the motor car becomes an agent of protection, strangers become the objects of road rage: the conventional freeway's counterpart to 'flaming' on the Internet.

As a technology for shrinking distances and re-establishing connections, the freeway is not dissimilar in many of its features to the function which the new communication freeways perform in our lives. The Internet paradoxically brings individuals together at the same time as it separates and fragments them.

In the 'use' of these technologies, be they information superhighways or vehicular superhighways, individuals usually experience a greatly enhanced autonomy by way of speed and control, as long as they stay within that environment. However, the 'programmed' nature of the technology actually prohibits forming mutual relations of reciprocity outside the operating design of the technological environment. At the same time, individuals are typically removed from control over the structure of the technology and increasingly lack the means to form relations independent of that structure. Moreover, we have little control over the fact that such environments, which allow us to overcome suburban isolation while at the same time contributing to this isolation, can be sold to us as a commodity.

As cities grow in their scale and abstractness the older technologies of urban connection – the motor car, the television, the telephone – can become inadequate to the maintenance of daily cycles of connection. It then becomes attractive for urban realities themselves to be re-invented as a commodity – the virtual community, neighbourhood watch, the private lifestyle security village or suburb, the multifunction *polis*. These ideals of virtual urbanism are 'actively promoted by corporate interests and ideologies' (Robins 1999: 34). The marketing of such urban developments normalizes the incidence of virtual urbanization where the individual, having lost connection to geographic association, is inversely empowered with radical private control over simulated and temporal spaces (see Featherstone 1998: 910).[43] The magnitude of such control, however, is only proportional to the mobility and reach afforded by technologies of simulation and communication. Arguably, the astonishing take-up of the Internet, and its increasingly central role in urban interaction, is a prime indicator of the ways in which individuals reach out for mobilities which are otherwise denied them in urban existence.

The marketing of virtual urbanism also has real effects on the experience of 'pre-virtual' urban worlds. The renovation of urban spaces by computer networks, mobile telecommunications and 'primitive' cyberspace is beginning to annul the importance and experience of the physicality of that space (see especially Boyer 1996; Ostwald 1997). Moreover, the standardization of architectural

styles resulting from virtual mapping techniques and the replacement of physical urban landscapes with 'datascapes', are flattening out the visual and cultural differences between the urban settings of information societies. Virtualization is, together with tourism, an emerging factor in the standardization of city cultures – what Lefebvre calls 'the general urbanism of neocapitalism'. It is less the case that we live in a global village than that we live in the age of the global city.

At the same time, the difference between the experience of physical space and electronic space is also beginning to flatten out. It is not that electronic space, and in particular *digitally-generated and mediated* spaces, are somehow annihilating physical space, as some writers have extravagantly ventured (see particularly Mitchell 1995). Rather, it is more the case that such digitally generated frames of perception are altering the cognitive/aesthetic appreciation and creation of fabricated space in general. If, as Crary maintains, 'visual images no longer bear any reference to the position of an observer in a "real" optically perceived world', then it is necessary to explore the domain in which that reference continues to be maintained – those 'millions of bits of electronic mathematical data' (Crary 1990: 2).

The issue of the division and relationship between cyberspace and physical space is one which a number of chapters in the first section of this volume address. The two opening chapters tackle, head-on, a thorny dilemma of contemporary cyberculture – the problem of explaining continuities between urban space and cyberspace.

Mark Nunes notes in the first chapter that in much contemporary literature 'one finds an increasing "urban" flavour to cyberspace' – one emblematized by the unusually high representation of tourist and city promotion on-line, as well as 'virtual cities' which exist entirely in cyberspace. However, it is erroneous to think of cybercities as strictly imaginary or mental realms as, for Nunes, virtual urban spaces constantly slide between representations as well as inhabited realms in themselves – what he calls a space of multiple figurations and multiple virtualities. At the same time physical cities which they 'represent' are increasingly conforming to virtual architectures.

Nunes deals with the epistemological obstacles which stand in the way of properly thinking about 'virtual cities' by enlisting the theoretical resources of Henri Lefebvre. The first is the tendency towards dualism in 'cybertheory' between the physical and the virtual. In a trajectory which complements de Certeau's formulation of space as a practised place, Nunes points out that lived social space emerges where concept and practice intersect, a negotiation between levels of spatial production between 'spatial practice', conceptual 'representations of space' and experiential 'representational spaces'.

A second related problem is the 'assumption that cyberspace describes a homogenous social space' which has only very recently developed. Rather, is it argued that Lefebvre pointed out thirty years ago ways in which late or pancapitalism is attracted to the production of a technological utopia, a computer simulation of the future, which is driven by the instrumentalization of the capitalist mode of production. Promoted by very powerful corporate interests, the

Internet has increasingly become that technological utopia. The anytime-anywhere dream is not about universal access but about marketing mobility in the context of already uneven spatio-temporal development, upon which global processes of urbanization are based.

While, as a result of corporate promotion, the Internet might have emerged as the redemptive site of urban renewal, Mike Crang argues in his chapter that the popular metaphors through which cyberspace is understood reflect a range of anxieties and desires for urban life. For Crang, the discursive tropes through which cyberspace is thought profoundly condition the sense of context which individuals have when the 'electropolis' and urban life are inmixed. At the same time these tropes express urban desires about a city-imaginary: the city as both real and imagined, and 'lived' via definite electronic practices. In particular, four city-imaginaries are explored – cities as nodal points of global flows, suburbanized telecities, communitarian utopias and electronic assemblies as a new public sphere – in order to unravel the significance of electronic sociality in the contemporary city.

Like Nunes, Crang sees the city as central to the imagination of virtual topographies but at the same time the city is having an identity crisis. The city is at once a service centre for information flows, but each city could also be conceived as a mere suburb of a virtual omnipolis made possible by what Graham has recently referred to as 'global grids of glass' (Graham 1999). Either scenario sees the city as central to a 24-hour network of global interaction, in which the city is travelling around the individual, while the individual is in relative stasis.

Following Virilio, Crang asserts 'Whereas the modern city was marked by the generalized mobility of its embodied population through mass transit or motor vehicles, now it is the virtual city that moves, leaving the population in a generalized inertia' (cf. Crang below). However, Crang questions the argument that this electronic nomadism flattens out the experience of the city in a uniform way. Indeed, within cities there is much dislocation and disconnection for those 'stranded in local time' and geographically cocooned by micro-urbanization. 'Social life is atomized, leaving individuals seeking narcissistic pleasures in "placeless" environments devoted to consumer capitalism.' The physical placelessness of the shopping mall is, however, overcome by connecting with virtual communities which bypass the spatially divisive city. In a sense, it is arguable that such connection is central to modern sociality in the sense that the global city (as either omnipolis or as node) has eclipsed the now less significant physicalist city.

Crang positions cyberspace as the new *agora* of the virtual city – but from an unexpected viewpoint. Rather than repeating a common tendency to see the *agora* as nomenclature for community-through-singularity, he points to its role in Greek antiquity as a place of fleeting interaction and heterarchy, a necessarily incomplete public sphere which is open to currents and fragments which finally make the identity of the city ambiguous and uncontainable.

The rise of the global city, its central role in social and political processes, as

well as the fact that it is being 'lived' with a new complexity, is practically verified by the new and special relationship which has developed between the Internet and global-city demonstrations which Tiziana Terranova's chapter examines. Austin, Seattle, Davos, Melbourne and Prague … in rapid succession, the powerful economic institutions of global capitalism – the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the World Economic Forum – have been targeted by travelling activists who have mobilized protest via the Internet (see also Wainwright *et al.* 2000). Such co-ordination would result in a physical manifestation outside a shrine to international capital where these institutions meet – themselves virtual spaces – stock exchanges, world trade centres or casinos. For Terranova, the disjunction between the mobility of capital and the relative immobility of labour and groups subject to the activities of capital is undergoing a transformation. It is precisely because cities have become spaces of flows of information and people that access to mobility, by those who have lacked the means of global assembly, has recently grown into networked social movements. Such movements have aggregative, decentred, event-led forms of political protest which are different from their predecessors. They are a response to the virtualization of 'spaces of control' which characterize the information networks of capitalist culture. They use spectacle and traditional media to make statements while employing virtual communication to achieve an identity as collective as the institutions they oppose. At the same time they also reclaim the street, which can be re-imaged as a spectacle precisely because the electropolis has otherwise abolished it.

Whereas the new telemediated social movements can be related to the omnipolis, the next two chapters in this collection focus on the suburbanized telecity. The virtualization of urban spaces is reflected in the informationalization of work (telework), trust and community (surveillance). These two realities lie either side of the screen, where telework is both an outcome and catalyst for screen-based interaction, while the constellations of surveillance, which saturate urban life today, render individual behaviour into quanta of information consumed by a state and corporate gaze.

In 'The space of telework' Nicola Morelli presents an array of empirical data which models the way telework, telecommuting and telecentres are renovating urban landscapes in advanced industrialized countries. The transformation of cities is most dramatically being influenced by two important factors: the shift from products to services and the intense use of information and communication technologies. Such processes are complementary and tend to change both the shape and organization of urban patterns and work activities. Furthermore, the two processes are expected to drive socio-technical systems towards a shift from material-intensive patterns to information-intensive ones.

This shift determines that cities are destined to be revealed in a certain way. When information becomes the unit-base of work and employment, the pressure on urban and transport structures of cities to serve physical flows of commodities and people decreases. The information worker no longer travels in the same way. At the same time, the fact that telework practices exchange complex infor-

mation, between and within cities, at a speed once only possible *within* cities, leads to a further reterritorialization of the city. It is not that 'telework' globalizes only in an economic sense. Rather, telework is, at its core, an already globalized form of activity, eradicating the historical separation between workplace and household that has, for so long, been a mediator of the development of cities and the attachment that people have to them. However, these processes are only observable in post-industrial and post-industrializing cities. Following Castells and Sassen 'Globalization is increasing the distance between physical flows (concerning production, distribution and consumption of products) and information management'. This exacerbates the polarization between information cities and regions which undertake production while split off from the omnipolis.

Just as telework is visibly transforming urban space, so too are practices of urban surveillance, from the video camera to database accumulation. Hille Koskela demonstrates how physical and 'emotional' spaces are *produced* by the placement of cameras, by panoptic urban architectures and by the convergence of database surveillance with audio-visual surveillance. The main focus is on surveillance in publicly accessible spaces such as shopping malls, city streets and places for public transport. The chapter explains how space under surveillance is formed and how it is related to power structures and human emotions. A distinction is made between video surveillance, data surveillance and cyberspace surveillance, which, Koskela argues, converge towards the formation of what some theorists call the superpanopticon (Jordan 1999). All forms of surveillance normalize the depersonalization of urban spaces. Visual surveillance converts embodied interaction into images, whereas electronic surveillance reduces everyday life to quanta of information. However, as the image becomes so easily digitized, more spheres of interaction (including work) are rendered as a digital standing reserve.

A significant feature of electronic surveillance is that the less visual and more disembodied it is, the more totalizing, because free of geography, it becomes. Moreover, an examination of panoptic apparatuses shows that it is not just transnational architectures which homogenize city-cultures into homogenous forms. Psychological and emotional spaces produced by surveillance are also capable of being standardized, spaces which are everywhere and nowhere, thanks to this cosmopolitan virtual gaze.

Tourist geography as virtual reality

What do the Internet, virtual environments and tourism have in common? Are the experiences of travel in virtual worlds and travel with our bodies collapsing into each other? This section of the current volume examines the extent to which urban and tourist spaces are increasingly converging. The top-ranking places which tourists visit – tourist 'bubbles', shopping malls, theme parks, museums and resorts – already exhibit many of the characteristics of virtual spaces. As agents of globalization, tourism – with its virtualizing gaze – and the Internet – as the support for computer-mediated space – each share remarkably

similar relationships to the destinations they offer, and the destinations themselves exhibit common features also.

The issue of the gaze is central here: we have already seen how certain architectural, transportational optical devices mobilize the gaze and change the experience of travel. The distracted shoppers' gaze, the surveillant gaze, and the gaze upon the screen, are kinds of looking which dovetail with the tourist gaze. As John Urry has been arguing for over a decade, the eye, the camera and the screen dominate the experience of the traveller in general and the tourist (the 'sight-seer') in particular. Through visual consumption, places are transformed into destinations and attractions. As Susan Sontag suggests, through photography 'destination becomes us' (Sontag 1979). Herein lies a powerful convertibility between the image and the tourist's destination. Where a tourist destination does not already resemble the image we had of it, it becomes even more subject to having its photo taken, at which point it can be domesticated and converted into a form of private property.[44]

The more geographically remote a tourist destination is from the domicile of tourists themselves, the more obsessed western tourists are with converting these sites into images through photography (see O'Rourke 1987). Conversely, a tourist destination may already be converted into a form which simplifies visual consumption. This may be in the form of souvenirs and postcards, the establishment of specialized icons especially for the tourist to gaze upon. Jonathan Rabin argues that every city in the US minimally contains a photogenic tourist object (Rabin 1990). Indeed travel and tourism can be differentiated by the nature of images: the traveller resorting to the photographic objectification of nature and culture (MacCannell 1999); tourism immersed in the kitschification of sites (Eco 1987); and post-tourism entailing the provision of entire worlds of simulation (Baudrillard 1982).

In my own chapter 'Monocultures of globalization', I explore this last form of image world. The chapter explores the way in which tourist environments are compressed and standardized into the themed worlds and resorts of the tourist/culture industry. It examines how perspective is de-realized in the virtual environments of resort worlds as 'the observation of environment is replaced by environments of observation'. These environments, be they shopping centres, holiday resorts or themed worlds, can provide unique and uneven experiences but do so within the flat homogeneity of multi-national architectures. The difference between tourist destinations of all kinds and the urban landscapes of the metropolis begin to break down, making it more difficult for the tourist to confront otherness through the uniqueness of place. As I explain (below), 'By way of the remaking of consumer landscapes (be it residential or tourist) in terms of privatized and increasingly totalized fabricated worlds, multi-national capital empties out the nature of travel itself. Origin and destination become joined by the standardization of features of the built environment at each location.'

The site chosen is the archetype in Australia for this kind of analysis. The Gold Coast is both a tourist destination, visited by ten times its residential popu-

lation, in any one year and also a large city in itself. Such a site provides an excellent setting for exploring the contradictions of tourism, particularly issues of attachment to place, where it is locals who are strangers in their own city, while the tourist is the native.

However, this division between local and tourist only holds to the extent that 'place' actually asserts itself in the forms of attachment individuals have to geographic space. Today cities display common global and globalizing features which refer much more to each other than they do to the geographical place in which they are located, features which even colonize non-urban domains. To support this claim we need look no further than the fact that cities need 'tourist bubbles' – places which are reserved for tourists (Judd 1999) with attractions to instil them with a uniqueness that overcomes their continuity with other cities.

The post-industrial imperatives of tourism have led to international cities competing with each other for tourist catchment. Cities refashion themselves in terms of tourist geographies. Here the construction of a city's image is 'programmed' to the scopic grids of advertising in order to do this selling. The reinvention of the city as a 'destination', rather than a domicile, is highly relevant (see, for example, Kearns and Philo 1993; Kotler *et al.* 1993; Gold and Ward 1994; Fainstein and Judd 1999; and Waitt this volume).

At the core of such redevelopment lies a most curious enigma which Susan Fainstein and Dennis Judd have articulated well: 'whereas the appeal of tourism is the opportunity to see something different, cities that are remade to attract tourists seem more and more alike' (Fainstein and Judd 1999: 12–13). This is true at the level of commodities, architecture and entire cities. Fainstein and Judd argue that 'the multinational firms that supply the convention hotels, chain restaurants, and retail establishments follow a corporate model, resulting in the seemingly endless proliferation of atrium lobbies, formulaic restaurants, and chrome and glass boutiques selling identical merchandise'. As Sharon Zukin (1998) also observes:

> There is a Hard Rock Cafe, or at least its retail store, in every major city of the world, new suburban-style shopping centres throughout eastern Europe and a Disney Store even in the duty-free zone of Heathrow Airport. Competition among corporations and cities has led to a multiplicity of standardised attractions that reduce the uniqueness of urban identities even while claims of uniqueness grow more intense. The diffusion of 'urban' lifestyles and the expansion of production sites, throughout suburbs and exurbs, further erode historical spatial differences.
>
> (Zukin 1998: 837)

Fainstein and Judd also point out that the high end of the tourist market (travel for conferences, forums and conventions) has to handle large numbers of people who expect a uniform product, forcing suppliers to provide standardized services and facilities.[45]

Outside such high-end facilities, in cities which have experienced urban decay – like the Gold Coast, Baltimore, or Detroit – 'tourist bubbles' are becoming commonplace. They 'envelop the traveler so that s/he only moves inside secured, protected and normalized environments' (Judd 1999: 36). Those cities which remain immune from having to construct these bubbles are the big league of European cities, – Paris, London, Rome, Madrid, Athens, Vienna, Munich, Amsterdam, Brussels and Copenhagen – which lure the tourist with heritage and vibrancy. Some US cities, like New York, Boston and San Francisco, can also be included (Judd 1999: 37).

However, most heritage tourism occurs in Europe, where large cities have become very protective of what heritage remains. This fact appears as a counter-tendency to the McEurope thesis, in which there is a parallel temptation for cities to introduce theme parks and 'halls of pleisure' (pleasure and leisure) adjacent to the heritage precincts (the example of Eurodisney outside Paris). Meanwhile the post-colonial obverse occurs in the US itself, where, as Roger Keel has asked:

> are European cities not starting to look more North American just when urban planners in the United States and Canada are attempting to create urban forms that resemble European cities such as main-street designs or urban villages?
>
> (Keil 1994:131, cited in McNeill 1999: 145)

The sacralization of heritage so often takes its impetus from the fact that, under the conditions of virtual globalization, it is eroded from afar. 'As we get more reconstructions of Mediterranean Villages or Mexican saloons in shopping malls and more Thai and Chinese restaurants in city streets, so the tourist industry in the real Mediterranean, the real Mexico, Thailand, and China has to exert itself with ever more contrived representations of the apparent "reality" of these places' (Urry 1999: 85).

The mania for 'theming' – theme restaurants, theme parks and the theming of entire cities (for a model example see Stevenson and Rowe 1998) – is perhaps the strongest indicator of the arbitrary relation between place and image which is unfolding out of global tourism, a relationship which problematizes the expectations tourists have about the identity of place.

When the McPlace thesis is considered alongside the 'touring cultures' thesis, it becomes easy to appreciate why tourism offers one of the greatest challenges to the modern individual. This is the topic of Michael Ostwald's chapter, 'Identity tourism, virtuality and the theme park'. Ostwald demonstrates how the most 'ephemeral of urban spaces in the physical world and the most prosaic of zones in the virtual world' share an uncanny host of features.

Taking the theme park, both its real and virtual versions, as a model site of analysis, Ostwald proposes that tourism demands the simultaneous commodification of space and simulation of experience. The first of these characteristics is reliant on the processes of spatial distillation and compression. The theme park

attempts to ensure that the essence of a place (space, city or country), or a reasonable facsimile of that essence, is able to be evoked through the observation of a limited range of architectural monuments and landmarks. The second characteristic is closely connected to the first. It appears to provide the tourist with a simulation of the regional culture, though not from the point of view of a visitor, but as it is experienced by a local. Thus 'local' cuisine, costumes, pastimes and even identities are sampled as part of the limited exchange of cultures that the presence of the tourist promotes. This same fluidity of space, culture and identity is also found in on-line or virtual environments as well as in marginal urban spaces of the 'Cartesian' world. Could the tourist be in some way the catalyst for the transformation of real spaces into virtual spaces, asks Ostwald, or could the tourist signify the presence of a zone wherein the two states merge together?

Certainly, travellers and tourists alike share the same global subjectivity as the so-called Internet avatar, in that relationships can be entered into without any 'obligation' for returning hospitality and without committing to any bonds which last any longer than the log-on session or the two-day stop over.[46]

However, it is true that identity can establish itself differently on the Internet as well as in the midst of travel *destinations*. The difference between the traveller and the tourist is revealed precisely in the fact that tourists travel for pleasure which occurs primarily in the 'tourist bubbles' or closed 'grids' of consumption. In moving within the same series of bubbles, tourists are always meeting each other over and over again. They may dine together to compare their experience of the same packaged holiday, the same 'recommended' destination sites, and so on. In turn, the very restaurant they dine in becomes a basis for further comparisons of hospitality throughout the tourist grid. If these things are considered together, the whole culture of tourism increasingly looks like an enclosed world, rather than one which opens out to adventure and discovery.

While the theme park has had a relatively long history in the system of global competition for tourist trade, two of the most prominent sites which have become features of city skylines today are convention centres and casinos. Casinos have certainly been the most heavily promoted in the last fifteen years, leading from their presence in only a few cities in the 1980s to a modern global distribution throughout North America, Australia and New Zealand, the Netherlands and the Mediterranean (Judd 1999: 50).

It is to casinos that Brian Morris has turned in his analysis of the Crown Casino Complex in Melbourne. This casino encompasses an entertainment complex, a gaming centre, hotel and convention centre and encloses the largest interior space in the southern hemisphere. Crown also happens to be the site of the WEF forum, which began on 11 September 2000 and gained international notoriety as the place of another anti-globalization rally, the S11 protest, the significance of which is analysed by Terranova in this volume.

Morris looks at the way Crown has imported features of casino and entertainment culture from Las Vegas, how it exemplifies a space in which entertainment itself has become a commodity, and some of the local/global contradictions of

this site. In particular, the chapter zeros in on the cinematic quality of the complex – the way in which it expresses itself as the architectural version of cinematic sensation.

Morris proposes three important identities exhibited by the Crown Complex which are relevant to virtual globalization: Spectacle, Screen and Port. In lacking a historical identity, it must generate its own attractiveness; it appeals to convertibility with the mobility promised by the cinema screen, as well as being a doorway to a tourist bubble.

The chapter argues that the virtual aesthetic manifested in 'architectures of entertainment', such as those found in Las Vegas, is becoming increasingly prevalent in many other sites of consumption around the world. Architectures of entertainment are the product of convergences between historical forms and spaces of entertainment, such as theatres, arcades, gaming clubs (Buck-Morss 1989), and more recent cultural technologies that have radically reshaped how we conceptualize and inhabit contemporary urban space. An important part of that reshaping entails local citizens being trained to see their urban surroundings through a global, tourist gaze. The chapter examines the spatial logic and political implications of this emergent aesthetic, and asks what lessons can be found in these various architectures of entertainment for our virtualized urban future.

As is pointed out in the 'Monocultures of globalization' chapter, the fact that it is increasingly difficult for cities to market difference, when such differences are being flattened out by virtual globalization, has elevated so called 'event tourism' to new heights.

> The world over, local governments and corporations compete to host and present global events. Some are world events such as the Olympic Games, Expos, and World Cups. Others are place and genre specific, such as the Wimbledon tennis tournament, motor-racing Grand Prix, and cultural events such as the Cannes Film Festival, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, the Edinburgh Fringe festival, and the opening seasons of musical extravaganzas (*Phantom of the Opera*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Miss Saigon* for example). Global events are part of the inter-urban competition to become 'global cities', a struggle that transcends and fragments nation-states.
>
> (Sassen 1991, cited in Hogan 1998)

Nowhere is this particular kind of competition more fierce than in bidding for the Olympic Games. The Olympics have acted as a model for analysing promotional culture for many decades, from Boorstin and Debord to Ley and Olds. In his chapter on the 2000 Sydney Olympics Gordon Waitt documents the way the image of Sydney presented for an international gaze is so wildly at odds with the way locals gaze at their own city. At the same time, the promotional campaign leading up to the games sought to 'train' residents to adopt a touristic attitude to their own city. Waitt takes us through the way marketers identify certain familiar elements of a city's identity, lifting them out of their contexts and editing them

back together, depriving them of their initial meaning. Denial of the historical difference and individual context is internal to place-marketing philosophies, which trade in oversimplifications (i.e., the reduction to one trait), stereotypes (amplification of one or more traits) and labelling (where a place is deemed to be of a certain nature) (Shields 1991).

Finally, King and Spearritt transport us to the last vestige of the global destination which one would think is, by its 'nature', spared from processes of virtualization – the island resort. In what is a very careful development of the idea of curtilage in heritage studies they demonstrate how design practices, heritage values and the demands of tourism as a culture industry conspire in the physical and psychological convergence of resort worlds. They argue that resorts are distinct from other heritage structures in having been developed and constructed expressly with a view to satisfying the expectations and desires of tourists. At the same time, because they are more integrated with their immediate environments, they are different from shopping malls and theme parks, 'which invariably sit within vast parking lots'. They therefore stand out noticeably as places where the tension between heritage and 'development' intersect. This is because, when tourists visit an island resort, they experience/consume both the resort and the island that surrounds it. The patterns of behaviour of such tourists and the degree to which they appreciate the surrounding hinterland are really central to the design, financing, environmental impact and future of island resorts. The physical aspects of the resort are increasingly driven by a commercial and marketing rationale, as well as by the psychological expectations people derive from media as diverse as tour guides, Renaissance paintings, novels, photographs, romantic advertisements and films. These kinds of media, which are kinds of 'culture brokers', contribute to the virtualizing of the resort curtilages, and their commodification as 'placeless' sites of consumption.

When consumption becomes their grounding rationale, such placelessness is made stark indeed. King and Spearritt ask: 'Why visit an island resort at great expense to experience palm trees, beaches and *muzak* when the same can be experienced more cheaply closer to home?' In doing so, King and Spearritt interrelate what are conventionally regarded as very different kinds of places (e.g. resort beaches, mainland beaches and 'beaches' in the city), shopping malls and resort world, all of which give the semblance of public space but which are privately owned. In turn, this brings up crucial questions about what constitutes the essence or authenticity of a place when much of its original surroundings might have been removed by development for tourism or residential purposes.

For tourists themselves, the mix of the nostalgic, the local, the national and the global in creating resort curtilages provides a postmodern conundrum: 'Why go to an island resort if fax, e-mail and mobile connections follow you about? Are patrons seeking escape, isolation and seclusion, or merely another setting in which to act out established or novel aspects of their lives?' (cf. below).

The paradoxes of place brought up by King and Spearritt – and indeed all the contributors to this volume, each in their own way – address the virtual globalization thesis. The fact that places, and representations of places, are moving

as quickly around the globe as human beings do creates identity problems for both individuals and places themselves. Suspended between 'virtual' identity and physical location, many of the places examined in this volume are split between their determination as 'local' and as destinations open to numerous kinds of consumption – as sights and sites. The ephemerality of these places presents particular difficulties for the experience of the local and attachment to spatial normativities that are developed over long periods of time.

As a collection of case examples which posit the contribution of virtualizing processes to the contemporary global condition, this book propounds new directions for research. The changing nature of the gaze, of travel and of different kinds of world-space suggest an alternative to 'economic' and political developmental perspectives on global culture. To understand the scope of forms of representation in information and tourist culture is to understand the systemic ways in which different telecommunicative and transportational forms surround modern existence, modify corporeal experience and suggest changing bases for social integration.

Notes

1 Media corporations, in which the power of the image and of capital are mixed, are exemplary in this regard. The Chairman of Viacom International, Sumner Redstone, declared his company's modest role in international relations: 'We put MTV into East Germany, and the next day the Berlin Wall fell' (quoted by Klein 2000: 116–17). Perhaps less modest is Ted Turner's explanation of how CNN and the Goodwill Games brought about a free world: 'I said "Let's try and undo this. Let's get our young people together and let's get this cycle together and let's try to get some world peace going and let's end the cold war." And, by God, we did it' (quoted in Klein 2000: 117).

2 As Hirst and Thompson define it, inter-nationalization can be distinguished from globalization in that it rests on an inter-national economy rather than a global economy where 'processes that are determined at the level of national economies still dominate and international phenomena are outcomes that emerge from the distinct and differential performance of the national economies' (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 10).

3 When related to world population at the time, the significance of migration in the nineteenth *versus* the twentieth century should not be underestimated.

4 As cyber-travel is taken up, the ability to circumnavigate the globe physically holds less value than the ability to travel that distance electronically (Nunes 1997).

5 Telecommunications and tourism have established themselves as the two fastest-growing industries in the world today by a number of indicators. Measured by indexes which account for convergences within the communications industry worldwide, by 1998 information technology and telecommunications were valued at US$1.1 trillion, and have been growing at 10 per cent annually since 1993 (Barr 2000: 168). Similarly, since the 1950s, international tourism, measured by the number of arrivals, has grown by 7.2 per cent. Between 1980 and 1990 international tourism receipts increased at an annual rate of 9.6 per cent. Tourism is now the largest industry in terms of trade and employment (Fainstein and Judd 1999: 2).

6 The paradox of the modern-day tourism ritual is that many persons in advanced industrial countries are in fact members of both classes *in time*. Annual leave legislation ensures that most individuals take their turn at being 'globally mobile', but, at the

same time, there is also a permanently mobile international middle class, who identify themselves as such.

7 For an argument that airports are constitutive of a global system of archi-space see Bouman (1996). For Bouman 'the term … "airport city" has summarized in one image both the web of urban forms that characterizes the modern metropolis and the international network of cities' (Bouman 1996: 177). For an impressive compendium which reviews the features of over forty of the world's big-league airports see Binney (1999).

8 Analyses of virtual space, defined in this way, usually adopt a 'user' perspective. For example, Sherman and Judkins define virtual reality (VR) according to a number of minimum conditions, each of which heavily implicates the individual: VR must be 1) interactive; 2) intensive; 3) immersive and believable; and 4) sealed off from an outside world. VR must allow a user to act reciprocally (usually by computer), it should exist in a form to which a user will respond, it should absorb the user so much that it is believable and it is most convincing in conditions of 'sensory deprivation' from a contrasting external reality (Sherman and Judkins 1993: 25). Methodologies for studying VR can usefully be divided into three different areas: 1) VR as a technology in its own right; 2) VR research as an ideological-military-industrial development; and 3) as a metaphor for 'broader cultural processes and as material contexts which are beginning to enframe the human body and human communication' (Holmes 1997: 1).

9 Whether it is about tuning in to the same radio or television time slot, or adopting the newspaper as our 'morning prayer', as Hegel once suggested, or visiting the same bookmarks on our web-browser, the interface of which itself has a familiar and reassuring pixelated architecture, or whether we are at home at the cybercafe, all of these places are practised to the point of a uniformity which can be monumental in character. One can relate to the standardization of media-architectures like a web-browser or a news performance in the same way as monuments might become references for a traveller.

10 Walkmans are an intrinsic micro-extension of the contemporary city. It is appropriate that the idea for the Walkman was hatched while the president of Sony was walking in New York in 1980. It provides a near perfect manifestation of the way geometric frames of perception are replaced by individualized chronometric ones (Chambers 1990: 3). The overstimulation of the city-sensorium can be re-ordered and domesticated with respect to one of the senses. The Walkman 'permits the possibility, however fragile and however transitory, of imposing your soundscape on the surrounding aural environment and thereby domesticating the external world: for a moment it can all be brought under the stop/start, fast forward, pause and rewind buttons' (Chambers 1990: 2).

11 Two excellent examples present themselves here. In looking at the micro-sociology of interaction with electronic environments James Schwoch and Mimi White's essay 'Learning the electronic life' (1992) is illustrative. They describe an entire day in the life of their families' interaction with computer-mediated technology – a cycle which 'with a slight degree of variation, begins anew the next day' (*ibid.*: 102). What is notable in their account is the degree of ritual and standardization of the manner of their interaction each day.

A similar, phenomenon, this time for the global traveller, is provided by Agnes Heller, an academic regularly travelling the world for conferences, who recounts meeting an employee of an international trade firm:

> She constantly migrates, and among many places, and always to and fro. She does it alone, not as a member of community, although many people act like her. ... The kind of culture she participates in is not a culture of a certain place; it is the culture of a time. It is a culture of the *absolute present*.

Whether in Singapore, Hong Kong, London, Stockholm, New Hampshire, Tokyo or Prague:

> She stays in the same Hilton hotel, eats the same tuna sandwich for lunch, or, if she wishes, eats Chinese food in Paris and French food in Hong Kong. She uses the same type of fax, and telephones, and computers, watches the same films, and discusses the same kind of problems with the same kind of people.
>
> (cited in Bauman 1998: 90)

12 To participate in these spaces is to overcome the borders they create. By attaining access to the spaces of flow they give us, we can be 'lifted out' of the *relative* imprisonment of historical time. Such a realization is assisted by Henri Lefebvre's theory of the 'production of space'.

Lefebvre's critique of the idea that historical process occurs in one monolithic spatial register is seen by many to be indispensable (Lefebvre 1991; see also Nunes, Koskela and Waitt, in this volume). His differentiation between the abstract and singular space of Euclidean geometry and more nuanced spaces that are uneven and divergently conditioned by experiential gaze and representational frames (a position taken up by postcolonial theory) is an important one in recasting discourses of globalization. The point is that economic and political analyses of globalization conventionally reside firmly within the production of monumental spaces and do not embed themselves within the difference and unevenness of spatial orders.

Whereas global models of economic and political change operate most effectively in 'singular space', phenomenological encounters with global change must confront much more diversity. The embodied and the virtual tourist each encounter otherness at the level of cultural difference (indeed cultural tourism is an industry made possible by this), even though the transportational and communicative means to such an encounter is annulling this difference and producing homogeneity.

13 As I suggest in *Virtual Politics* the more difficult it is to practise Cartesian spaces, the more the individual is driven to the technologies of personalization. In this way virtual reality, manifested in commodities which reclaim our autonomy over our sense of place, is the most visible expression of globalization.

14 See the fascinating article by Karin Knorr-Cetina (1997). Knorr-Cetina puts forward an 'end of the social thesis' in referring to the process of 'objectualization' in which, increasingly, 'objects displace human beings as relationship partners, and embedding environments, or that they increasingly mediate human relationships, making the latter dependent on the former. "Objectualization" is the term I propose to capture this situation' (Knorr-Cetina 1997: 1).

15 When, at 10 a.m. on 1 July 1913, the first wireless telegraph signal was transmitted around the world from the Eiffel Tower (Kern 1983: 14), the practical vision of the Canadian Engineer Sanford Fleming had been realized: 'The use of the telegraph "subjects the whole surface of the globe to the observation of civilized communities and leaves no interval of time between widely separated places proportionate to their distances apart"' (Sanford Fleming 1886, cited in Kern 1983: 11).

16 Augmenting the experience of universal standard time at the 'local' level was the co-emergence of incandescent lighting which eliminated the persistence of nature in dividing night from day, a precursor to the consolidation of twenty-four-hour culture so central to contemporary global culture (see Moore-Ede 1993).

17 'The wheel is an extension of the foot, the book is an extension of the eye, clothing an extension of skin, electric circuitry an extension of the central nervous system' (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 30–41).

18 This argument is echoed in the comparisons of aesthetic movements at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For an argument that contemporary postmod-

ernism stands in the same relation to modernism as decadentism did to classicism at the end of the nineteenth century, see Llewellyn Negrin (1991a, 1991b); Alex Callinicos (1990); Douglas Crimp (1983); Hillel Schwartz (1990); and Mikulas Teich and Roy Porter (1990).

19 In their account, Sherman and Judkins (1993) assume that the individual is a basic elemental 'user' of virtual reality, rather than seeing, from the other direction, that virtual spaces actively constitute the solipsism which typifies it. Williams' concept of 'mobile privatization', developed out of his discussion of socio-technical environments like television and motor transport culture, relates precisely to this feature of virtualization.

20 See Chambers (1990) and du Gay *et al.* (1997).

21 See Margaret Morse (1998: 109) on the concept of 'private'. Morse points out that while the private has, for so long, been used as only a political and economic term, it is also a term implicit to everyday geography.

22 An example of this can be found in the 1996 craze for Tamagotchis – small electronic pets – which were a children's cult in Japan, the US and Europe. These interactive pets, with an LED screen, could be fed (by scrolling through a menu), put to sleep (within programmed time-frames) and woken up. Failure to maintain such interactions could lead to death of the pet – an RIP or a cross would appear on the screen at such an occasion.

23 Ultimately, such standardization is an outcome of the fact that VR makes over subject–object relations in terms of *scientific representation*. The object world of VR is factored according to binary code, which replaces the representational limitations of the pre-virtual world with a more abstract kind of constraint: i.e., a reduction of an object world to the representations made possible by binary code. As Pimental and Teixeira (1993: 147) argue: 'Unlike the randomness of everyday reality, a virtual experience is a planned experience in which every sensory detail is a design decision. The usefulness of virtual environments is not that it duplicates all the details of reality (a fact technically impossible), but because it functions like our consciousness as a filter and focus, presenting only those details essential for enhancing a specific experience, or solving a given problem.'

24 For example, Feenberg (1991: 106). The Paris 1900 World Exposition featured a moving walkway, but more importantly a virtual train trip. Visitors could board seventy-foot-long train carriages – with dining room, smoking rooms, bedrooms – and take a virtual trip on the trans-Siberian railroad. It would condense a 14-day trip into 45 minutes.

25 Indeed, to foreshadow the argument that the virtual aspect of the modern freeway is an extension of these features of the railroad, we might well quote the 1956 Road-builders' Prayer invoked in the development of the US Interstate Network:

> Oh almighty God who has given us this earth and
> who has appointed men to have domination over it;
> who has commanded us to make straight the highways,
> lift up the valleys and make the mountains low.
> We ask thy blessing …
> Bless these, thy nation's road builders and their friends.
>
> (cited in Goodman 1971: 78–9)

26 'Compared to the eotechnical space-time relationship, the one created by the railroad appears abstract and disorienting, because the railroad – in realizing Newton's mechanics – negates all that characterized eotechnical traffic; the railroad does not appear embedded in the space of the landscape the way coach and highway are, but seems to strike its way through it' (Schivelbusch 1979: 44).

27 'The change effected in the traveller's relationship to the landscape becomes most evident in regard to his sense of sight: visual perception is diminished by velocity' (Schivelbusch 1979: 59).

28 This argument is exemplified by Simmel's essay 'The metropolis and mental life'. In response to the rapidly changing stimuli and widely contrasting phenomena of the city 'The metropolitan type creates a protective organ for itself against the profound disruption with which the fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu threaten it. Instead of reacting emotionally, the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner (Simmel 1971: 326). The metropolis, then, not only became a destination for the railroad itself but the metapsychology of travelling on a train at speed and undergoing the nervous stimulation of the metropolis, can be seen to be in alignment.

29 In other words, the railway journey was not merely a means of getting to a destination, it was itself an *optical device*, complete with its own sensibilities about perception. The proof of this can be found in the Europe of the 1830s and early 1840s, *prior* to the opening of major railway routes, with the advent of the diorama and panoramic shows which attempted to simulate 'faraway landscapes, cities and exotic scenes' (Schivelbusch 1979: 64–5). At a time when the railway journey was still too onerous and expensive, from the comfort of well-upholstered seats 'the five continents [could] roll by' without the spectator 'having to leave the city and without having to risk bad weather, thirst, hunger, cold, heat, or any danger whatsoever', as one Parisian newspaper described the diorama in 1843 (Schivelbusch 1979: 65). Together with the phenakistoscope and the stereoscope, two very popular means of consuming photographic imagery in the first half of the nineteenth century (Crary 1990: 16), the diorama and panorama were obvious precursors to the sociocultural acceptance of cinema (Featherstone 1998: 919).

The properties of the diorama as an amusing, but nonetheless entirely earnest, attempt at constructing a primitive virtual reality, have numerous continuities with genres of display in contemporary theme parks and contemporary events of exhibition. The diorama provided for consuming images in complete comfort, which, to view first hand, would involve significant distress, but it also reconnected the individual to landscapes which were otherwise difficult to appreciate at speed. Just as is the case today, there has always been an intrinsic link between the construction of virtual worlds and the experience of 'travel'. The diorama's properties of simulacra and displacement, its ability to mobilize the gaze, choice over its consumption (it is difficult to leave a train halfway through its journey), and controlled safety are all high-ranking hallmarks of cyberspace and contemporary virtual environments. As Sherry Turkle shows in *Life on the Screen*, life on line is often preferred to RL (real life). It is safe; it facilitates a highly mobile gaze (as Microsoft advertisements persuade us); you can leave the environment at any time; it can be engaged with in a physical environment of the immersee's own choosing, along with attendant physical comforts.

30 For a recent text which compiles designs by architects who seek to realize the role of visual consumption in design equivalents of a digital aesthetic, see Reiwoldt (1997).

31 Following Friedberg, the argument here is that certain physical architectures are interesting in that, at some level, they offer a reflection of how the act of looking has been transformed. In the contemporary context, therefore, it cannot be argued that digitally mediated 'virtual realities' are somehow dissolving solid architectures. The extreme exponent of this view is William Mitchell in his *City of Bits: Space, place and the Infobahn* – who represents a rather over-stretched technical essentialism which deploys a crude binary opposition between the physical and the electronic. For example, at one point Mitchell attempts to argue that the advent of Automatic Teller Machines has meant that 'The traditional Main Street bank building disintegrated, and the pieces that remained reintegrated themselves into new settings' (Mitchell 1995: 79). As

is argued by many writers in this volume, solid architectures may themselves be a basis for virtual *gazes* – a matter of perception, not of ontology. Electronic spaces may replace architecture, but only to the extent that the 'practising' of electronic spaces might come to substitute for practising other spaces. And, as a host of writers from Robert Musil to Michel de Certeau have pointed out, the physicality of the built environment, its liquidity and solidity, has been a profoundly unstable matter for many centuries.

32 One of the first arcades in Paris, the redeveloped (1780) *Palais Royale*, made dramatic impressions on any one who visited it by its ability to concentrate so much visual stimulation. One visitor to Paris in 1789 declared: 'One could spend an entire life, even the longest, in the Palais Royale, and as, in an enchanting dream, dying, say, "I have seen and known it all"' (Friedberg 1993: 68).

An illustrated guide concerning an arcade in Paris in 1852 is cited by Benjamin: 'Both sides of the passageways, which are lighted from above, are lined with the most elegant shops, so that such *an arcade is a city, even a world, in miniature*' (cited in Friedberg 1993: 74).

33 'The remote regions are made available to the masses by means of tourism: this is merely a prelude, a preparation for making *any* unique thing available by means of reproduction. When spatial distance is no longer experienced, the differences between original and reproduction diminish. In the filmic perception – i.e., the perception of *montage*, the juxtaposition of the most disparate images into one unit – the new reality of annihilated in-between spaces finds its clearest expression: the film brings things closer to the viewer as well as closer together' (Schivelbusch 1979: 47–8).

34 Cinema offers semiotic difference on technological scales that are far more flexible than historical reality (a dehistoricization of experience). Many theme parks feature a 180-degree theatre which surrounds the seated subject, and which successfully simulates those time-space realities in which the subject's seating location was spatially related to what was happening on screen. For example a roller-coaster ride, which is containerized along a forward moving space-track in which the subject's attention is captured in a forward direction, while the rest of the fun park accelerates away on each side.

We can recall here Bazin's account of total cinema as an attempt at integral realism (cf. Holmes 1997). But, interestingly, the limitations of the 'total cinema', as a function of a 'fixed' body and visual perception, come to the fore. The integral realism of the cinema is only realized if the spectator remains seated in relation to the screen and is successfully sealed into the division between the darkness of the theatre and the captivation of the animated window in front. The relation of viewer to screen is mediated by the *architectural* context of consumption. While it is able to stimulate the major senses, it is not able to capture them in isolation, nor can it seal them off from the possibility of intervening activity in the rest of the cinema. The spectator, in his or her corporeality, has to submit to these conditions by choice; they are not structurally inbuilt features of cinema as a context-world.

35 On this reading, the arcade is the architecture of the railroad, while the freeway, the shopping mall and the theme park are architectures corresponding to air travel and cyberspace. As William Gibson has commented: 'cyberspace looks like Los Angeles seen from five thousand feet up in the air' (Gibson 1984: 51).

36 As Boorstin once said in *The Image*, 'With movies and television, today can become yesterday; and we can be everywhere, while we are still here. In fact it is easier to be there (say on the floor of the national political convention) when we are here (at home or in our hotel room before our television screen) than when we are there' (Boorstin 1961: 231–2).

37 Jean Baudrillard, for example, has described the vehicle of postmodernity as one which 'now becomes a kind of capsule, its dashboard the brain, the surrounding

landscape unfolding like a televised screen' (instead of a live-in projectile as it once was before) (Baudrillard 1982).

38 Compare: McLuhan 'all previous technologies … [and] extensions of our bodies, including cities – will be translated into information systems' (McLuhan 1964: 68) with Lyotard 'knowledge only becomes operational if learning is translated into quantities of information' that can be rendered and translated into computer language (Lyotard 1984 :194).

39 When simulated urban spaces like the shopping mall and virtual electronic spaces are compared, it is possible to demonstrate a two-way relationship between architectural form and virtual mapping techniques like computer-aided design. The information-driven basis of CAD programs delimits (technically and aesthetically) the kinds of built form that are possible and desirable. Increasingly, practices of architecture and urban geographers, especially those involved in large-scale project design, employ virtual-reality applications – see, for example, Ostler (1994). The popularity of urban simulation programs like SimCity™ among urban planners is an exemplary case.

40 For a useful compendium of changes in recent *architectural* expressions of such space, see Pearman (1998).

41 This dereliction is affirmed right up to the point of crossing into the zone of the pedestrian. Approaching such a world-space on foot is a daunting exercise, as all of the signage and one-way lanes which vacuum motorists into multi-level car parks have no time for pedestrians. At some airports and shopping malls, it is possible to locate a sign reading: 'PEDESTRIAN' which, in having to be named as such, is the first indication that such a form of mobility is the exception rather than the rule. There are no such signs bearing the appellation 'MOTOR CARS'.

42 'When the twentieth century began, fewer than 3 percent of all humans lived in the city; by the time it ended … roughly 50 percent' inhabited cities (Iyer 2000: 28–9).

43 'Urban spaces where the occupants of different residential areas could meet face-to-face, engage in casual encounters, accost and challenge one another, talk, quarrel, argue or agree, lifting their private problems to the level of public issues and making public issues into matters of private concern – those "private/public" *agoras* of Cornelius Castoriadis – are fast shrinking in size and number. The few that remain tend to be increasingly selective – adding strengths to, rather than repairing the damage done by the push of disintegrating forces' (Featherstone 1998: 910).

44 As Daniel Boorstin argued nearly 40 years ago, 'As nature now imitates art, as the geysers in Yellowstone now provide us with tourist attractions, more and more of our experience nowadays imitates advertising. The pseudo-event, or that which looks like a pseudo-event, seldom fails to dominate' (Boorstin 1961: 217).

45 '[T]he Oberoi in Kathmandu, the Taj in Delhi, the Ramada in Amsterdam, the Hyatt in Washington, are virtually indistinguishable, as are the historic structures converted to festive malls. Even Bohemian milieus seem imitative of one another – the Left Bank in Paris, New York's East Village, London's Camden Locks – all boast similar cafés, galleries, and street vendors. Cities seemingly would gain by distinguishing themselves from their competitors, but their civic leaders and their tourism entrepreneurs either fear to break the mold that resulted in apparent success elsewhere or cannot envision anything different' (Fainstein and Judd 1999: 13).

46 Similarly, interactions between avatars in computer-mediated worlds are subject to the closure of *institutionalized interests*. The same avatars may find themselves interacting in listserves, multi-user chat groups and IRCs, to the point of such interaction being sufficiently cross-contextual to 'fill-out' the identity of each interlocutor. Such avatars may acquire a 'cyber-authenticity' insofar as they become known in a number of different contexts. By rejecting reciprocity in one context (for example through 'flaming', treating other avatars badly and earning a poor reputation), an avatar would quickly be disgraced in all the other contexts as well. As long as such an avatar continued to have the same institutionalized interests, the closure of various sub-

media makes changing identity quite difficult. Subscribers to multiple electronic mailing lists or readers of multiple Usenet newsgroups know that even in a network as vast as the Internet the same people cross paths repeatedly (cf. Baym 1995).

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Part 1

Urban space, cyberspace and global space

1 Ephemeral cities

Postmodern urbanism and the production of online space

Mark Nunes

> Why not oppose ephemeral cities to the eternal city, and movable centrality to stable centres?
>
> (Henri Lefebvre 1996: 155)

In the last decade of the twentieth century networked computers became an increasingly visible part of contemporary life. Before 1990 the Internet served primarily as an e-mail and file-transfer system for academics and researchers across the United States. By the middle of the decade the fabric of this medium had undergone two significant changes: commercial use, once forbidden across the US-based backbone, had begun to outpace academic use; and, with the growing popularity of the World Wide Web (WWW), a graphical, hypertextual interface (point-and-click) became the dominant cybernetic vehicle for navigating Internet sites. By 1999 Internet access had penetrated everyday life in America and elsewhere around a networked globe. While we have hardly reached universal access – and 'the Web' is hardly worldwide – website URLs have become as common as trademark logos in the commercial world, and e-mail has far surpassed the US Postal Service in number of daily correspondences. Perhaps, then, the 1990s will best be remembered as the 'cyberspace decade'. In the US city of Wilmington DE, at least, the 1990s have already been declared the 'dot.com decade' or, in the words of Paul Levinson of Fordham University: 'the information decade … It's only been in the '90s that we've paid attention to information as a commodity' (Vejnoska 1999: B1). True, the word 'cyberspace' first appeared in the 1980s science fiction work of William Gibson (most notably his 1984 novel *Neuromancer*), but it was not until the 1990s that it became a powerful cultural trope – first in America and then spreading virally elsewhere.[1] The network of computers that we call the Internet maintained a phenomenal growth rate throughout the 1990s, from around 300,000 'host sites' at the start of the decade to more than 72 million by January 2000 (Internet Software Consortium 2000). But this material expansion alone cannot account for the increasing presence of networked computers in elementary and secondary schools in the US, or the appearance of Internet kiosks and electronic

coffee shops worldwide. Nor can it account for the explosive growth of capital investment in Internet companies (and, more generally, e-commerce) during 1998 and 1999.[2] While the discussion of an immersive virtual information space may have sounded to many like speculative science fiction ten years ago, the explosion in the number of users who have since invested real time, real energy, and real capital into the Internet has very much made cyberspace a social, cultural and economic reality.

More than anything else, it would seem, the 1990s' fascination with information technology concerned the power of the computer to function as a communication medium and social environment, rather than its capacity as a processor.[3] As such, 'cyberspace' offers the exhilarating and foreboding image of a mediated social space that is no longer geographically determined. At the beginning of the 1990s, Michael Ostwald notes, the Internet (along with other 'virtual technologies') appeared in the media as a 'door' or 'window' onto a hacker world that threatened to undermine social and urban environments; by the mid-1990s, however, that world promised 'a potentially new way of reinstating democracy, reforming the community and redistributing the populace so that urban ghettos could be invigorated with new life' (Ostwald 1997: 125–6). While Ostwald maps an historical shift in perspectives, I would argue that these representations are coexistent within the contemporary moment. An analysis of the social function of the Internet, in fact, reveals a heterogeneity of sites, practices, and representations, all falling under the rubric of 'cyberspace'. In the same way that 'the urban' speaks of both the dangers and potentials of complex social interactions, the Internet presents a social space of multiple figurations and multiple virtualities. Certainly the burst of business investments suggests a landscape dominated by capitalist modes of production, but one will also find cyberspaces that resist, differentiate, and disperse those territorial claims. To understand the cultural significance of cyberspace, it is therefore important to recognize that these competing, contradictory social spaces are not merely productions of a media event or figments of a popular imagination. Called by any name, these 'virtual topographies' involve real bodies, real material investment, and real social interaction.

Towards a spatial analysis of cyberspace

During this first decade of 'cyberspace' much of the theoretical writing on the Internet has suffered from two serious errors. First, both critics and advocates of 'computer-mediated communication' (CMC) tend to assume too readily that cyberspace describes a mental or non-corporeal space: a world of simulated bodies and actions that replaces (parasitically or transcendently) the physical world. Much of the early theorizing on cyberspace (exemplified by that oft-quoted collection of speculative and technical essays *Cyberspace: First Steps*) tended to perpetuate this corporeal/non-corporeal divide, marking off cyberspace as a strictly mental realm.[4] As Michelle Kendrick notes, this fundamentally dualist approach denigrates *res extensa* in the name of *cogito*, treating networked social

space as a Cartesian–Leibnizian space 'that represents the triumph of the algorithmic mind over a physical body that refuses to be fully computed' (Kendrick 1996: 145). Or, put more euphorically and succinctly by Internet pundit John Perry Barlow: 'Nothing could be more disembodied than cyberspace. It's like having your everything amputated' (cited in Kelly 1994: 185). This figuration of cyberspace imagines an immaterial world that promises to free us from the burdens of the flesh. While many popular conceptions of CMC have embraced this notion, the image lingers even in some of the most sophisticated renderings of cyberspace. In his 1997 book *Collective Intelligence*, for example, Pierre Levy theorizes the emergence of a networked 'knowledge space' that, while 'inseparable from the construction and habitation of a world', still limits the experience of cyberspace to a mental phenomenon, immaterial in its very 'form' (Levy 1997: 12). Central to Levy's book, in fact, is an analogy between cyberspace and the angelic realms of Jewish mysticism, in which virtual subjects ('angelic bodies') carry and receive messages that provide 'dynamic descriptions of *the world below*, moving images of the events and situations into which human communities are plunged' (Levy 1997: 98; italics added). Levy provides a more nuanced understanding of a relation between a knowledge space and a space of social processes, but even this description of a 'virtual world [that] is no more than a substrate for cognitive, social, and affective processes that take place among actual individuals' tends to divide off a mental cyberspace from a material 'world below' (Levy 1997: 112). This tendency towards dualism in 'cybertheory' radicalizes the difference between the social space of networked interactions and the space of everyday life. Even Ostwald's analysis of the 'virtual urban', which connects networked communication with other contemporary urban phenomena, tends to focus on how this social space 'simulates something that is *other than the real space*' (Ostwald 1997: 127).[5] But certainly the social space produced by way of networked communication neither begins nor ends at the computer screen The *experience* of the interface between bodies and machines has a material and event-like quality to it: one that cannot be reduced to a mental *conception* of space.

In response to this tendency to think of cyberspace strictly as an imaginary or mental realm, I argue in this chapter that Henri Lefebvre's analysis of the production of space provides a valuable analytical solution. Lefebvre attempts to reveal what he describes as the 'truth of space': that lived, social space emerges where concept and practice intersect (Lefebvre 1994: 398–9). Lefebvre in part faults Cartesian dualism for giving rise to modernity's tendency to understand space in terms of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Social space, he argues, is neither an abstraction mapped by a conceptual system (mathematical, semiotic, or discursive), nor is it an absolute emptiness that simply awaits the arrival of objects (the 'empirical' space of Newtonian science). Instead, Lefebvre describes the *production* of space as a material process occurring at the interplay of concept and practice, and inseparable from this process. Social space is 'not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)' (Lefebvre 1994: 83). Lefebvre's social space occurs within a triad of lines of force: material 'spatial

practice', conceptual 'representations of space', and experiential 'representational spaces'. Social space incorporates all three of these dialectical forces, and the production of one is always implicated in producing the others.[6] Rather than thinking of cyberspace as merely a representation of space, then, a Lefebvrean analysis would take into account all three of these spatial productions. More precisely, it would implicate all three of these forces within the production of cyberspace as a conceptual, material, and experiential space. As opposed to assuming that cyberspace describes a purely mental realm, any discussion of the production of online space would need to take into account the conceived, the perceived, and the lived spaces of networked social interactions: the cramped fingers and carpal-tunnel-syndrome wrists; the laptops in coffee shops and terminals in public libraries; the proliferation of IPOs and URLs; the cyberphilic hype and the technophobic dread.

The second troublesome error that has frequently occurred in analyses of CMC stems from the assumption that cyberspace describes a homogenous social space. While one can certainly identify a dominant networked social space (both capitalist and 'democratic'), a critical analysis of cyberspace reveals heterogeneous and heteromorphic materializations, representations, and practices. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Lefebvre was already pointing out how the dominant social space under neocapitalism[7] involves itself in the creation of 'a technological utopia, a sort of computer simulation of the future, or of the possible, within the framework of the real – the framework of the existing mode of production' (Lefebvre 1994: 9). In the past decade, the Internet has increasingly become that technological utopia. The dominant representations of the 'information superhighway' and the 'World Wide Web' as a zone of free and open exchange are perceived within the lived, material practices that support global networked capitalism. Simple numbers reflect the dominance of this figuration of cyberspace: as of January 2000, the Internet had nearly twenty-five million commercial hosts – more than four times the number of academic sites (Internet Software Consortium 2000).[8] 'The Information Superhighway' – as both a representation of space and a material process – is seen as replacing the rails and roadways that under an earlier form of capitalism produced 'a close association … between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, "private" life and leisure)' (Lefebvre 1994: 38). Within this technological 'virtuality' of networked domains (a technological map of the possible, so to speak), social space reduces to a matter of traffic – the regulated circulation of information and capital, as well as the bodies caught up in these flows.

But not all usages play out along these lines. One finds a wide range of social bondings online that cannot be reduced to production and consumption – not even a production and consumption of information. A range of contemporary theorists and, in particular, a group of 'postmodern geographers', have called attention to how heterogeneous social spaces resist co-ordinating into any total system, presenting instead multiple emergences, types and arrangements. As Derek Gregory points out, much of the post-modernizing trend in geography by

figures such as Giddens, Hagerstrand, Harvey, and Mann involves a recognition of social spaces as the products of 'multiple sociospatial networks of power' (Gregory 1996: 223). He sees a return to a geography of areal differentiation, but with differences occurring as 'overlapping, intersecting, and contending' space-times that map both the physical and experiential components of social space (Gregory 1996: 223). Applying such a perspective to an analysis of cyberspace would allow for an account of the range of material, mental, and experiential components involved in the production of online social spaces that make 'cyberspace' resistant to homogenous descriptions. One could also then begin to consider how this network permeates 'everyday life'. Increasingly, lived spaces are understood, in James Rojas' terms, as 'enacted environments', producing and produced by the actions of individuals: 'People are both users and creators of a space … People activate settings merely by their presence' (cited in Hayden 1997: 87). Practices such as e-mail, web-browsing, electronic shopping, and 'chatting' implicate a range of 'enactions' of a lived social space. Likewise, the proliferation of computer labs built by universities, the computers sitting in every public high school in the US, and the appearance of public 'kiosks' and cybercafes present a heterogeneity of spatial practices with real ramifications for the production of multiple social spaces.

On one hand, the dominant post-industrial economic space of web advertisements, 'cookies', and electronic commerce instantiates a 'hyperpotential'[9] cyberspace for capitalist exchange that gives the market a new kind of omnipresence. But the lived experience of this networked structure also allows for relations that appear as 'threats' to the ideological blanket of late capitalism. These dangers appear in the media most frequently as representations of 'inappropriate' contact: pornography before the eyes of children and bomb recipes in the hands of terrorists. On a more everyday level, however, one might think of how 'browsing' or 'chatting', for example, can suggest a more playful relation of individuals, rather than one based on exchange value, production, or consumption. Thus corporations worry about work hours lost to games and 'net-surfing', and in college and university computer classrooms students drift off from their assignments in multiple directions. These recreational immersions in cyberspace run counter to the promotion of the Internet as a place of efficiency and the realization of Enlightenment values of progress, control, and the speculative unity of knowledge. Regarding the Internet as a resource can be considered a part of what Lyotard calls the postmodern 'logic of maximum performance': at all costs, communicate efficiently (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). Under this performativity principle, legitimation becomes a matter of establishing 'the best possible input/output equation' (*ibid.*: 46). Advertisements for faster connections and more accurate search engines[10] describe an Internet driven more and more by this performance logic. But the potential for a wide array of contacts, for the dissemination of information, and for the cross-pollination of social groupings suggests that other modes of experiencing the Internet are quite prevalent. Consider, for example, the case of Kurt Vonnegut's 1997 MIT commencement address, widely circulated on the net. Unfortunately, Vonnegut had nothing to do

with MIT's commencement that year, nor was the circulated speech his work; it was, in fact, a column written by Mary Schmich for the *Chicago Tribune*, and neither she nor Vonnegut have any idea how the mix-up occurred, nor how the original column began its viral spread. The social space mapped out by the comings and goings of this column do not suggest the triumph of efficiency in a space of rational exchange. In contrast to this image, Schmich herself off-handedly suggests the phrase 'lawless swamp' to describe cyberspace: a space of confusions, ambiguous margins, and muddled navigations (Schmich 1997). Thus, in the same way that a dualist account of CMC belies its material and experiential reality as a social space, so too does the error of homogenizing descriptions overlook the complex heteromorphous nature of cyberspace.

Online urbanism: the great city?

Given the fascination with the Internet as a social space that no longer needs geographic determination, it should come as no surprise that 'the city', historically marked as a complex site of social interaction, would occur with growing frequency in a range of figurations of cyberspace. From the popular <Geocities.com> site addresses, to the growing number of actual cities with tourist and business sites online, one finds an increasing 'urban' flavour to cyberspace. The University College of London's Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA), for example, has developed a Virtual Cities Resource Centre web-site to track the rise and development of the electronic urban.[11] Dodge, Smith, and Doyle explain that their goal at CASA is to create not just an informational map of a city online but rather 'true virtual cities' in cyberspace: 'an effective digital equivalent of real cities, providing people with a genuine sense of walking around an urban place … a rich diversity of services, functions and information content, and crucially, the ability to support social interaction with other people'. They describe their plan for a 'virtual London' that will simulate London precisely – through the help of Geographical Information System (GIS) technology – which can then be used to model real interactions in real space. The city as locus of 'life and spontaneity' plays itself out in cyberspace as a virtual urban specifically tied to the image of the city as a 'geographic [centre] of people, activities and services', a 'hub' or 'focal point' for exchange (Dodge *et al.* 1997).

As with CASA's 'Online Planning' project, much of the discussion of cyberspace as virtual city tends to focus on this function of electronic social space as a point of exchange. Of all these urban representations, 'the *agora*' has probably had the widest currency, originating in the cybertopian writing of Howard Rheingold to describe his experience in building community with like-minded individuals on the WELL (the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link). Somewhat simplistically, Rheingold envisions the spread of 'informal public places' online that would serve as new community hubs in this age of encroaching shopping malls (Rheingold 1993: 26). William Mitchell elaborates on this trope in his 1995 book, *City of Bits*, exploring what he sees as the liberatory potentials of CMC:

> The worldwide computer network – the electronic agora – subverts, displaces, and radically redefines our notions of gathering place, community, and urban life. The Net has a fundamentally different physical structure, and it operates under quite different rules from those that organize the action in the public places of traditional cities. It will play as crucial a role in the twenty-first century as the centrally located, spatially bounded, architecturally celebrated agora did (according to Aristotle's *Politics*) in the life of the Greek polis …
>
> (Mitchell 1995: 8)

Yet, while Rheingold, Mitchell, and others describe an *agora* of rational social exchange, and therefore of liberation, the market function implicit in this representation of space also suggests an urban experience governed by circulation and exchange, well in keeping with the dominant social space of late capitalism. Michael Ostwald, for one, calls attention to this problem while retaining the representation of cyberspace as a virtual *agora*. In a more sophisticated rendering of 'virtual urbanism' that draws on the work of Lewis Mumford and others, he identifies both the shopping mall and the electronic *agora* as contemporary potential 'sites of cultural seepage' (Ostwald 1997: 132–5). Rather than differentiating between the mall and the virtual community, however, as Rheingold would like, Ostwald points to how 'the urban' itself has become virtualized: a simulation that simultaneously replicates and resists the social function of the *agora* as a point of cultural seepage. The malls function as 'private cities, places where the inhabitants can escape into simulated comfort and forget about the homeless, the poor and the unemployed' (*ibid.*: 137). Likewise, the electronic *agora* merely provides a more technologically sophisticated version of the 'private city', sanitizing the urban of its social encounters but leaving intact its function as a point of exchange and consumption.

Rather than mapping a terrain of liberatory potential, the emergence of this electronic 'great city' just as easily points towards what Edward Soja calls a 'spatial restructuring' of society that accompanies the rise of a new form of capitalism (Soja 1989: 61–2). This conception of space also allows for an experience of the urban as a 'postmodern hyperspace', everywhere and nowhere at the same time (Jameson 1991: 44).[12] Thus, in the electronic *agora* the marketplace is no longer any *place*, but an ever-present hyperpotential opening. Far from unique, this representation of space presents itself throughout modernity in what Lefebvre calls the 'anaphorization' of abstract space, where one 'transforms the body by transporting it outside itself and into the ideal-visual realm' (Lefebvre 1994: 309). It likewise entails the next step in what David Harvey (1989) describes as the time-space compression of the globe in the modern West. He writes: 'many if not all of the major waves of innovation that have shaped the world since the sixteenth century have been built around revolutions in transport and communication' (Harvey 1996: 412). With the production of online social space, the networked computer represents, in effect, a revolution in transport *and* communication, operating as a 'vehicle' that allows for global travel without

leaving home (Virilio 1989: 112). This process amounts to what Harvey sees as the global spread of 'a complex web of urbanization that defies any simple categorization' (Harvey 1996: 404). In this rendering of cyberspace, the Internet as virtual urbanism presents the next step in a trend towards the 'global process of capitalist urbanization or uneven spatio-temporal development' (*ibid.*: 414). Likewise, while Pierre Levy calls for the construction of a utopian knowledge space of collective intelligence, he too recognizes traces of the modern urban in the current structure of the Internet, allowing it to function as a 'commodity space' of networked, deterritorialized flows (Levy 1997: 212–14). If we are building and living in virtual cities online, clearly such practices are not entirely at odds with the dominant social space of networked capitalism.

In this regard, Harvey provides parallel analyses of what Lefebvre has called the 'globalization of the city' and the 'general urbanism' of neocapitalism (Lefebvre 1996: 208). The 'urban fabric' that Lefebvre describes metaphorically as a 'net of uneven mesh' spread over suburbs and countryside materializes in the 'everyday life' experience of globally networked home computers (Lefebvre 1996: 71). Likewise, the urban reality of 'routes and networks' has a very real existence online: as a material network of phone lines, T1 connections and T3 backbones; a spatial practice of distributed information sites; and a conceptual framework of an 'information superhighway'. Most obviously, perhaps, this globalization of the city results in a disappearance of remoteness from the post-industrial world. In the creation of a social network that is no longer geographically determined, all points on the WWW (hence the virtual globe) are equally accessible. One of the more intriguing examples of this disappearance of remoteness is the emergence of Tuvalu onto the World Wide Web. Tuvalu is a small, relatively unknown chain of islands occupying ten square miles in the South Pacific. It possesses, however, some very valuable electronic real estate: the .tv domain name. In a 1998 NPR interview, Jason Chapnik, President of the Toronto-based dotTV marketing firm, describes the brainstorming session that got the company going. Looking for the 'ultimate top-level domain name' to market the sale of Internet addresses, the team came up with the letters 'TV'; only then did they discover the existence of the tiny islands to which InterNIC had assigned the .tv domain site (Chadwick 1998). In this instance, geographic location lacks significance compared to one's location on a virtual globe. Certainly the integration of what had once symbolized absolute remoteness – the antipodes – into a global communications network provides a compelling example of what Jameson and Harvey see as a compression of space and time. While McLuhan had imagined a global village, Jason Chapnik and other Internet entrepreneurs have materialized a global city, held together by an 'urban fabric' of information flows. Ken Friedman has called similar attention to how the flow of information via global networks transforms remote locations (in this instance Nordic cities) into nodes within a system of exchange. Drawing in part on the work of Manuel Castells, Friedman notes how a 'space of flows' replaces a 'space of places' in this networked world of information exchange: 'The flow of information and the flow of ideas join the flow of human energy to

become the governing flow that controls the shape of the world' (Friedman 1996). Consciously avoiding the image of a cyberspace unmoored from a social space of material practice and embodied experience, he describes virtual cities as components within a global urbanism that places even the most remote locations into the flow of exchange. From Tuvalu to Virtual London the effects of this space of flows are real, involving changes in both the experience and conception of 'urban life'.

While Mitchell, Rheingold and others see the deterritorialization of electronic cities as 'radically redefin[ing] our notions of gathering place, community, and urban life', clearly we can find instantiations of the 'virtual urban' that correspond well with the processes of the 'globalization of the city'. In fact, in both representation and practice, one can find evidence that the virtual topography of the electronic *agora* also reveals a terrain consistent with the rationalist city of urban planning, epitomized in France by the figure of Le Corbusier. Lefebvre identifies the modernist 'model of the ideal city' as an *agora* of circulations that places human relations into a system of 'traffic' rather than encounter (Lefebvre 1996: 97–8). The ideology of planning 'claim[s] that the city is defined as a network of circulation and communication, as a centre of information and decision-making' (Lefebvre 1996: 98). This is the materialization of the technological utopia, the space of the technocrats, that Lefebvre argued against as early as the 1960s.[13] The rationalist city 'no longer gathers together people and things but data and knowledge. It inscribes in an eminently elaborated form of simultaneity the conception of the whole, incorporated into an electronic brain' (Lefebvre 1996: 170). The dominant space of neocapitalism certainly has much invested in a cyberspace conceived as a virtual city, materialized in a global network, and lived through exchange-based online social practices. If Pierre Levy's collective intelligence, for example, is to provide an image of the liberatory potentials of an electronically mediated 'knowledge space', it will therefore have to define a social space that both interpenetrates and differentiates itself from this virtual *agora* of mercantile flows.

Cyberspaces and the postmodern urban

We should not be surprised, then, to find that capitalist modes of production have turned the Internet into a network of flows. This space shows itself in the vision of a rationalist virtual city of electronic traffic and circulation: an 'information superhighway' where 'speed', 'freedom', and 'knowledge' coalesce in a network of determinate, navigable sites and point-to-point contact.[14] But the urban is not limited to the rationalist city. I would argue that a 'postmodern urban' presents itself online as well, mapping multiple social spaces that resist, interpenetrate, and contest the dominant claims to a virtual city. At its simplest, this resistance expresses itself in the heterogeneity of sites online. There are, after all, *multiple* virtual Londons: from CASA's GIS-based project to the London Tourist and Convention Bureau's <LondonTown.com> ('The Official Internet Site for London') to the more than twenty websites bearing the phrase 'virtual

London' in their page titles. The virtual *agora* positions itself within a hypercomplex network of interconnected sites – a matrix of stable, navigable points. In acknowledging the heterogenic and *heteromorphic* nature of these sites, however, one might also acknowledge an alternative arrangement of material, conceptual, and live processes – namely a network that is emergent and enactive, and therefore never simply a 'network of circulation and communication'. As such, each web page functions less as a node on a web than as its own 'enacted environment', producing linkages according to principles quite distinct from Lyotard's 'logic of maximum performance'. For example, the various clusters of sites known as 'WebRings' (<www.webring.com>) appear to present an orderly arrangement of like-minded sites, organized hierarchically by topic. Yet each webring shows itself to be an assemblage of interconnected sites in which the linkages between various web pages produce disjunctions and differences as much as lines of filiation. As a social space, this arrangement of sites into a network based on loose, changing, and at times idiosyncratic connections suggests a resistance to the dominant social space of the rationalist virtual city. Rather than producing a space of regulated traffic, these linkages produce a space that enacts the potential for fortuitous, singular *encounters*.

Lefebvre writes persuasively that the city, while dominated by a social space of urban planning and capitalist exchange, belongs to the order of human *use*: 'places of simultaneity and encounters, places where exchange would not go through exchange value, commerce, and profit' (Lefebvre 1996: 148). While the rationalist city speaks of circulations and flows, Lefebvre maintains that 'The eminent use of the city, that is, of its streets and squares, edifices and monuments, is *la Féte* (a celebration which consumes unproductively, without other advantage but pleasure and prestige and enormous riches in money and objects)' (Lefebvre 1996: 66). This 'ludic city', theorized by Lefebvre, was put into practice by French Situationists in the 1960s. As Simon Sadler argues in *The Situationist City*, Debord and others resisted the 'planning' ideology of the organized city by bringing to the fore the experience of the urban as a confused, heterogeneous, labyrinthine space (Sadler 1998: 22–33). He writes:

> The situationist city was at odds with the Corbusian vision of people at ease in an ideal urban landscape, a place where the struggle with nature, with the body, with space, and with class had inexplicably come to an end … In psychogeography all the struggles were acute again, making a nonsense of the Corbusian fantasy of the city as something abstract, rational, or ideal.
>
> (Sadler 1998: 77)

Unlike the circulation and flow of traffic, people, information, power, etc., of the planned city, Situationist psychogeography provided mappings of *dérives*: driftings through multiple, confusing urban topographies that connected the material form of the city with experiential practice. In his 1956 'Theory of the *dérive*' Guy Debord explains: 'In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their

work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there' (Debord 1981: 50).[15] Through *dérives* and a *détournement* (appropriation) of urban space, Situationists hoped to reveal the 'constant currents, fixed points and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones' (Debord 1981: 50): the multiplicity of spaces that coexist and interpenetrate the dominant logic of the rationalist city.

This theory of the *dérive*, along with Lefebvre's insistence on the ludic use of the city, has important consequences for a spatial analysis of networked social space: namely that the 'space of flows' instantiated by the dominant social space of CMC might likewise present spaces that resist this logic of circulation, exchange, and maximum performance. In its simplest form, aimless 'net surfing' on the WWW suggests a kind of 'drift logic' that maps out a connection between individuals unregulated by the flow of commerce or economic exchange. With complete disregard for a 'logic of maximum performance', web users can find themselves involved in interactions that prove 'aimless' and 'unproductive'. Literal 'spaces of play' exist throughout the Internet, allowing for encounters that again refuse to entail productive relations or economic exchanges. Likewise, chatrooms, MUDs, MOOs, and IRCs – all forms of real-time online communication – resist productivity and encourage the ludic: 'a fundamental desire of which play, sexuality, physical activities such as sport, creative activity, art and knowledge are particular expressions and *moments*, which can more or less overcome the fragmentary division of tasks' (Lefebvre 1996: 146).

Steven Johnson (1997: 63–7) has developed this line of argument to some degree in his discussion of interface design. Drawing explicit parallels to the contrast between the 'crooked Parisian streets' of the Latin Quarter and the 'broad, straight lines' of Haussmann's boulevards, Johnson sees in the development of network interfaces the potential for two models of online interaction. Although he is encouraged by the rise of interfaces 'designed to represent communities of people rather than private workspaces', he expresses concern over 'whether these new environments will end up looking like the gated communities of Los Angeles or the more open-ended, improvisational street theater of traditional urban life'. As an example of this image of the ludic city online, he turns to The Palace, a computer-mediated environment for synchronous communication (much like a MOO or a 'chat room'), with the added feature of visual representation of presence – users can select and/or customize their own personal avatar. Unlike the 'surfer' metaphor associated with the web, Johnson argues, The Palace puts the user in the role of Baudelaire's *flâneur*, 'drawn to the "kaleidoscope of consciousness" found among the teeming masses prowling those metropolitan streets'. In its present form, however, at <www.thepalace.com>, it is hard to take too much encouragement from this version of the ludic city. Now a service of <communities.com>, The Palace bills itself as 'the first real-time, interactive, rich media network', and promises to 'packag[e] content, audience, advertising and e-commerce … to create an enhanced sense of place and permanence that uniquely enriches the community experience' (Communities.com 1999) The Palace presents its users

with a choice of 'channels' organized around topics (TV, music, romance, etc.), as well as special-event real-time 'chats' with celebrities ranging from teen pop stars to dotcom CEOs. In effect, the ludic has become lucrative. Thus, we find ourselves once again navigating through a highly organized space that has more to do with scheduling and programming than 'spontaneity and encounter'.

In *La Révolution Urbaine* Lefebvre suggests that 'planning' and rational urbanism 'colonize' the city in part by turning the 'spontaneous theatre' of the streets into places of traffic and circulation (Lefebvre 1970: 29).[16] One can note a similar tension in cyberspace(s) – between ludic, drifting spaces and the dominant social space that attempts to organize them into its material, conceptual, and lived processes. Rather than looking for stable sites of resistance to the rationalist virtual city, then, we would be more likely to find multiple, emergent networks – structures that enact a social space that contradicts or disrupts the 'traffic' of circulation. In the terms introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, we would find 'smooth spaces' emerging that disrupt the organized 'striated spaces' of the point-to-point network.[17] The virtual city, like the traditional city, presents 'the striated space par excellence' by organizing flows into a system of nodes and circulations (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 481). In this regard, the city serves as a locus within a (state, national, global) network, thereby 'capturing' the flow of capital within a rational regime of circulation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 432–4). On the other hand, they note, each node, as a locus of flows, constantly presents the potential to dissolve this organizing structure. Thus, while the city provides a space that allows the state to organize its flows into a system of circulation, the city also maps a space of gaps and fissures within the organizing structure – flows of individuals that keep the city from becoming thoroughly organized. However temporary, then, these tensions map the potential for an emergent social space – an urban form that disrupts the logic of the virtual rationalist city.

Numerous electronic communities have wrestled in various ways with the multiplicity of social formations that occur, often to the disruption of the 'intended' social function of a site.[18] We are not talking merely about conflicts in mental conceptions of society, but rather differing experiences of interaction and differing utilizations of material resources. What has occurred in the chatrooms of America Online, in the virtual environments of LambdaMOO and MediaMOO, and at the public terminals in libraries, computer labs, and electronic classrooms, is a conflict in the construction of an online space: a contestation of the rationalist grid-space by a multiplicity of non-conforming social configurations. Interpenetrating the striated spaces of point-to-point contact, for example, one can also find representations of cyberspace as a Deleuzean rhizome: 'an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 21). Kathleen Burnett has argued that the material networks and conceptual framework of an electronic 'scholar's rhizome' might lead to a shift in the real relations of power exhibited in the academy by faculty hierarchies, journal reputations,

and university press rankings (Burnett 1993). This conceptual space of 'the rhizome' also shows itself in Marcos Novak's representation of cyberspace as a 'transphysical city' of changing 'liquid architecture' that would form and dissolve based on user interactions (Novak 1995a). In a review of *City of Bits*, in fact, Novak (one of the original contributors to *Cyberspace: First steps*) makes specific reference to Mitchell's tendency to envision a striated, closed architecture for cyberspace. He writes:

> The Aristotelian logic that inspires *City of Bits* also leaves Mitchell waiting for Hippodamos, looking for a grid logic to contain cyberspace. His taxonomic [comprehensiveness] is arborescent, not rhizomatic. The book's extrapolations are frequently quite daring, but all too often seem linear. I would argue that cyberspace will be a far stranger space than what this book predicts.
>
> (Novak 1995b)

The strangeness of these interactions, and the possibility of unplanned, spontaneous gatherings, suggest an electronic urbanism that will not reduce to the rationalist city and a logic of maximum performance.

The value of '.tv' as virtual real estate provides another example of the sorts of contestations occurring online. While this piece of virtual real estate only has value once it has been 'co-ordinated' by a logic of performance and circulation, it also marks the heterogeneity of sites that allows 'difference' to maintain significance in the production of cyberspace. On the one hand we are given a virtual example of how difference is '*produced* in space through the simple logic of uneven capital investment' (Harvey 1996: 295). The multiple arrangements of cyberspaces around this practice of distributed sites, however, also present at least one version of what Harvey calls 'one of the biggest challenges of twenty-first century urbanization': how to preserve heterogeneity while maintaining a 'global' justice (*ibid.*: 438). In contrast to the 'abstract space' of modern urbanism, which Lefebvre describes as global in organization, fragmented in function, and hierarchical in arrangement, a 'postmodern urban' that preserves difference would allow heterogeneity to occur on all three levels (Lefebvre 1994: 282). Within abstract space, 'difference' is either resisted or subsumed for the precise reason that it presents a potential point of rupture. By enacting a resistance to homogenization, spaces that exist as singularities can elude an abstract, systematized space of circulation and production. One can imagine the cluster of media corporations that will be attracted to the .tv domain name. But the Internet also allows for a proliferation of zones of difference conducive to a range of lived experiences, all the while allowing such spaces to abut with, connect to, and contradict each other in a heterogeneous cyberspace.

The urban described by Lefebvre, while never termed 'postmodern' in his own work, wears the tag well, particularly in the context of his rising influence among 'postmodern geographers' such as Soja and Gregory. In particular, Lefebvre describes a (postmodern) urban that:

> cannot be defined either as attached to a material morphology (on the ground, in the practico-material), or as being able to detach itself from it … It is a mental and social form, that of simultaneity, of gathering, of convergence, of encounter (or rather, encounters). It is a *quality* born from quantities (spaces, objects, products). It is a *difference*, or rather an ensemble of differences.
>
> (Lefebvre 1996: 131)

One can see evidence of this postmodern urban in the production of online social spaces. While the rationalist city corresponds to an organized network of flows, the Internet also provides an 'ensemble of differences': a multiplicity of spaces mapped by 'spontaneity and encounter'.

Emergent networks and the ephemeral city

The heterogeneity of space in the production of cyberspace suggests that the 'globalization of the city' under neocapitalism also produces fractures within that dominant space. One finds tensions between the city as unified space, or isotopia, and the city in its multiplicity, or heterotopia (Lefebvre 1996: 113).[19] These points map sites of contradiction in space: not a standing tension so much as a mutual interpenetration of space and 'counter-space' (Lefebvre 1994: 367). As an isotopia, we recognize the dominance of an *agora* model for cyberspace as point of exchange and consumption. As heterotopia, we see the 'ensemble of differences' that produces competing, interpenetrating spaces. In 'Of other spaces', where Foucault describes his own version of heterotopias, he speculates that 'the site' serves as the essential spatial unit in contemporary society: 'Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites' (Foucault 1986: 23). Written well in advance of the arrival of the World Wide Web, and even before the proliferation of networked computer servers, Foucault cannily finds a home in the discourse of the Internet.[20] The heterotopic site, Foucault goes on to explain, stands in a peculiar relation to these other sites in that they 'suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect' (Foucault 1986: 24). Above all, Foucault envisions heterotopias as 'a contestation of the *space in which we live*' (Foucault 1986: 24; emphasis added). The heterotopic, in other words, always involves everyday life, mapping an interpenetration that, in Deleuzean terms, both deterritorializes and reterritorializes lived space. If online space presents sites of resistance, it does so because of its relation to the very 'centre' of dominant space. But these two topographies do not spatially *oppose* each other; rather, they are implicated in the emergence of two competing and interpenetrating social spaces. Spaces of resistance are always, then, spaces in conflict. Cyberspace, as practice, concept, and lived experience, marks one such scene of dialectical struggle.

We are left, then, to consider the 'project' of the online urban – the utopian space of cyberspace. In doing so, we might imagine cyberspace as a global urban that maintains difference in a network of flows. Following Lefebvre, we might

imagine cyberspace as an 'ephemeral city': not dematerialized, but an electronic urban of 'moveable centrality' that places real cities (in their 'practico-material form') in a networked virtuality – a situation of possibility, or possibility of situation, a fleeting space of simultaneity and encounter (Lefebvre 1996: 155). These images of a virtual urban utopia are speculations, of course – 'fantasies' at some level – but driven by the real possibility of utilizing the material, conceptual, and lived experience of networked communication in a way that refuses to reduce to a system of efficient relays. These last speculations, however, do bring us back to our original two problems with 'cybertheory'. Clearly we have allowed for the production of a range of online social spaces. But as we consider the conceptual, material, and experiential mappings of these virtual topographies, here traced out as urban landscapes, we might pause to consider how dualism threatens to return to our discussion. How 'real', after all, are these emergent networks as social forms – these spaces of difference, heterogeneity, and resistance?

In his discussion of 'cyberdemocracy', Mark Poster maintains that the Internet 'installs a new regime of relations between humans and matter and between matter and non-matter' (Poster 1997: 205). Such an 'electronic geography', he argues, 'pose[s] the question of new kinds of relations of power between participants' (*ibid.*: 205–6). Here we come face to face with the concern of Ostwald and many others who have examined the social formations of networked communication: whether or not real social and political power can occur within these social spaces, or whether we experience the mere simulation of such things (Ostwald 1997: 142). We might likewise question the degree to which cyberspace presents what David Harvey sees as a politically dangerous monadology: 'the Utopian vision of being able to live the "Leibnizian conceit" free of material constraints … We can each voyage forth to the frontiers of cyberspace as mini-deities' (Harvey 1996: 279–80).[21] He suggests that 'It will take a strong injection of historical-geographical materialism to understand where all this refashioning of space-time might be taking us' (*ibid.*: 280). For his own part, Harvey suggests a rather interesting blend of Marx, Leibniz, and Whitehead. In this current work, Lefebvre hopefully serves a similar purpose. Certainly it is tempting to unmoor our considerations of cyberspace from materiality, to get caught up in the flow of digital information. But, as Lefebvre's spatial analysis insists, social space is a tangle, a multiplicity, involving bodies, infrastructure, and activity – as well as a representation. As a project it suggests 'not the imaginary of escape and evasion which conveys ideologies, but the imaginary which invests itself in *appropriation* of time, space, physiological life and desire' (Lefebvre 1996: 155).

Lefebvre positions the contemporary moment in a struggle between an increasing (postmodern, post-industrial, post-systemic) resistance to the dominant/dominating social space and a proliferating abstract space that is ever more 'global' and ever more 'discrete' in its organization. In facing this dominant social space, online and elsewhere, the issue of power comes to the fore. While compelling reasons exist to consider cyberspace as a produced social space, we are left with an important, unanswered question: although the Internet presents

a decentralized space, could a lived, resistant practice *really* resist the dominating forces of a virtual class that ultimately control the *real material* of spatial practice? While this question is impossible to answer at present, clearly the *virtuality* of such social spaces is currently being produced online.

Notes

1 Perhaps the First Conference on Cyberspace, held in Austin, Texas in 1990, and the proceedings that appeared the following year in expanded form as *Cyberspace: First Steps*, should serve as the events that herald the 'dawn of cyberspace'. As the commercial and public use of Internet grew exponentially in the 1990s, the term 'cyberspace' began to occur with greater frequency as shorthand for the neither-here-nor-there space produced during online real-time interactions. Around the same time the WWW began to develop (followed quickly by first-generation graphical browsers), and by the mid-1990s, web addresses and sites – *places* to visit – had begun to figure as an important part of corporate marketing. In 1995, for example, Universal Pictures ran a full-page advertisement for its science fiction film *12 Monkeys* in the Sunday *New York Times*, featuring nothing more than a large graphical image (an icon in its broadest sense) and a web address. The growing number of material and metaphorical investments in the spatiality of the Internet suggest that, by the mid-1990s, 'cyberspace' had become more than just a speculative fiction.

2 By the end of 1998 Internet stocks were the hottest investment in a volatile stock year. According to the NASDAQ report on 1 January 1999, sector leaders such as the web portal company Yahoo and the Internet venture capital group CMGI closed out the year 800 per cent above their 52-week lows. In addition, over 10 per cent of all initial public offerings in 1998 were Internet companies – more than 25 per cent in the last quarter alone ('Lift from Internet', *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 1999: B1). Throughout 1999 Internet stocks appreciated at unbelievable rates; Yahoo gained a further 350 per cent, while CMGI rose another 1,000 per cent. By March 2000 much of the delirious investment in 'dotcom' companies had come to a crashing halt in the face of a radical correction in the NASDAQ market. A year later NASDAQ and Internet stocks continue to slide, and many of the dot.coms have ceased to exist. Still, even after losing over 90 per cent of their peak value, Yahoo and CMGI stocks have more than doubled since January 1998.

3 Note that in popular representations of home computers (as opposed to government and corporate 'supercomputers') processing speed is most often associated with a computer's ability to send or receive information, not perform complex operations. In *Life on the Screen*, Sherry Turkle describes this change as a fundamental shift in our relation to computers: from 'modern' machines, used as number-crunching tools, to 'postmodern' media that simulate environments of communication and interaction. See Turkle (1995), especially pp. 18–21.

4 For example, in his own contribution to *Cyberspace: First Steps*, editor Michael Benedikt defines cyberspace as: 'a globally networked, computer-sustained, computer-accessed, and computer-generated, multidimensional, artificial, or "virtual" reality. In this reality, to which every computer is a window, seen or heard objects are neither physical nor, necessarily, representations of physical objects but are, rather, in form, character and action, made up of data, of pure information' (Benedikt 1991: 122–3). See also the introduction (pp. 1–3) for a range of mentalist definitions of cyberspace.

5 This approach to cyberspace places it within a Baudrillardian world of simulations. For an elaboration on this point, see Nunes (1997).

6 This trilogy of terms presents the crux of Lefebvre's spatial analysis. 'Spatial practice' refers to those material processes that 'secrete society's space' (Lefebvre 1994: 38). It is a production of relations between objects and products and corresponds to the poten-

tial to be 'perceived'. 'Representations of space' refers to relations (ideological, linguistic, symbolic) between lived space and a conceptual framework. 'Representational space' refers to a 'lived' space, emerging through a passive, daily social interaction with objects, images and symbols. For a summary, see Lefebvre (1994: 33, 36–46).

7 Lefebvre's own term for what contemporary Marxian theorists have alternatively called late capitalism, postFordism, pancapitalism, or post-industrial capitalism.

8 Formerly the Network Wizards, the Internet Software Consortium provides a domain survey of the Internet at six-month intervals. For the most recent numbers, consult <http://www.isc.org/ds>.

9 In *The Ecstasy of Communication* Jean Baudrillard discusses the shrinkage of space by media and transportation as placing each individual in a 'hyperpotential point', where absolute mobility and absolute fixity coincide (Baudrillard 1988: 39–42).

10 One 'portal' company, for example, has a faithful retriever as its mascot, who responds rapidly and accurately to the command: 'Lycos, go get it!'

11 Although the Centre describes itself as a site designed 'to explore and develop the representation of urban form on the World Wide Web', at present the web page contains little more than a lengthy listing of two- and three-dimensional virtual cities. The Centre's homepage is located at: <http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/vc/welcome.htm>.

12 Like Soja, Fredric Jameson sees 'spatial restructuring' as both produced by and productive of changes in capitalism. In *Postmodernism* he argues that, while classical capitalism operated in a space defined by 'a logic of the grid', and monopoly capitalism functioned in a fragmented space of disjointed experience, the capitalism of 'the multinational network' results in a space that 'involves the suppression of distance … and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty places, to the point where the postmodern body … is now exposed to a perceptual barrage of immediacy from which all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed' (Jameson 1991: 410–13).

13 See in particular Lefebvre (1967).

14 For further discussion of this aspect, see Nunes (1999).

15 Simon Sadler notes the similarity between Situationist psychogeography and 'this new interest in the cognitive city' that begins with Kevin Lynch (Sadler 1998: 92). For another rendering of how an 'aesthetic of cognitive mapping' relates to reconfigurations of both global and urban space see Jameson (1991: 51–4).

16 One is reminded of the early stages of 'Disneyfication' of Times Square in Manhattan, when barricades were erected at various street corners to impede pedestrian crossing and augment traffic flow.

17 For a further discussion of cyberspace as smooth/striated space see Nunes (1999).

18 See, for example, Ostwald's (1997) discussion of Lucasfilm's virtual environment, *Habitat*: what has now become an oft-told tale of one community's struggle for order within the eruption of unsanctioned activity.

19 The missing third term in this triad is the city in its projected or imaginary form – the city as utopia. For Lefebvre, these three points stand in dialectical tension: a sort of 'grid' for understanding the contradictory relation between spaces. This conceptual framework 'distinguishes between types of oppositions and contrasts in space: *isotopias*, or analogous spaces; *heterotopias*, or mutually repellent spaces; and *utopias*, or spaces occupied by the symbolic or the imaginary – by "idealities" such as nature, absolute knowledge, or absolute power' (Lefebvre 1994: 366).

20 Steve Shaviro (1995–7), for example, references Foucault to define networked heterotopias as 'other-spaces, or spaces of otherness, in contrast to utopian non-spaces … [T]hey are never exempt from the power relations and constraints of the societies that spawn them. Indeed, heterotopias express these relations and constraints even to excess.'

21 For another reading of Leibniz, monadology, and the metaphysics of cyberspace, see Heim (1993: especially pp. 83–108).

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2 Public space, urban space and electronic space

Would the real city please stand up?

Mike Crang

Introduction

When it comes to thinking about the city and information and communication networks, the first question is what is 'urban' about these networks at all? I want to suggest it is less the location of access points than the interactional spaces created. These often mobilize using an urban imaginary. I want to trace the different imaginations involved in accounts that outline virtual topographies where the city is central. I hope this will start to suggest the promiscuous and pluriform combinations of urban and electronic spaces (and metaphors). I begin by examining accounts that look to the dislocation of the city, its overextension and disappearance. Following this are accounts that see a suburban mode of experience – a telematic 'Cyberville' or 'Cyburbia'. Opposing this, some point to electronic networks revitalizing communities. Then I wish to address arguments for the transformation of the public sphere. Through these contrasting stances I want to explore a view linking these discontinuous visions into a labyrinthine view of the city, of different media and associated spatialities folding into one another.

In developing this chapter, I aim to highlight how urban metaphors tend to be used to provide a 'grounding' solidity, a familiarity and 'reality' against which virtual spaces can be judged. Choosing specific metaphors for 'electronic space' organizes the experience of electronic technologies into techno-spatial practices that embody particular conceptions of cyberspace (Kneale 1999: 206). Using familiar, commonsense spatial ontologies may inhibit the possibilities for software worlds (Novak 1995: 4/3). Spatial metaphors make the low-level abstractions of machine code tangible, but may naturalize some configurations of cyberspace; thus images of (techno-)frontiers may offer connotations of a mythical, individualistic, libertarian past combined with a faith in progress, while (information) highways and their ilk bring the baggage of state intervention (cf. Jones 1998: 2; Lockard 1996; Rowe 1996). And yet we cannot bypass spatial representations, because they are an idiom through which networks are experienced. The city is both object and metaphor in a reflexive system where the imagining of electronic space is vital to creating it. This chapter suggests that spatial metaphors provide what Derrida called the

'hauntology' of cyberspace: not grounding but structuring absences, whose apparent solidity and common sense is both useful and limiting. To explore this, the chapter examines accounts of urban and electronic space, connected to often very distinct spatial imaginaries and fostering particular appropriations and creations of electronic spaces. Through this, it suggests, these spatial imaginaries and symbols articulate the city through a series of differentiated anxieties.

World cities and the world wired city

Cities play a vital role in the emerging global 'datascape'. Here I want to draw out three takes on the city in a global context before progressing in later sections to consider alternate urban templates. Two related versions depict world cities with increased communication and information flows. A third sees the metropolis expand to constitute a world wide city, a single omnipolis. A first take emphasizes networked information and communication technologies, or telematics, as extending existing command-and-control functions in 'world cities', highlighting their positions in a global order (Luithlen 1998; Sassen 1997, 1998). There may be bifurcating paths for cities in the global information economy – and also within cities – where dominant sectors use enhanced communication to increase their sphere of control, while others are being managed and still others are cut out of the system altogether (Aurigi and Graham 1998: 63–5). However, even dominant cultures are not delocalized. We should not fall into the trap of reading the speed and distanciation of communication technologies as imbuing the lives of their users with similar properties (Thrift 1996). Structural position does not just create dominance, this has to be actively produced in that locale (Sassen 1997: 5, 7).

In an alternative take on the global order, Castells (1989, 1996) flips these arguments of extended command and control, depicting cities as overwhelmed by flows of information. Charting the increasing flows of information along digital conduits, suggests the growing importance of informational space. For Castells, the city as a place of embedded cultures is eroded by delocalized flows. The specifically urban question diminishes, with states, let alone cities, forming just 'nodes of a broader framework of power' (Castells 1996: 304).

Picking up many of the same themes, a third reading sees an expansion of the urban. Guattari suggests that, whereas particular cities were at the apex of world systems in various epochs,

> a capital dominating the world economy no longer exists. There is instead an 'archipelago of cities' or even, more precisely, sub-ensembles of big cities, connected by telematic means and a great diversity of communication media. One might say that the world-city of contemporary capitalism has been deterritorialized, that its various components have been scattered over the surface of a multi-polar urban rhizome.
>
> (Guattari 1992b: 124)

The account moves from cosmopolis to omnipolis, one virtual city of which others are suburbs, where 'the virtual space of the telecommunications era is gearing up to take over from the geography of nations' (Virilio 1997: 84). This disaggregation and disassembly sees everything circulating, yet difference eroding. Networks produce an existential nomadism where

> [t]he contemporary human being is fundamentally Deterritorialized. By that I mean that his [sic] originary ethological territories – body, clan, village, cult, corporation … – are no longer … fixed to a precise point of the earth but essentially incrust themselves in incorporeal universes. Subjectivity has entered the realm of a generalized nomadism.
>
> (Guattari 1992b: 123)

Virilio (1997), though, warns that this hypercommunicability does not offer freedom but an instant, technologized totalitarian control and response. Cyber-enthusiasts too often portray time, space and material as constraints to be overcome or transcended into a realm of 'real-time' interaction. And yet the fantasy of immediacy, and the suppression of distance, resonates with an authoritarian aesthetics (Ronnell 1989: 9). It would mean that

> decentralization would take on an altogether different sense from that of autonomy accorded to regions, it would signal the end of the unity of place of the old political theater of the city, and its imminent replacement by a unity of time, a chronopolitics of intensivity and interactivity, 'technicity' succeeding the continuity [long *durée*] of the City, architecture of information systems definitively replacing the system of architecture and of contemporary urbanism.
>
> (Virilio 1998: 61)

What these last two approaches add to the first is that telematics does not occur in or between urban spaces but produces a new form of space-time. Whereas the city was the intensification of space to overcome time, now urban space is not a space and time that contains action, but an interactive, real time cityscape (Graham 1997: 32). In Virilio's dystopian vision, politics based around public and private spaces, local and global, is replaced by a series of intermingling and conflicting temporal modalities – a chronopolitics created by instantaneous transmission bringing formerly discrete space-times into contact (Boyer 1996: 19; Ronnell 1989: 79; Sassen 1999) – where the differentials between speeds of production, dissemination and comprehension for different kinds of information jar (Wark 1994: 17). Virilio points to an immobilized, transfixed spectator subject to bombardment by thousands of images crossing the living-room every day. The global has imploded, and the catastrophic centre is right on the couch. Whereas the modern city was marked by the generalized mobility of its embodied population through mass

transit or motor vehicles, now it is the virtual city that moves, leaving the population in a generalized inertia (Virilio 1995: 2, 1998).

It is this sense of novel space-times I want to retain from these approaches. The world wide city is less a node, or heroic actor, than a 'phantom city' composed of the assembled ruinous landscapes of past technologies, producing multiple and competing temporalities; leading to a sense of a city where our experiences, histories and memories are diversely mediatized (Burgin 1997; Guattari 1992a; Ostwald 1997). The resultant over-exposed city is a hollow place without a unity of time. Where 'constructed geographical space has been replaced by chronological topographies, where immaterial electronic broadcast emissions decompose and eradicate a sense of place, the city lost form except as connector or membrane' (Boyer 1996: 19). Cities are no longer unitary entities with bounded insides and outsides (Mazzoleni 1990: 100; Mandarini 1998). The relationship between micro- and macro-spaces is not linear expansion, or inside and outside, but a series of knots and spirals. The urban wall, the boundary that made the city coherent, has been replaced by a range of imbricated spaces at different scales. This is not the classical *polis* of Habermas or Arendt, but a Babylonian

> world city – a settlement of enormous scope, which is the opposite of a community through its heterogeneity and lack of citizenry … Yet in contrast to the polis, this cosmopolis possesses a tolerance of diversity, the co-existence of various groups who mingle in active street life, but who do not join together in active citizenship.
>
> (Featherstone 1998: 911)

However, the totalizing tenor of the accounts – where apparently everyone, everywhere experiences the same electronic 'nomadism', and the reduction of urban life to the flatness of the scanscape (Burrows 1997: 41) – is problematic. It leaves too little room for the ordinary citizen and almost none for the ordinary city – or suburb – and the different development paths that world city analysis highlights. Despite Virilio's (1998) references to Mexico City, a profound metropolitanism is revealed if we try to imagine a 'post-colonial' vision (Gabilondo 1995; Robins 1999). Though those excluded from these electronic networks are noted, it seems for authors like Virilio (1997) that, if there is one thing worse than being swept up in these complex networks, it is being stranded in a local time (cf. Graham and Aurigi 1997a). At least, though, the pluriform space-times recognize that this technology may well increase rather than ameliorate social polarization.

Cyburbia

> Not a wired culture, but a virtual culture that is wired shut: compulsively fixated on digital technology as a source of salvation from the reality of a lonely culture and radical social disconnection in everyday life.
>
> (Kroker 1996: 168)

Dystopian works on virtual globalization have echoes in approaches that see not urbanization but suburbanization as the outcome. Instead of the city as site of contact and exchange, there are suburban cocoons (Boyer 1996). There is no public space where unplanned interaction might occur. Spatial separation exacerbates social divisions, while the distribution of 'bandwidth' regulates access to the new urban spaces (Mitchell 1995). Physically separated by roads and cars, *en route* from gated community to enclosed shopping mall, telematics reinforce existing segregations by further reducing unplanned encounters – deepening the crisis of the city rather than contributing to a solution (Robins 1999: 52). As Elwes put it:

> computer technology was designed to promote and speed up global communication and yet the effect is somehow one of disconnection and distance. Individuals are increasingly locked into the isolation of their homes … and they only make contact with the outside world through telecommunications and networked computer-information systems. Not so much distance learning as living at a distance.
>
> (Elwes 1993, cited in Featherstone and Burrows 1995: 12)

The tele-burbanite is villain and victim at the same time: an isolated individual, cut loose from the sociality of urban life, separated from the world by the pixelated screen. The utopianist discourse offers a fantasy of escape through virtual cities that, in an Althusserian sense, offers to let people live an imaginary relationship to their real conditions. Or, as Wilbur put it, 'Virtual community is the illusion of community where there are no real people and no real communication. It is a term used by idealistic technophiles who fail to understand that authenticity cannot be engendered through technological means' (1997: 14). The political analysis that this leads to suggests that

> belief in virtual communities is an ideology that obscures the reality underlying the pseudo-communitarian patterns of virtual interaction … it is a projection, the product of wishful thinking and desire for the sense of belonging, fellowship, solidarity, nurture and safety that daily living in modern capitalist societies routinely denies to most of its citizens.
>
> (Gimenez 1997: 84)

Virtual realms are seen as part of a strategy where the wealthy retreat into

privatized enclaves that promise to keep the user from the accidents of proximity that are the grist of living in places (Boyer 1996; Doheny-Farina 1996). These anti-urban fears and denials of embodied place express a desire to avoid contact (Doheny-Farina 1996: xi; Robins and Levidov 1995: 115). Robins (1995: 144) argues that 'virtual empowerment is a solipsistic affair, encouraging a sense of self-containment and self-sufficiency, and involving the denial of need for external objects'. Coupling the roots of virtual spaces such as 'Multi-User-Domains' in role-play gaming, where players can interact in a fantasy environment controlled by programming 'wizards' (sic), with the trumpeting of 'eternal' needs that can be met, suggests not so much alternative futures as compensatory pleasures:

> It is a familiar old appeal to an imaginative space in which we can occupy new identities and create new experiences to transcend the limitations of our mundane lives. It is the aesthetic of fantasy gaming; the fag-end of Romantic sensibility … The imagination is dead, only the technology is new.[1]
>
> (Robins 1995: 139)

Social life is atomized, leaving individuals seeking narcissistic pleasures in 'placeless' environments devoted to consumer capitalism. The mall already represents a virtual environment in some senses. The virtual mall is one of the endlessly heralded opportunities promoted for the Internet. And this should not be surprising, since the average 'netizen' is affluent, educated and interested in consumer goods (Aurigi and Graham 1998; Graham and Marvin 1996). We are promised a three-dimensional walk through environment, with Virtual Reality allowing us to inspect products and ready credit lines to buy them: perfectly simulated capitalism – stores that need carry no stock, visited by shoppers' 'avatars' (computer-generated figures that represent the user or, better, offer telepresence) placing orders by electronic cash, which lead to transactions in bank networks and the telematically co-ordinated just-in-time production of goods. Compounding this is the 'dataveillance', so called, where interests and actions are logged and recorded to build up marketing profiles of interests. The suburban shopping mall is taken to a higher order; cyberspace extends a general urban problem of the commodification and closure of public space (Featherstone and Burrows 1995: 12).

However, it is surely not too much to admit that there are forms of sociality in the mall, nor should we forget the heterogeneity of these semi-public, partly-private spaces, from megamalls to humble arcades. Moreover, implying a contrasting authentic, real urban experience seems problematic, since many of the classic locales of 'public' interaction were commercial – from cafes, to department stores (Light 1999: 115). Nor is this anxiety about the city new, and it has a counterpart: while Cyburbia depicts telematics eroding urbanity, a more communitarian vision sees them operating in the opposite direction. As Mitchell (1999: 76) notes, these 'chilling visions of urban dissolution into endless undifferentiated suburbia' tend to conflate locational freedom with locational

indifference. It may be people want to use these technologies to enable emplaced urban community. There is no immanent logic to them. Techno-communitarian accounts form the antithesis of accounts of telematic suburbanization, drawing opposite conclusions from similar concerns.

Virtual communities

Both critics and advocates of telematic communities start from similar beginnings, and both risk seeing technology determining the outcome. Recent urban history is told as a story of declining communal space and increasing atomization; the difference comes in a belief that this time technology offers a solution, instead of causing further crises, that fibre optics can reconnect communities broken up by tarmac. In an uncanny restaging of classic urban accounts, cyberspace meets Simmel and Tönnies: Simmel's alienated, overstimulated urban *bricoleur*, stitching an identity from fragmented sources, fits well with accounts of information overload in cyberspace (Bouchet 1998). However, instead of this fragmented subject, adrift in oceans of information, there is a vision (or, as detractors would have it, a fantasy) of recreating community. Communication is not interpreted as efficient transmission of information, as in accounts of globalization, but rather as a socially binding ritual (Jones 1998: 15).

Communication technologies are claimed to offer possibilities for putting communal life back together again – to revivify disappearing informal and associational spaces (Rheingold 1993: 14). Telematics is seen as offering pragmatic possibilities for improving real lives. Hard-wires could support local social networks.[2] This has been promoted as almost a direct mapping where local initiatives could use technology to revitalize their neighbourhoods (e.g. Schuler 1996). So pragmatic critics like Doheny-Farina (1996: xiii, 155) call for 'civic networking' that reintegrates people with places and for the evaluation of technologies not by their global extent but the intensity of localized connectivity in places. His approach locates the vitality of community in emplaced interaction, which may be supplemented by networked communication, but relies at heart on unplanned interaction (cf. Calhoun 1998).

> A community is bound by place, which always includes complex social and environmental necessities. It is not something you can easily join. You can't subscribe to a community as you can a discussion group on the net. It must be lived … The hope that the incredible powers of global computer networks can create new virtual communities, more useful and healthier than the old geographic ones, is thus misplaced The net seduces us and further removes us from our localities – unless we take charge of it with specific community-based, local agendas.
>
> (Doheny-Farina 1996: 37)

Indeed, if we look at how telematics fits in with other practices and communication technologies, we can see that although they are *sui generis* 'delocalized', a

lot of interaction is actually between people in the same area who meet in person, telephone and share other connections (Wellman and Gulia 1998: 179). Indeed we should not assume that electronic contact replaces other forms of interaction – there is evidence that, quite to the contrary, we want to travel to physically meet people whom we contact online (Mitchell 1999: 91).

However, an alternative argument sees non-localized 'virtual communities' independent of locally embedded urban networks. The idea that virtual communities are escapist or inferior is rejected, and they are seen as co-equal with other forms of belonging. Instead of spaces of informational flows, telematics creates places to which people can feel attachment and belonging. Real community is created by meaningful interaction, be it down a phone or face to face (Markham 1998: 156–62). The most prominent exponent of this view has been Howard Rheingold (1993) whose folksy, homespun 'wisdom' and West-Coast style has enchanted and angered commentators in equal measure. He took a computer-mediated discursive community and charted the lengthy interactions, the gradual build up of shared feeling and mutual support among a spatially dispersed group – a group, he suggested, that eventually formed a community (see Chapter 1 above). To recite one of the more famous passages on this topic, 'virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on … public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relations in cyberspace' (Rheingold 1993: 5). Nunes emphasizes an affective electronic community to which members feel belonging. This community, then, may not correspond to the physical city, especially not if we see it as a counter to trends towards fragmentation. Some initiatives may use electronic networks to reinforce existing neighbourhoods, but there is no necessary coincidence of the two.

Cyberspace, in this vision, allows knowable, mutually supportive communities to bypass the spatially divisive city. Social networks metamorphose into wired networks. Telematics does not just overcome distance, or simply expand space, it offers smaller more knowable groupings a chance to form (Fernback 1997; Harasim 1993). Where the modern city is beyond human scope, here a more direct Platonic scale of republic can prosper. This means we might look at, say, the multiplicity of discussion groups on Usenet, coming together around shared beliefs or interests, articulating numbers of imagined communities. Rather than judging these as authentic or not, we might look at the different modalities through which communities can be constituted (Baym 1998). We might link the concentration on performance, the critical focus on identity, as part of a demassified politics of identity. The urban metaphor here may well be a displacement of the urban villages of the Chicago school. The telematic world is a city populated with Little Italies and a thousand identity-based urban villages. And yet the idea and practice of closed enclaves has clear down-sides. First, these enclaves function through policing borders to create bounded territory (on and off-line) (see Massey 1994; Tepper 1996). Second, this urban mosaic is itself a metaphor whose depiction of the off-line city can be questioned. We might ask how studies tend to focus upon, and thus replicate, internal linkages (Fennell 1997), rather

than the material, personal and symbolic entanglements of communities with other places. This seems especially important since the history of telematics, from the early days of telephony, can be written in terms of fears and disputes over boundary maintenance (Marvin 1988; Ronnell 1989). Third, then, the idea of place here needs to be examined, to ensure we do not conflate locale and community and valorize place over entangled, dis-placed social networks and performative practice (Jones 1998: 16; Loftalian 1996; Wellman and Gulia 1998: 169). In a symmetrical but opposite reading to Cyburban accounts, place signifies the more or less happy accidents of proximity (cf. Doheny-Farina 1996: 37; Healy 1996: 62). The analogy is with communities of common location, but instead we are dealing with communities of interest. Fourth, networked identity does not just fragment the social and political into a series of standpoints based on given identities, it fragments individual identities.

This directs our attention to two powerful factors that work against seeing telematics as creating a flowering of virtual communities. First, the net allows fluidity of identity and differentiated performances to different audiences (Stone 1991; Kitchin 1998: 90). People do not have singular identity-based affiliations on-line (or off-line, generally), but multiple memberships, where the purpose of joining may be an individual goal. Rather than the holistic support often associated with idealized communities, the differentiated parts of the net (and increasingly differentiated lifeworlds) often provide mutual support through peer groups in specific and narrow fields. Rather than communities for themselves, these may well be means/end-oriented and used instrumentally for personal goals. Second, net groupings are elective (Log out; Exit!). This, then, does not seem to offer the sanctions that communities often rely upon to enforce social responsibility. The intensity of affective bonds reported by Turkle (1996) should not obscure the ability to exit, nor the transitory hold that 'meaningful others' on the net have in defining ourselves (Willson 1997). We might instead consider Herder's suggestion of 'willing identification' forming community (Spencer 1996). It may then be possible to imagine some point between the empty and determined self – a sort of instrumental rationality within a communal field. Another way of combining the elective and fragmented nature of people's involvement with multiple telematic groupings might be through Maffesoli's (1996) neo-tribes – transient, affective groupings, that are not simply instrumental but purposive groupings that are partly elective. These are groupings that their members achieve rather than being born into (Kitchin 1998: 94), but that nevertheless mobilize unspoken, shared sociality through a sense of 'tactile proximity' rather than rational order (Poster 1998: 198; Stone 1995). However, such groupings might be just another form of 'lifestyle enclave' that, Bellah noted, 'is fundamentally segmental and celebrates the narcissism of similarity' (Healy 1996: 61).

It is not a case of questioning the reality of mediated groupings (cf. Watson 1997). From early telephone networks, many social groups have relied upon mediated communication. These groupings show that networks cannot be simply opposed to interactional space. But are communities the best metaphor for

groupings such as <alt.rec.music.indigo-girls>? The dispersed interest group offers some connections to an earlier incarnation of civil society as dispersed communities of scholars sustained by correspondence. The circulation of knowledge and information, leading occasionally to informed discussion, seems to offer some parallels (Stone 1991) to a civil society where agency is grounded in interaction, not an external, validating identity (Jones 1997: 30). The similarity then appears to be with the self-reflexive critical examination of foundational positions associated with the outline proposed by Habermas for the public sphere.

New public spaces

An alternative approach looks not to the renewal of community but to the public sphere, not just in the sense of access to information (though that is surely part of it) but in the sense of creating social spaces. Traced back to fifteenth-century Italian city states, multiple associations, interest groups and connections form a web of sociality sustaining a civil society with a density and plurality of aims and objectives. The net recreates this possibility of non-hierarchical discussion and free association with new public arenas – possibly global civil societies breaking out of national polities (Frederick 1993; Nguygen and Alexander 1996). The origin of a public sphere can be linked to the emergence of new subjectivities and personae in the early modern period. In this period, writers argue, the self becomes increasingly constructed through textual means, while the body ceases to be privileged (Stone 1991). The effect is the creation of a textualized and less corporeal public persona. Indeed, it is possible to make the case that the public sphere has always been virtual – not opposed to but reliant on texts and technology, from telephones to mass-media (Jones 1998: 25; Light 1999: 123) – and part of an ongoing and ramifying development of congeries of semi-private social spaces (Calhoun 1998; Stone 1995: 402). This decorporealization risks blurring into a universalism that represses the actual specificities of the subject – bourgeois, white and male – but there are clear echoes of the play of textualized identities facilitated through telematic means.

To reprise some significant moments from Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), an informational sector of society comprising a range of institutions allows people access to information to foster reflexively aware understandings in a condition of relative autonomy. Webster (1995) argues that the sphere is in decline through the increasing ability of states and corporations to manipulate information, and thus discussion. Despite his distrust of historicism, Habermas seems to locate a golden age of the public sphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, linked to certain urban institutions and spaces. Habermas is notoriously difficult to pin down in terms of concrete implications for public space (Howell 1993), but the crucial loci are the coffee houses of seventeenth-century London and the salons of eighteenth-century Paris – both, we should note, semi-private (Light 1999: 115). These offered an arena for a rising class fraction to articulate itself against a 'feudal'

hierarchy. There are striking parallels with computer-mediated communication: first, distribution and access to information; second, the relationship to media institutions. On both counts, the net, being less controllable and based on many-to-many exchanges, has been proclaimed as remedying the crises Habermas depicts. Third, in terms of the salons and coffee houses, could we not see discussion groups and so on in this light, as spaces of associational democracy (Fernback 1997; Gimenez 1997: 87; Weston 1997)?

The decentralized and non-hierarchical system seems to resist the distortions Habermas depicts in the current media.[3] Where Poster (1995, 1997) noted that, with the media industries, the public sphere was often a silent sphere, driven by the pairings of sender/recipient, producer/consumer; telematics, then, offers a field of generalized interactivity. Thus e-fora offer discourse between symmetrical individuals, pursuing consensus through the presentation of validity claims (Poster 1997: 218). The procedures for establishing a Usenet conference involve the examination of the rationale and presuppositions of the proposed group through public debate and discussion (Loftalian 1996). That said, the co-present, embodied encounters of Habermas' account are systematically denied to electronic spaces – e-fora being asynchronous media, as well disembodied. Or we might turn to the evolution of multi-user technology to produce electronic spaces where people can socialize and interact in real time – either through textual channels or as graphically presented virtual 'places' (e.g. Baym 1998; Kolko and Reid 1998; McLaughlin *et al.* 1997). The space is the opposite of the 'infobahn'. Instead of the productivist space of the highway, full of surging data, there are pluriform spaces of associative democracy (Kroker 1996: 170). Perhaps the most famous example of this metaphor being put into practice is Amsterdam's Digital City (<www.dds.nl>) which intended to create a renewed public realm around digital fora explicitly as evoking an 'open city' (Lovink and Riemens 1997: 182; Francissen and Brants 1998).[4]

However, before this none-too-clever trick of mapping one century into another gets out of hand, there are some things that do not fit so well. First, the privileging of rational, informed commentary seems to overlook the overload of information and irrational aspects of flame wars. Second, I am sceptical about linking recent developments to class fractions. While there are arguments for 'informational classes', these often group together people with radically different relationships both to the rest of society and to the information handled (see Kumar 1993). They seem too incoherent to compare to the commercial bourgeoisie. Thirdly, the public sphere marched to a public time: that is, the invention of a linear temporality allowing rational choices to predict and control the future. A real-time society poses problems for such conceptions. Finally, the public sphere was founded on the invention of a stable and bounded political self. How is this concept able to deal with the more fragmentary, unbounded and distributed self of the network? Do we follow Poster (1997: 222–4) and see a move from validity claims being presented to using the technology to constitute selves? Or do we appeal to 'location technologies' designed for 'warranting' users – that is, connecting

mediated presence to a body – to create a 'socially apprehensible citizen' (Stone 1995: 399)? In short, locating the competent subject of attributable actions is rendered problematic.[5]

Architectures and virtual public spaces

If cities act as a grounding metaphor for cyberspace and its practices, it makes some sense to look at how architecture itself approaches public spaces. Some analyses read types of (virtual) urban spaces directly into types of social world – a Platonism that sees a perfect correspondence between information, forms and consciousness (Stallabrass 1995: 5, 8). For example, a neo-classical revivalist architecture looks to uncover an archetypal urban grammar in neo-classical forms that will promote a more communal, organic urban life. However, the classical *techne* says little about the relationship between created space and social life (Scaff 1995: 64). More interesting perhaps are neo-rationalist interpretations by architects like Rossi, where classical forms are not about communal identity so much as an invocation that is somewhere between inventory and memory – not an eternal grammar but evoking the historical specificities of past public realms in order to mobilize their metaphors. Thus the work of architects like Leon Krir does not aim to recreate an essential public form, but rather a relationship between new and old forms 'that will weave their path through the junk of the commercialized city, re-establishing a public realm and knitting together the presently disparate bits – a new order to be layered on the urban detritus' (King 1996: 152). It is a form of building spaces for public association that deploys strongly classical ideas of space not in order to suggest that classical forms determine public life, but to animate their cultural memory.

How might these imaginative public spaces of architects inform telematics? Digital Amsterdam has various *agoras* for public debate modelled on city squares, as a metaphor for a public sphere of information and discussion: urban metaphors which explicitly invoke 'Athenian participatory democracy' (Francissen and Brants 1998: 20). One of the aims is to foster a virtual public space where decisions can be queried and issues discussed, in order to redress a decline in conventional political participation. The urban metaphor seems reassuring, using words like *agora* and forum in the same way that Krir evoked Western history. More directly, the Helsinki Arena2000 project offers a direct replication of the city; it offers virtual visits to existing places.

These are visualizable, organizable spaces. Instead of the fluidity of the metropolis many of these environments seem rather to echo walled cities and knowable, closed realms of shared assumptions (Nunes 1997: 171). However, the transparency of the spaces created should give pause for thought. In contrast to omnipolis, it is not multiplicity of times in given spaces but the monologue of form that represents function. We might well criticize this dream of transparency as more of the modernist 'radiant city' (Stallabrass 1999: 111). But many designed 'public spaces' have actually translated into lonely squares of grass (Light 1999: 124). Instead, with Robins (1997, 1999), we could invoke

Byzantine cities of ambiguous times, slow action and unplanned contact instead of the trumpeting of speed, weightlessness, frictionless and painless interaction. This is not the utopian transparency of the modernist city recycled by cyber-enthusiasts, nor the collapsing world of its dystopian twin. We need to think of overlaying multi-purpose spaces. I would suggest metaphors of *labyrinthine* space, offering not so much the bird's-eye view as Simmel's city in ruins (Featherstone 1998: 918). Even the imaginings of communal and public space deployed by virtual protagonists risk repeating a notion of presence that may be neither tenable nor desirable. Whether the electropolis is seen as helping or hindering them, good places are typically identified with a narrative of wholeness.[6] There seems to be a danger that political action becomes something that happens in a community or public space taken as real – rather than something that is produced through politics. As Deutsche (1996: 286) puts it, we have to ask what political subject is naturalized by perspectival space. Disorderly and confused boundaries open up notions of publicness that do not presuppose a claim for a subject detached from the scene before them, a sense of public space that does not rely on a sovereign self abstracted from context. Deutsche argues the sense of unitary subject acting in a unified public sphere was, and is, a phantasm. The public sphere is not an exterior space that private individuals enter but a rupture in self-presence. Citing Keenan, Deutsche (1996: 324) argues the public sphere not only never was but is structurally 'not here' (cf. Stone and Driscoll 1992). Very often the imagined *agora* is a place of security and safety for the subject. On the other hand, public space is 'agonistic', bringing the irreconcilable and formerly separate into contact.

Instead of comforting classical allusions we might look to the *Parc de Villette* compiled from one rubric over another, cutting across each other denying coherence – a layering of different types of space. Or we might look to the eighteenth-century etchings of Piranesi that, echoing anatomical drawings, excavated Rome through ruins, creating gaps and irruptions of the past into the present. This sense of the public as disjunctural politics and space suggests countering the narrative that the loss of the public sphere is the loss of enclosure through flows (Boyer 1996: 206). The architect Lebbeus Woods' 'freespace' projects try to create such an arena through an 'anarchitecture', where there are scars and cuts, sudden discontinuities and irruptions in the urban fabric. Thus a living-room is suddenly opened to the world, or transposed to another part of the city, blurring dimensions of inside and out, here and there (Woods 1996; cf. Novak 1991). Indeed attempts to use community and spatial metaphors for online interaction too often collapse when they look for whole and coherent places rather than junctures and connections between different spaces and registers (Ward 1999). These forms do not simply reprise past public spaces but take them up and place them in new constellations and assemblages. Not so much works of mourning as event spaces.

Public space in virtual cities may be a geography of events and becomings. Instead of the desire for a coherent, visible, and legible city, critiqued by de Certeau (1984) as writing the city through the optics of control, electronic public

space is pluriform, conflictual and opaque. It is not fixed and standing, but is made through conjuncture. This public space is not the binding together into wholes, the creation of symbolizable realities, but much more the puncturing of representational space. Old technologies and spatialities do not disappear but persist in an interweaving and cross-cutting of forms and practices. Lacan once invoked the form of the knot, which seems to evoke the labyrinthine, self-referring and complex unfolding of electronic spaces. The wired city, then, seems to mesh with accounts that see the city as both social and psychic imaginary – full of anxious encounters and projections, desires and symbols.

Concluding remarks

Bringing this together, then, it seems that both the communal vision of cyberspace, with its appeal to affective belonging, and the public space of information and associational democracy have reasonable, yet equally contestable, claims as a template for the electropolis. The spatial imaginings of the city seem to have drawn upon this vocabulary and mobilized a rather idealized urban historical geography. The spaces imagined seem too often knowable and bounded containers for action. They seem to emphasize spatialities of presence rather than fragmented subjects. The somewhat hyperbolic visions of the dissolution of the urban at least share the flavour of polyglot spatiality in the globalized city. A city of networks and connections between places and the coming together of different and formerly discrete entities (Massey 1994; McBeath and Webb 1995: 252). It might be, then, that we can see a fractured public space being formed: not so much localized urban villages as a space that jumbles previously distinct categories.

Electronic space interacts with urban space to create heterarchic spaces, which disrupt conventional boundaries (Menser 1996). The virtual is the multiplication of spaces, and temporalities, in the same place (Stone 1991). The public space of the virtual city is thus very much the electronic *agora*, in the sense that the *agora* was the point where the conventional orderings and rules of the classical Greek city broke down. It was the place that disrupted the unifying symbolism of the city, where novel forces from outside swirled inside the walls, where there was cultural mixing. Where the acropolis held the depth of the past and the unity of the city's gods and top-down hierarchy (Woods 1997), the *agora* was about spatial extension and fleeting meetings which expressed no unity (Ostwald 1997: 133) – a heterarchy. This sense of public space suggests the electropolis is not an alternate realm but offers conjunctures of different forms of space – different electronic, physical, social and political spaces. Running these together produces a fractured public sphere, not a container that defines how self-present individuals interact but a sphere where interactions themselves form a public space that is necessarily incomplete. That space is one of singularity not stability, one of partial objects not products, which requires pathic knowledges not of the spatially distinct and temporally homogeneous but of something experienced in fragments (Guattari 1992b).

It seems, then, that we should be careful of all attempts to make these spaces coherent and representational. Instead, perhaps they are unsymbolizable, what Lacan would call the traumatic real, or, as de Certeau's (1984) critique suggests, the city is haunted by different practices and knowledges. The mappable, plannable electronic visions suggest both a desire to know and the limits of that knowing subject. Comparing these visions of cyberspace, what they share is the haunting by urban fears and urban imaginaries. They speak loudly of fears of incoherence and instability. The Real city is then not the contrast of the electropolis with solid ground, or the fleshy, smelly, shoe-leather-and-petroleum city. The Real city is then not the base around which virtual cities encrust. Rather it is a hole, a puncture, created via telematics as much as by any other means; the traumatic kernel of the Real city is inarticulable. Fearful and anxious, however, we paste over comforting graphics. Electropolis is another anxious urban imagining, confusing and compounding codes of order. Being always elsewhere it defers the idea of the presence of the city. The ideal city – be that the cyber-utopian or the anti-cyberian – seems to function as a haunting ideal and necessary loss.

Notes

1 Slightly contrary to this, recent trends suggest that text-based MUDs are some of the most enduring computer games around, because they utilize the traditional strengths of imaginative literature.
2 It is worth noting that in the early 1970s the arch-communitarian Etzioni was publishing reports on wiring local communities – though in that case with Cable TV (Doheny-Farina 1996:162). For a critique of how this translates social to spatial networks, see McBeath and Webb (1995).
3 Whether this lasts or not is a matter for debate. It is worth remembering that telephone systems in the US began as overlapping, and multiple networks allowing many-to-many conversations, before being shaped into corporate monopolies (Marvin 1988).
4 Rural initiatives like the Swedish 'Tidsvag noll' and Montana's 'Big Sky Telegraph' have also attempted to create a virtual urban public sphere for rural communities who were conventionally debarred from this by scattered residences and infrequent interaction (Schuler 1996: 96–7, 198–9; Uncapher 1998).
5 For instance MOOs offer delegated agency, where avatars and 'bots' re-present their creators, but the latter are semi-automated to perform certain tasks. Thus when a user (represented on screen by a moving mannequin and self-selected name) enters the virtual cafe (designed and controlled by the host) and is greeted by a friendly figure offering some news (but which is actually a 'bot' sub-routine greeting every guest), then who is the competent subject here? And who can be held accountable under which jurisdiction for any of their actions?
6 'Under the protection of the word public, some critics return to unproblematized, pre-critical uses of the adjective real – real people, real space, real social problems' (Deutsche 1996: 318).

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3 Demonstrating the globe

Virtual action in the network society

Tiziana Terranova

On 19 June 1999, messages and reports from the 'June 18 project' started doing the rounds across various Internet mailing lists. 18 June was the first 'international day of action aimed at the heart of the global economy', an international effort at organization that went on to produce major protests in Geneva, Seattle, Melbourne and Prague over the next eighteen months. The first international day of action had been organized by the British collective 'Reclaim the Streets', who mainly relied on the Internet to rally constellations of activist collectives around the globe. The protesters' idea was that capital was now operating mainly at a virtual, networked and global level, and resistance to capital had to start from the same level, using decentralized, global network technologies, in order to target the hidden nodes of global command.

Among the reports flooding into the mailing list *nettime*[1] was an especially long one written by a member of the Electronic Disturbance Theatre from Austin, Texas. As a member of a collective whose main objective is to integrate the 'virtual' with the 'real' – that is 'joint computer-based and street-based actions' – Stefan Wray had quite a few things to reflect upon. In the first place, there was the success of the Electronic Civil Disobedience action against the Mexican government, launched on 15 June 1999: a 'virtual sit-in', with protesters repeatedly pointing their browsers to the Mexican government website, thus clogging 'the Internet pathways leading to the targeted web-site' (Wray 1999).

On the other hand, Wray was disappointed by the outcome of the 'embodied' action in Austin on 18 June, which, in his opinion, was characterized by an inability to draw on virtual and real resources. The event had been poorly organized and ended up with three arrests. The activists lacked even basic access to a mobile phone to alert the local press to the action. Basically, the Austin demonstration failed the test as a spectacle: it neither attracted media attention nor produced images which would achieve global recognition or be remembered as a significant historical moment. But, on the plane of the virtual, 18 June 1999 in Austin, Texas, was attaining a new type of existence. Rather than being simply drowned in information, the events of the day established themselves in a vast virtual memory, first as a circulating impulse across the spidery networks of Internet mailing lists, then as archived material in those lists' web-sites. It is this virtual presence of 18 June, Austin, Texas, that enables it now to resurface in the

strange form of an academic essay; in the world of spectacle, 18 June, Austin, Texas does not exist – but in the realm of the virtual its memory is preserved as a potentiality whose unforeseeable actualization keeps unfolding.

As we have seen since the Reclaim the Streets action, globally targeted and generated demonstrations have come to feature more frequently in world news, in the character of social movements, and in the use of Internet media around the world. The demonstrations in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2000, but also in Melbourne and Prague in September 2000, have been among the foremost events of this kind. These globally organized events, produced out of a conjuncture of 'virtual' and street-based kinds of action, seem to be here to stay – as the now quite stringent steps taken by cities and nations to repress them are revealing.

This chapter looks at the emergence of such a convergence in the interplay between political activism on the Internet and the political contestations of city spaces in which economic and global powers are fought over. While it has become commonplace to criticize these protests for the unrealistic nature of their objectives or their lack of a unifying strategy, this chapter takes a different route. It tries to understand what it is about virtual social movements that makes them different from their immediate predecessors (the social movements of the sixties and seventies) and constitutes their specificity. At the core of this specificity lies a confrontation with networked, global forms of control and a conflictual relationship with mediated communication and its relation to political change. Caught between discipline and control, the street and the net, the spectacle and the virtual, global social movements (this chapter argues) are important sites for the emergence of new types of collective identities which are a response to the social and political challenges of network societies.

Between the spectacle and the virtual

Many of the hopes raised by the Internet as a medium were derived from a widespread dissatisfaction with established media such as television and the press. As Howard Rheingold put it at the beginning of the Internet revolution, 'commercial mass media, led by broadcast television, have polluted with barrages of flashy, phoney, often violent imagery a public sphere that once included a large component of reading, writing, and rational discourse' (Rheingold 1993: 13). These sentiments were widely shared among early net pioneers who thought of the Internet as the anti-television: potentially capable of establishing a true realm of communicative action free from corporate control and the mediation of established entertainment conglomerates.

At the same time, veterans of the cable experiments were very wary of the sustainability of the summers of love with a new medium. It is a fact, they argued, that such experiments are the product of brief seasons of experimentation before the established corporate players move in and incorporate the results of such experimentation in their quest for new markets (Dovey 1996). While it

was easy to understand the wariness of those who had seen it all before, and got burned by the fire of their previous hopes, it was a bit more difficult to understand from where, exactly, they thought such changes could come.

In a sense, those early sceptics were right. The Internet has commercialized and become more than hospitable to new business cultures. Indeed, in relation to processes of globalization, it has become the embodiment of a new stage of capitalist development, about whose final outcome concerned critics have good reasons to be wary.

And yet the peak of the dot.com fever that swept through a good many corners of the world in 1999 coincided with the first visible outcomes of the flurry of political debate and organization taking place in some parallel universe on the Internet itself. In 1999 and 2000 virtual and real actions took place all year round across the globe. A new generation of hackers, the so-called 'hacktivists', introduced an ethical dimension to cybernetic sabotage. This list of hacktivists' actions in 1998/9 speaks for itself. Targeted sites include: the Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo's website, in protest over Chiapas (12 October 1998); the site of India's Bhabba Atomic Research Centre to protest India's recent nuclear tests (June 1999); various Indian government sites, in connection with alleged government-sponsored repression and human-rights violations in the contested northern Indian state of Kashmir; the Indonesian government websites, over East Timor (1 August) and the targeting of Chinese-Indonesians during the anti-Suharto riots in May (12 August); and the *New York Times* pages, which were hacked to protest against the newspaper's treatment of the Kevin Mitnick case (13 September) (see Paquin 1999b).

Once again, hacktivism is marked by the virulent anti-television backlash that Rheingold had similarly outlined in *The Virtual Community*. Hacktivists, Bob Paquin warns by quoting a network-security consultant and member of the activist Tao Collectives, are members of a generation 'that were watching television before they could walk. This generation wants their brains back and mass media is their home turf … [Hacktivism] was founded by a generation whose language was taught to them by advertisers, whose habitat is almost entirely electronic' (Paquin 1999b).

More widely, it was the same media-savvy generation who, after the rehearsal of 18 June, made it to the global media stage through the anti-WTO protest of November 1999 in Seattle, Washington. The events in Seattle, organized through Internet mailing lists and web-sites, were reported with an abundance of detail and some spectacular images throughout the globe. The world of television and major national dailies wondered at the spectacle of the protest with 'no signs'. Commentators were split between looking at the movement as an early manifestation of a desire for more representation at a global level and shaking their heads at the naiveté of targeting nothing less than global capital itself.

Meanwhile, hundreds of messages and reports from the protest sites of conflict were being insistently posted to Internet mailing lists, giving the insiders' version of the events of the day. The stream of messages circulating on the

Internet at the time of the Seattle protest in November 1999 were inflected by two common revelations about the nature and function of power in late capitalist societies. The young demonstrators were shocked by the brutal reaction of the police to what the authors considered a peaceful demonstration; and they were scandalized by television and newspaper reporters' bias towards police violence.

> The local news stations were reporting on the broken windows of businesses and not the broken bones of the protesters. They reported on things like 'police fatigue' which I assume is when your arms get tired after you beat people for hours. They talked – and continued to talk about – the extreme 'restraint, open-mindedness and gentleness' displayed by the police.
>
> (Krane 1999)

In the case of each protest, the rapidity and intensity with which ideological and repressive state apparatuses worked together to protect the interests of capital was remarkable. The widespread feeling was that of a willing misrepresentation of the events, a radical mismatch between televised reality and the lived experience physically marked on the bruised flesh of the protesters.

In this sense Seattle brought home for many young activists the reality of the conundrum experienced by older generations in their dealings with the media. The relationship between political activists and the media is, by definition, a difficult one. Political activists, regardless of the specific issues supported, privilege the field of action over that of representation. From this perspective, the world of media is a formidable enemy, one that has absorbed the lessons of the sixties, when, especially in the USA, the spectacle of televised war and internal dissidence was enough to produce real political change (more explicitly, the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam).

From the standpoint of political activists, virtual action is in a peculiar and difficult position. Virtual activism needs to vindicate its existence as a separate and alternative realm from that of the spin universe of mass media; in order to do so, however, it needs to acquire consistency as a sphere of 'direct' rather than 'mediated' action. Its effectiveness in terms of producing change is therefore tied to its distinctiveness from the realm of simulation represented by the mass media and its capacity to establish a connection with the 'real' world outside. Its problem is finding ways around the equation of 'discourse' with 'spectacle', and avoiding contributing to the creation of more empty signs (Lovink and Garcia 1999). The new virtual social movements, then, have attempted, in various ways, to establish their difference from the society of the spectacle (as described by Guy Debord 1994 [1967]) and the interchangeable world of simulation (as defined by Jean Baudrillard 1988).

There is much at stake in definitions of virtuality – and not just for the specific problems of media activists. The persistent conceptualization of virtuality as a space of indifferent exchange where movement (and change) is fundamentally deceptive is, in fact, a real obstacle to the formulation of effec-

tive cultural and political analysis in network societies.[2] As we have seen, these are not just idle matters of academic speculation; they constitute some basic political problems for the collective politics of networked societies, of which the media activists looked at in this chapter constitute a significant, but far from exclusive, component. In the following sections, therefore, I will look at how the 'virtual' in 'virtual global movements' needs to be understood – first in the context of a shift in the dominant technologies of power (from discipline to control), and then in relation to virtuality as a property of matter rather than an exclusive quality of computer-mediated communications. While sixties' social movements were reacting against disciplinary societies, virtual social movements confront a different mode of power: cybernetic control. The electronic space of broadcast media that puzzled and repelled the social movements of the sixties, then, could be productively understood as the beginning of control society; that is, as the beginning of the virtualization of the globe. Virtual political subjectivities, on the other hand, were formed by, and operate within, a virtual space: that is, a space characterized by constant reconfigurations and flexible lines of communication. The problem faced by anti-disciplinary social movements was the demolition of the walls of disciplinary governmentality; the problem faced by virtual social movements is that of virtualization (connection and exchange) and actualization (the organization and pursuit of 'actions').

Virtual global movements need, then, to be understood both in terms of the unsolved legacy of anti-disciplinary social movements (the sixties) and in terms of their relationship to control societies' mobilization of the virtual as a productive quality of matter.

Discipline and control in the age of global virtuality

In a short text written in the early nineties, 'Postscript on control societies', Gilles Deleuze formulates his hypothesis of a shift from disciplinary societies to societies of control. Proceeding from Michel Foucault's work on discipline, Deleuze argues that societies of control are characterized by a different way of organizing space. The main shift is that from a society dominated by the grid, the classificatory space of discipline organized around confinement in closed sites, to a logic of modulation, which Deleuze describes as a 'self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next, or like a sieve whose mesh varies from one point to another' (Deleuze 1995: 179).

According to Deleuze, Foucault's formulation of the disciplinary technologies of power already implies an argument about their decline in favour of a different configuration: control (Deleuze 1995). As Michael Hardt remarks, '[o]ne of the most important aspects of Foucault's definition of disciplinary regimes is that it is historical: before the predominance of disciplinary societies, societies of sovereignty were the paradigm of rule; and after disciplinary societies, societies of control entered the scene' (Hardt 1998: 23). In Deleuze's own words:

> Foucault associated *disciplinary societies* with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; they reach their apogee at the beginning of the twentieth century. They operate by organizing major sites of confinement. Individuals are always going from one closed site to another, each with its own laws: first of all the family, then school ('you're not at home, you know'), then the barracks ('you're not at school, you know'), then the factory, hospital from time to time, maybe prison, the model site of confinement … Foucault has thoroughly analyzed the ideal behind sites of confinement, clearly seen in the factory: bringing everything together, giving each thing its place, organizing time, setting up in this space-time a force of production greater than the sum of component forces.
>
> (Deleuze 1995: 177)

For Deleuze, the dissolution of the old system is observable in the current breakdown of the sites of confinement set up by discipline: the family (an interior that is always in crisis, always breaking down); the hospital (with the development of day hospitals, community psychiatry and home care); and the prison (with the beginning of experimentation into electronic tagging for prisoners guilty of minor offences). The breakdown of disciplinary societies also coincides with the tendency towards globalization: that is, towards a reconfiguration of the role of the nation-state within network societies (Castells 1997: see especially Chapter 4 'The powerless state'). One of the most significant differences between disciplinary and control societies, as highlighted by Deleuze, is their organization of space and, consequently, of the subjectivities produced by and active within those spaces. While disciplinary society produced a 'striated' space (that is, divided by the enclosures of discipline), control societies operate in a smooth space that turns borders and walls into 'thresholds'.[3] The moulds of discipline, moulding the individual and collective bodies into stable, individualized forms, are turning into *modulations*, 'self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next, or like a mesh whose point varies from one point to another' (Deleuze 1995: 178). Deleuze also describes this shift as that from factories to businesses; from 'apparent acquittal' (between two confinements) to 'endless postponement' (constantly changing); from 'precepts' to 'passwords'; from 'individuals' and masses to 'dividuals' and data; and from thermodynamic to cybernetic machines. These passages should not be understood as indicating an abrupt break with the past: the past never ceases to be, it just ceases to act or to be useful. Disciplinary institutions do not disappear; they survive (even if in marginal and reconfigured forms) and disciplinary power is not so much destroyed as dispersed throughout a smooth social space.[4]

From the perspective of this larger political passage from disciplinary to control forms of governmentality, the differences between post-war and end-of-millennium social movements is to be explained in the first place as a difference of targets. It could be argued that social movements of the sixties and seventies were acting against the strictures of disciplinary spaces and the

simultaneous movement of individuation, classification and massification produced by the state and institutions such as the school, the family, the prison, and the factory.

The spatial organization of disciplinary societies was also an important factor in preparing the conditions for the anti-disciplinary revolts. Within disciplinary societies, physical bodies are always already assembled: disciplinary power separates the individuals from each other but, at the same time, also amasses bodies in enclosed spaces. This physical co-existence is what makes the anti-disciplinary movements so powerful: it is a matter of breaking down the walls that separate the individuals from each other, while also making contacts with similarly assembled groups in different spaces. The political subjectivities of post-war social movements – students, workers, prisoners, inmates, women and children – are all summoned in a common struggle against disciplinary confinement. Since the disciplinary diagram operates across different sites, anti-disciplinary resistance can be directed towards a common objective: the breakdown of the disciplinary mould, the disruption of the disciplinary deployments in schools, prisons, factories and hospitals. Individualization – the discovery of individual, subjective desires stifled by the disciplinary machine – and solidarity – the recognition of a common cause – provided the basis for much of the strength and spectacular results of sixties' and seventies' social movements.

While sixties' social movements were reacting against the closed sites of discipline by transforming the subjectivities of the inhabitants of those confined spaces, nineties' social movements are facing the uncertain features of ever-shifting control societies. It is not enough for them to 'liberate' those subjectivities in order to produce an automatic crisis of power. Although the regulation of flows of people and money is crucial to control societies, the space thus regulated is 'smooth'. The meshes of control (unlike the moulds of discipline) can be continuously redrawn, literally moved around. Virtual activism does not rely on ready-made spaces. That is why the tactics of information warfare have become so central to it. It is a matter of tracking the movements of the society of control (where the next meeting of the WTO will be held; who will attend; what is going on in Chiapas/India/Indonesia; what a certain biotech company is doing); of transmitting this knowledge to the dispersed world of virtual subjectivities (circulating information in a local/global mode, through face-to-face interaction, e-mail, web-publishing, and telephones); and of finding ways to make this knowledge act; that is to re-actualize it somehow in a visible and effective form.

In the following sections I will briefly look at these two characteristics of virtual social movements: their preoccupation with 'effectiveness'; and their reliance on extremely mobile, fluid and ever-shifting communication strategies that are crucially based on the Internet but also extend well beyond it. I understand these two movements in terms of a movement between *actualization* and *virtualization* that incorporates cultural preoccupations and political concerns produced by the crisis of discipline and its dissolution into control societies.

Lost in cyberspace

From the point of view of the history of social movements, the crisis of the disciplinary diagram is also a crisis of previous models of mass mobilization based on the struggle to liberate individual/collective subjectivities. This is what, with the benefit of hindsight, underlined Fredric Jameson's well-known argument about postmodernism: an affectless, disorienting space, invested by deep but mysterious transformations that defied the capacities of the modern subject to orient himself (it was usually a 'he') and find new forms of political agency (see Jameson 1984 and the further elaboration in Jameson 1991). If Jameson somehow underestimated the deep mutations of postmodern subjectivities in the process of becoming the 'socialized worker' prefigured by Antonio Negri's work (see Negri 1989), his call for new forms of 'cognitive mapping' touched a nerve. In agreement with the cyberpunks, Jameson pointed to 'cyberspace', the invisible space of databases and computer networks, as the 'real' space of postmodern societies, the level at which the deep currents of postmodernism moved. The argument was simple: there was a deep restructuring of capital going on, one with drastic consequences, and it was happening within a parallel, politically unaccountable but highly effective space – cyberspace. In *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells describes the late seventies/early eighties as marking the beginning of global financial integration both in terms of international monetary policy and in terms of financial markets (Castells 1996). The shift from disciplinary to control societies by way of a massive implementation of Information and Communication Technologies starts to take shape in those years, and with it also the parallel re-arrangement of the mechanisms of global governmentality against which the virtual social movements were to manifest at the end of the millennium (see Williams 1994).

Jameson's analysis of cyberspace as the new infrastructure of postmodern capital resonated with the cyberpunk movement's own understanding of where the new cultural and political subjectivities of the information age were to be found.[5] If cyberspace was the mysterious infrastructure ruling the disorienting chaos of postmodernism, hackers were the guerrilla movement of the new age. Mostly unpoliticized, but with a deep feeling for the texture of cyberspace, the hacker movement of the eighties, with its reckless incursions into forbidden grounds (government, military and corporate databases), presented the features of a postmodern avant-garde guerrilla, periodically unmasking the fragility of the new Informated World Order and, simultaneously, its crucial centrality to the transformations experienced outside, in the 'real' world. Teenage hackers broke into databases, stealing information mostly for the sheer challenge of it, united only by the hacker slogan 'Information Wants to Be Free' (see Levy 1984; Hafner and Markoff 1991).

As a political subject, however, the hacker movement of the eighties was still an immature and uncertain one. In the first place, there was the console cowboy's disdain for the 'flesh', that provoked some deserved criticism from many quarters, especially from within feminism (see Balsamo 1996; Springer

1996; Ross 2000). Their exclusive commitment to cyberspace, with the exception of a few more politicized groups, was also an obstacle to a much-needed encounter with older traditions of political activism, such as those indebted to the anti-disciplinary ethos of the sixties. Cyberspace, the ultimate smooth space of control societies, was still too sparsely populated: it was as if a certain density of population had to be reached, a critical mass of users who would not appear for at least another decade.

The narrow preoccupations of the hacker movement, their rejection of physical contact and of reality altogether (undoubtedly marked by the subjectivity of young adolescent males and not-so-young, technology-oriented ones), was also a crucial point of tension with the various components of eighties' political activism. It is useful to remember that post-war social movements did not just dissolve at the end of the seventies. The difficult but effective solidarity that united various social movements in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, however, did partially disintegrate into a multiplicity of small groups and scattered micro-political organizations. Single-issue campaigners, specialized interest groups, animal-rights activists, environmentalists, identity movements, Marxist revolutionary cells, libertarian lobbies and anarchist communitarians populate the landscape marked by the crisis of disciplinary institutions and the consolidation of cybernetic power that was to become ever more visible a decade later.

The postmodern decade also marked a phase of intense hostility between the scattered offspring of mass social movements and media culture, as exemplified by the angry anti-advertising take of the Canadian zine *Adbusters*. The spectacularization of power in the eighties left many activists with the feeling that Guy Debord's intuition in *The Society of the Spectacle* (an influential text, especially for European social movements in the sixties) had been the right one. Debord had described a society that was increasingly absorbed within the rationale of the spectacle, a mediated space of false communication, that sacrificed true activity to a sterile contemplation (see Debord 1994). Jean Baudrillard's popular thesis on the power of simulation pushed Debord's thesis to its limits, suggesting that the real had by now become irretrievable altogether, and the only possible form of mass resistance was passivity (see Baudrillard 1983, 1988). Right at the moment when cyberspace was starting to become more visible a diffuse diffidence towards broadcast media was emerging. Because of this the difference between the medium of computer-mediated communications and the society of spectacle, simulation, and virtual reality can be seen to collapse into each other. Indeed cyberspace and virtual reality became increasingly synonymous with the derealization of social conflict and its incorporation within the tactics of simulation, a smooth space of infinite variation where nothing ever really happened.[6]

This was obviously a very unfair perspective on media culture, whose complex operation within a global context cannot be reduced to its being an agent of simulation or a cynical manipulator of affects in the interest of power. Indeed, broadcast media themselves are agents of virtualization, although a different one from electronic media such as the Internet. However, it was this common perception that made life quite difficult for media activists in their

attempts to transmit the legacy of anti-disciplinary struggles to the Internet. In spite of a diffused awareness of the necessity of some kind of involvement with the media, it was increasingly difficult to defend media activism before 'real activists'. In Geert Lovink and David Garcia's words,

> By focusing on the media question we are accused of creating more empty signs … Media these days are accused of fragmenting rather than unifying and mobilising. Paradoxically, that is partly because of their discursive power to elaborate on differences and to question rather than just voice propaganda.
>
> (Lovink and Garcia 1999)

After the demise of the video and cable experiments of the seventies and eighties (another revolutionary technology that was supposed to revitalize democratic participation), media activists could no longer claim to express the vision and culture of a pre-existing movement (Lovink and Garcia 1999). The 'tactical media' movement of the late eighties was important in its appropriation of 'consumer electronics (in those days mostly the video camcorder) as a means of organization and social mobilization', but it was still 'overwhelmingly the media of campaigns rather than of broadly based social movements. They are not a megaphone representing the voice of the oppressed or resistance as such' (Lovink and Garcia 1999). Media activists, then, offered their services to single-issue organizations and campaigns (such as Greenpeace), all the time hoping to inject the media landscape with enough impetus to collect the scattered postmodern political subjectivities into something that would be closer to the mass explosions of the previous decades.

> [A]lthough less utopian about the emancipatory potential of new media there is a general convergence of many tactical groups around the principle of learning the lessons of global capitalism. While refusing to leave globalism to the investment houses and multinationals, these groups combatted global capital with global campaigns. And present in these strategies is the faint hope that if a campaign generates enough velocity and resonates with enough people, it might just take on some of the qualities of a movement.
>
> (Lovink and Garcia 1999)

Understandably, then, media activists entered the Internet with equal measures of enthusiasm and caution. Was the Internet to be the long-awaited democratic space of communication, participation and organization, or was it to become another component of the spectacle, separated off from 'people doing things in the street'? The well-known Internet debate about whether the latter was going to be commercialized and thus lose its radical potential is, among other things, also an expression of this preoccupation, an attempt to save the 'virtual' from 'the spectacle'.

Although the argument about commercialization still regularly flares up within Internet mailing lists, it is also becoming increasingly clear that it has become too limited a debate with relation to the current development of political subjectivities on the Internet. While the latter has become the central vehicle for the transmogrification of post-Fordism into the uncertain shape of the 'new economy', the use of the Internet by political activists has intensified and stabilized within a complex communication landscape that includes the use of e-mail, mobile telephones, webcams, audio- and video-streaming, etc. The Internet, and other cable- and ether-based networks of communication, have become fundamental tools of organization for new types of social movements emerging out of the encounter between the anti-disciplinary social movements, postmodern single-issue campaigners, and cyberspace's own native tribes, such as hackers, cyberpunks and technolibertarians.

The difficult encounter between these different groups marks the features of virtual political subjectivities as much as the more generic shift to control mapped by Deleuze, and should be taken into account in any effort to conceptualize and understand events such as the so-called 'anti-globalization' campaigns of 1999 and 2000. The micro-cells that make up virtual social movements connect, as we will see in the next section, within highly fluid and mobile networks of communication. They also connect on the basis of a common desire for 'effectiveness', a drive to demonstrate that computer-mediated communication is not simply a new extension of the society of the spectacle represented by the mass media. It is this drive that marks the specific dynamics of actualization within virtual social movements at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Actualizing the virtual

The international days of action against global capital of 1999 and 2000 are the complex outcome of a multiplicity of encounters and connections, some of them originating within an electronic environment, some others stretching back in time. A common, but not unitary, project is constituted out of a multiplicity of exchanges, unmediated or mediated, also fed by other cultural circuits of exchange that involve television, daily newspapers, conferences and meetings, e-zines, and in general the larger matrix of communication tapped into by virtual subjectivities. 18 June and 30 November 1999, for example, were organized through a dense network of meetings and communications among groups such as: the anarchist trade union IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), formed at the height of the Fordist mode of production; the PGA (People's Global Action against the WTO and 'free' trade), a group formed in 1998 out of the impetus collected by the Zapatista movement; Reclaim the Streets, the British collective born out of the reaction against the Criminal Justice Act; the Electronic Disturbance Theatre, a well-known group of Internet activists and thinkers; the DAN (the Direct Action Network), another collective formed specifically in view of Seattle; and the Independent Media Center, which ran the <www.indymedia.org> site. These groups (and many others) came to meet each other

through a variety of means, such as one-to-one e-mails, face-to-face meetings, phone calls and international conferences. The outcomes of these meetings were regularly circulated across Internet mailing lists and local groups who subsequently started their own micro-organizational efforts.[7] The events of the day were then picked up by the press, television, various web-sites and mailing lists, thus re-entering and complicating the circuit of the virtual.

An event such as Seattle, then, collects speed while travelling across electronic and physical circuits of organizations, groups and individuals. Peak moments such as Seattle or the wave of hacktivist actions in 1999/2000 ('borrowing the tactics of trespass and blockade from these earlier social movements and applying them to the Internet': Wray 1999) are thus based on complex, extremely fluid, *virtual* processes. The process of actualization dynamically preserves all the elements that were already present within the virtual moment, but subordinates them to the necessity of action, in this case action against the unaccountable powers of global capitalism. However, it would be a mistake to assume that such events will become the trademark of virtual social movements in the coming century, although undoubtedly 'direct actions' of one sort or another are already filling the gaps introduced by the crisis of representational politics.

The years 1999/2000, in fact, mark a singular convergence between the legacy of previous social movements and their attachment to mass demonstrations; a preoccupation with effectiveness that is characteristic of virtual social movements, an uneasiness about mediated communication; and an urge to overcome the disorienting flow of micro-organizations with some kind of physical reassurance about a common purpose. Events such as the international days of action against capital should be seen as the outcome of a historically specific drive to *actualization*: that is, the search for a solution to the problems that emerge within the fluid moment of *virtualization*. At the current moment it is impossible to predict whether mass physical demonstrations will continue to be central to virtual social movements, but it is possible to point to virtualization as the field that generates the problems to which social movements respond. It is to the latter, then, that I turn in order to outline some crucial issues in our understanding of network cultures at the turn of the millennium.

Virtualizing the political

While the desire to assemble physical bodies in local spaces offers an important guarantee that virtual activism will not lose itself within a wired, separate electronic space, it constitutes only a part of the dynamics of virtual activism as a whole. The 'invisible' (to broadcast media) daily activities of virtual social movements should not be seen as secondary when compared to the 'real' outbursts of physical demonstrations in the streets. As we have seen, the relationship of virtual social movements to street demonstrations is quite complex and marked both by the recent history of social movements in European and American societies and by a preoccupation with effectiveness as a safeguard against the

perceived danger of being trapped by cyberspace. However, when seen exclusively from the perspectives of events such as Seattle, 18 June, or other days of action organized through the Internet, virtual social movements are denuded of some of their most interesting features. The failure of virtual social movements to be represented fairly (that is to produce a consistent ideological position) by broadcast media lies in their being virtual – that is operative within a space that eludes the logic of representational politics and its related emphasis on rational debate between prepositioned subjects.

This position is explicitly taken up by the Critical Art Ensemble, who have argued against the suitability of mass movements to what we have learned to recognize as the society of control. The CAE's argument is that the emphasis of many political activists on mass movements is ineffectual within the current cultural, political, and technological landscape. Mass movements rely on the spectacle of civic disobedience to muster support for specific causes. According to the CAE, control societies produce a cultural and political space that is no longer affected by such spectacles.

> The indirect approach of media manipulation using a spectacle of disobedience designed to muster public sympathy and support is a losing proposition. The 1960s are over, and there is no corporate or government agency that is not fully prepared to do battle in the media. This is simply a practical matter of capital expenditure. Since mass media allegiance is skewed toward the status quo, since the airwaves and press are owned by corporate entities, and since capitalist structures have huge budgets allotted for public relations, there is no way that activist groups can outdo them. A soundbite here and there simply cannot subvert any policy making process or sway public opinion when all the rest of the mass media is sending the opposite message. Any subversive opinion is lost in the media barrage, if not turned to its opposition's advantage through spin.
>
> (Critical Art Ensemble 1999)

The strategy pointed at by the CAE is focused instead on the necessity of 'decentralized flows of micro-organizations' that challenge control societies in their own space (cyberspace), but pulling the latter in a different direction, one directed by the desires of the multitude rather than by the imperatives of control.[8] The absence of a unitary purpose is then an advantage: 'conflicts arising from the diversity of the cells would function as a strength rather than a weakness; this diversity would produce a dialogue between a variety of becomings that would resist bureaucratic structures as well as provide a space for happy accidents and breakthrough inventions' (Critical Art Ensemble 1999).

Harry Cleaver has similarly described the features of virtual activism as constituting what he calls a 'hydrosphere', a fluid space 'changing constantly and only momentarily forming those solidified moments we call "organizations". Such moments are constantly eroded by the shifting currents surrounding them so that they are repeatedly melted back into the flow itself' (Cleaver 1999).[9] He

prefers the notion of a 'hydrosphere' to that of the net, inasmuch as the latter seems to him to be more appropriate to global organizations, such as the NGOs, that rely on stable nodes organized with a view to act on specific issues. Virtual social movements, on the other hand, seem to him to exceed the limitations of network theory because of the intrinsic mobility of their elements, connected together by a multiplicity of communication channels, converging and diverging in mobile configurations.

By way of example, I will list some of the ways in which virtual social movements operate in their 'virtual' mode. 'Virtual' in this case does not describe a putative, unreal space constructed through electronic communication, but a dynamic movement that is constitutive of electronic and physical space at the same time. According to Pierre Levy's problematic but useful analysis of virtuality, the virtual should not be confused with the real or the unreal as a matter of principle. Following in the footsteps of Henri Bergson and Deleuze, Levy describes the virtual as immediately productive not so much of the real as of the actual (Levy 1998). The difference might appear as a subtle matter of academic dissent, but it should be taken very seriously when considering the centrality of the virtual/actual loop in the constitution of contemporary social movements.

> Virtualization is not a derealization (the transformation of reality into a collection of possibles) but a change of identity, a displacement of the center of ontological gravity of the object considered. Rather than being defined principally through its actuality (a solution), the entity now finds its essential consistency within a problematic field. The virtualization of a given entity consists in determining the general questions to which it responds, in mutating the entity in the direction of this question and redefining the initial actuality as the response to a specific question.
>
> (Levy 1998: 26)

If the virtual is understood as a 'derealization', in fact, cyberspace can only be seen as a choice between different possibles, a choice that does not affect in any creative way the nature of the real: we can be whomever we want to be on the Internet, but our choice is predetermined by what exists outside, in the real world, and it will not affect that world in any significant way. If the virtual is understood as a dynamic state, where the 'knot of tensions, constraints, and projects that animate' a being are constantly actualized and then returned to virtuality, then the picture is different. Such conceptualization of the virtual allows us to affirm the continuity of computer-mediated communications with the ontological texture of reality (Bergson 1960) since the virtual is not exclusive to cyberspace but it is a generalized feature of matter. Inasmuch as it is a general property of matter, the virtual can become a central resource of network societies, in the same way as the thermodynamic properties of organized matter were central resources of disciplinary societies.[10]

Within the current restructuring of capitalism into a 'new' or 'digital' economy, for example, the virtualization of the cognitive and affective powers of

the multitude has become central in the production of added value (see Terranova 2000). The specificity of virtualization within computer-mediated communications is founded on the potentialities opened up by *connectivity*. By connecting groups and individuals otherwise physically disconnected within an open system; computer-mediated communication accelerates the creative virtual powers of the multitude (in Bergsonian/Deleuzian terms, an 'intensive magnitude') to formulate problems and look for solutions. There are no guaranteed outcomes for this process, but it certainly seems to me that a return to issues of organization from the point of view of the virtual should be an essential part of any such effort.

Virtual social movements and global political futures

In conclusion, I will try to outline some of the ways in which 'mass' virtuality is played out on the Internet and beyond by virtual social movements. There are obviously several conditions that have converged to enable the rise and success of virtual social movements. The first condition is that the political and cultural subjectivities able to participate in virtual movements have been already produced by historical processes. The second is that a technological paradigm that encourages connectivity within open systems has been implemented and become widely operational. In the first place, then, there would be no virtual activism without the shift to an information-based economy and the concomitant production of what Geert Lovink has called a 'techno-intelligentsia' (Lovink 1999) (and Antonio Negri the 'socialized worker' (Negri 1989)).[11] The latter is as much a product of the shift to a knowledge-based economy as of those same desires and aspirations of the multitude that precipitated the crisis of the disciplinary diagram. In the second place, these subjectivities must be able to connect to each other beyond the limitations of time and space. Such connectivity is encouraged by a shift in the current technoscientific paradigm towards 'third-wave cybernetics' (that is, to open systems ruled by positive feedback), a communication network that is essentially open to new additions, thus thickening the space of virtual connections.[12]

Because of the complex nature of communication within such networks, I will – by way of a slightly arbitrary example – choose mailing lists as an entry-point. It is only slightly arbitrary because mailing lists are crucial constituent moments within the development of virtual social movements. Within mailing lists the generalized connectivity that opposes the users to the magmatic abundance of Internet material starts acquiring a certain type of organization, but one, as we will see, that is very much in tune with the fluid 'hydrosphere' suggested by Cleaver. Mailing lists organize the use (the actualization) of Internet material by coupling the circulation of information with the circulation of interpretation and evaluation (Cleaver 1999). They are one of the most powerful ways through which the confusing, dizzying abundance of information and data on the Internet is organized and filtered to singular Internet users. Mailing lists are as exemplary of the virtuality inhabited by these movements as their constitutive and constituent conditions.

Mailing lists, of which different types exist on the Internet, are inherently temporary: they might run for a long time, but the decision to stop them can be taken at any time. They are usually focused on specific topics, accepting subscribers either on a limited or unlimited basis. Mailing lists might go through very active phases and then die out, or they might be regular, limited updates streaming through one's e-mail account; they might be moderated or unmoderated, mainly dedicated to spreading information, or to discussing specific topics; they might be local, national or global. Cross-posting across mailing lists is common, so that a network of messages and communication runs continuously among different users, changing according to the time and topicality. For example the cross-posting between American and Western European lists with Eastern Europe increased exponentially during the Kosovo War, creating what McKenzie Wark has called 'a new web of witnessing' (see Wark 1999), but many of the more politicized mailing lists are consistently crossed by messages from South America or Eastern Asia. Mailing lists are also important alternative search engines, directing participants towards selected web-sites for in-depth reports or video and audio streaming on the occasion of specific events. Those participants more actively involved in organizing protests or exchanges might also meet face-to-face in regular or occasional meetings; or might use mobile or fixed telephony to set up meetings or organize demonstrations. Participants in these exchanges might be individuals who are relatively disconnected from the majority of the other participants, or they might move within physical networks where regular face-to-face contact cements a group belonging. That is, they may or may not belong to local or global groups; they might feed information, or mostly just absorb it; they might be organizers of specific events, or only occasional participants.

Mailing lists, then, present the political subjectivities born within the crisis of Fordism with the possibility of continuously formulating and reformulating the types of problems they wish to address on the basis of collectively produced information. They connect individuals and groups to each other, but also disconnect them from the totality of Internet users in order to focus on specific issues. They introduce users to a variety of opinions and information while also filtering and re-arranging for them the chaotic abundance of available information on the Internet. Within virtual social movements, these potentialities are driven by a desire for effectiveness, for a visible actualization of the problems that emerge out of such exchanges.

This sketchy topology of mailing lists (only one of the different protocols used by virtual social movements) merely suggests the extreme mobility of virtual social movements. The movement between actualization and virtualization within a virtual/global space is always specific in its instantiation; it is always related to a timeliness, following closely as it does the movements of the global society of control. I do not want to suggest that participation in these cultures is direct and unproblematic: on the contrary, the barriers to access and participation are as many as are the ways and purposes to which the Internet can be put. Neither do I want to suggest that virtual social movements operate in a free-

floating space where everything is possible, and all permutations permitted: there are obviously issues of partial determination (and indetermination) at stake. The dynamics of such in/determinations, however, demand different conceptual perspectives from those established within the old infrastructure/superstructure dialectics, the simulation/spectacle Platonic approach, or even the new political economy/cultural studies divide. They demand, that is, a political and theoretical effort, to move beyond what Bergson called 'the logic of solids' that dominated cultural and social theory within disciplinary societies. The fluid space of virtuality does not guarantee any specific outcome, whether in favour of social movements or in favour of control. However, as this chapter suggests, it does demand a different way of conceptualizing the questions to be asked of contemporary forms of political organization.

Notes

1 On *nettime*, see Bosma *et al.* (1999).
2 For different views on the virtual as the deceptive movement of interchangeable signs, see Baudrillard (1983), Arthur Kroker and Michael A. Weinstein's 'will to virtuality' in *Data Trash* (1994), and Manuel Castells' culture of 'real virtuality' in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996).
3 In a chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'The smooth and the striated', Deleuze and Guattari describe the relationship between the two at great length. It is impossible to do full justice here to the crucial importance and great theoretical sophistication behind their conceptualization of such spaces. I will just quote one of the many definitions of the striated in relation to music as 'that which intertwines fixed and variable elements, produces an order and succession of distinct forms' while the smooth is 'the continuous variation, continuous development of form' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 478).
4 Following Deleuze, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest that '[t]he society of control might thus be characterized by an intensification and generalization of the normalizing apparatuses of disciplinarity that internally animate our common and daily practices, but in contrast to discipline, this control extends well outside the structured sites of social institutions through flexible and fluctuating networks' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 23).
5 For an illuminating selection of the more politicized writings of the cyberpunk movement, see Raffaele Scelsi (1990).
6 On the subject see also Bogard (1996).
7 For an example of this dynamics see the account of the organizational background of the Seattle 1999 protests in Comunicazione Antagonista (2000). The authors trace the origins of the Seattle events to the activities of the PGA (People's Global Action against the WTO and Free trade), a collective founded in 1998 out of the *Segundo Encuentro Zapatista* in Spain.
8 Hardt and Negri argue that the term 'multitude' expresses the most productive and revolutionary aspect of collective political subjectivities across history, one explicitly opposed to the identitarian fiction of 'the people'. In their words '[t]he multitude is a multiplicity, a plane of singularities, an open set of relations, which is not homogeneous or identical with itself and bears an indistinct, inclusive relation to those outside of it. The people, in contrast, tends toward identity and homogeneity internally while posing its difference from and excluding what remains outside of it. Whereas the multitude is an inconclusive constituent relation, the people is a constituted synthesis that is prepared for sovereignty' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 103).

9 On forms of agency in networked environments also see Broeckmann (1998).
10 In this sense virtuality is a close kin of 'turbulence', a property of fluid states that is able to generate unpredictable change. Turbulence is increasingly central to the technosciences of control societies. On this subject, see Parisi and Terranova (2000).
11 See Geert Lovink's definition of a 'meta-techno intelligentsia' as a formation 'transcending primitive social Darwinism with its winner/loser and adapt-or-die logic' (Lovink 1999).
12 For an informative account of the history of cybernetics see Hayles (1999).

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4 The space of telework

Physical and virtual configurations for remote work

Nicola Morelli

The transformation of work and the reshaping of urban structures are two major foci in the debate on information technologies' role in the evolution of socio-economic systems. Work organization and urban settlements represent respectively a logical and a physical bond for modern societies. The transformation of work organization is linked to urban change in a co-evolutionary process that involves economic, technological, institutional and social structures.

Information technologies accelerate the change in both work and urban structures; therefore the co-evolutionary process is also accelerated and headed in unpredictable directions. Another factor affecting the co-evolutionary process is market globalization, which is creating an imbalance between developed and developing countries. Such an imbalance is causing a shift in work activities across the globe. Manufacturing activities are being moved to developing countries, while in developed countries the increasing complexity of socio-institutional systems requires more services, control and management. Such a global process of change has been read as a paradigm shift involving information technology, economic structures and socio-institutional systems. According to Castells (1989) a new logical framework is replacing the old framework of the industrial age. Information technologies are heavily influencing the logic that will rule the future evolution of socio-institutional systems.

The transformation of work activities is a clear example of such a paradigmatical change. Work activities change along with the organizational logic of human settlements. Such a co-evolution does not follow linear trajectories and cannot be predicted with certainty. Nevertheless, different scenarios can be outlined on the basis of different configurations of work and urban settlements, and analysis of these scenarios can point out trends that are supposed to lead the evolution of human systems towards 'desirable' configurations. That is why, for several years now, the interaction between economic structures, information technology, work activities and urban settlements has been the focus of an intense debate.

The influence of information technology

According to Castells (1989) the ongoing change in the socio-technical system is a result of the concurrent process of the restructuring of capitalism and the increasing relevance of information technologies. Castells interprets this phenomenon as the rise of a new paradigm driven by an increased use of information and knowledge. The 'informational mode of development' defined by Castells suggests, first, that the present change in social, technical and economic systems overshadows the horizons of the existing industrial paradigm and assumes the form of a paradigm shift. Secondly, it suggests that in the new paradigm knowledge is used as both the raw material and the output of the production process, whereas in the old paradigm it was simply considered as one of the elements of the production process.

A paradigm, broadly defined, is a 'framing set of concepts, beliefs and standard practices that rules human action' (Ehrenfeld 1994). Consistent with the idea of a paradigm shift there are some studies on technological development that are based on the assumption of a cyclic series of continuity and discontinuity in the evolution of technology (Kuhn 1969; Dosi 1982; Nelson and Winter 1982; Perez 1983; Freeman 1987). The main implication of a paradigm shift concerns the loss of elements of continuity between historical experience and future developments: the future cannot be predicted as an extrapolation of historical series, or on the basis of the existing experience. The paradigm shift dissolves the logical framework of the old paradigm and recomposes new and pre-existing elements in a new framework. The scenarios that might be generated by such a process of 'creative destruction' cannot be predicted because of the number of elements interacting in the shift and because of the complexity of their interaction.

Technology, one of the pillars of the paradigm of the industrial age, is also one of the main causes of its dissolution. Notwithstanding its relevance in such a shift, technology cannot be used as the only factor in the development of the new logical framework. If used as an analytical filter, technological determinism would hide some critical elements of the present change and would generate misleading scenarios.

Gillespie (1992) observes that the 'rhetoric of technological sublime' – that is, a deterministic vision of technology as a possible cause of the approaching radical transformation in the way we live – is particularly evident in the discourse concerning the future of the city in the post-industrial era. Telework has been a major focus of this rhetoric; it has become a battlefield in an intense debate about the future of cities. For several years now, utopian and dystopian scholars have debated the question of moving work activities from central offices out to remote branches: within the home, for example, or simply in small, mobile workstations. Analysing telework provides the elements for evaluating the gap between the technological potential of information technologies and the evolution of socio-cultural patterns.

In fact, information technologies are but one of the factors influencing the evolution of work and the growth of telework. The transformation of work has to be analysed in a broader systemic context, which is also influenced by other factors, such as the opening of new markets and the globalization of the economy.

Globalization and the transformation of work

Globalization is increasing the distance between physical flows (concerning production, distribution and consumption of products) and information management. Production is being changed by two major factors that enhance information-processing activities: namely, the splitting of large-scale production from centralized management, and the substitution of knowledge for capital and labour in the production process (Castells 1989: 18).

Sassen (1991, 1995) interprets this phenomenon in the light of an increased service intensity in the industrial organization. Thus, firms are using more legal, financial, advertising, consulting and accounting services, while at the same time services based on information-handling are also becoming fundamental in the consumption process (Castells 1989: 18).The mass market is also increasing the distance between producers and buyers, which generates greater processing of information to establish the connection between the two ends of the market. Additionally, a growing share of the consumption process has been taken over by collective consumption – that is, goods and services are directly or indirectly produced and/or managed by the state as a right rather than as a commodity, giving rise to the welfare state.

Accordingly the number of workers in service activities is increasing, especially in developed countries, while the number of people employed in primary and secondary activities is being shifted from developed to developing countries.[1] As a consequence of such a shift, there has been a radical change in the balance between employees in service sectors and workers in primary and secondary sectors in the biggest developed countries (Sassen 1991, 1995; Newman *et al.* 1997; Gipps *et al.* 1996).

Information technologies and sustainable scenarios

The debate about scenarios based on an intense use of information technologies in human activities has raised some important questions: for example, to what extent are these scenarios acceptable? Are they sustainable? What are the trends that will lead socio-economic systems towards sustainable scenarios? And how can such trends be supported?

Implicit argument in many studies[2] of information technologies is the argument that these will improve the environmental quality of developed countries' socio-economic systems. Such a large expectation is based on the two assumptions, linked as an Aristotelian syllogism, namely:

(a) that many processes implying the management of physical objects and flows will be 'virtualized': i.e., they will be replaced by knowledge and flows of information; and
(b) that the replacement of physical flows with information flows will reduce both the use of new resources and the outgoing material flows from systems to the environment (emissions, waste, etc.).

As with Aristotelian syllogisms, the assumption that information technologies will improve environmental quality is valid if both these propositions are true.

Analysis of the first proposition requires the term sustainability to be analysed in a broader context. Although fascinating, 'virtualization' is not always a desirable transformation. The complete replacement of face-to-face contact with telecommunications, for instance, could reduce the complexity of social interaction. The risk is that information technology could create socially unsustainable situations. For that reason virtualization cannot be seen as a broad phenomenon. In some areas of human activity it is enhancing innovation; in others, though, it is not a socially sustainable prospective, and therefore it is simply not happening.

The second question is based on the principle of reducing material input per unit of service, proposed by some studies on sustainability (Schmidt-Bleek 1993a, 1993b). A reduction in environmental impact would be a logical consequence of the replacement of physical flows with information flows. Nevertheless quantitative measurement of a large diffusion of phenomena based on information technologies, such as telework, has never been undertaken.[3] Any evaluation of the environmental impact of large teleworking programs should be based on models and future scenarios. In such models it would be quite easy to calculate the number of work trips replaced by telecommuting, but it would be very difficult to take into account other trips (such as driving children to school, shopping, etc.), that used to be linked to working trips. The choice made by telecommuters with respect to such trips would heavily influence the results of an environmental evaluation.

Analysis of the syllogism explains why phenomena such as telework should be analysed in a broad systemic framework. The analysis should take into account the spatial, social and cultural features of future scenarios suggested by the application of different forms of telework on a large scale. The condition of sustainability has to satisfy both social and environmental requirements.

The new geography of work

Technology is creating a more flexible relationship between workers and their traditional workplace because parts of the work consist of information handling, rather than the physical transformation of material. This condition is the basis for the debate in the last decade. The initial optimistic forecast that telework would become widespread in the present decade seems to be partly wrong. Nevertheless, the large change imposed by some technological factors, such as the digitalization of telecommunication and the diffusion of

computer-mediated communication, suggests that a broad diffusion of telework is still possible, if not inevitable.

The new organizational structures emerging due to the use of information technologies are increasing the complexity of work arrangements and developing new forms of co-operation between workers in the same companies. The term 'telework' is probably too vague to describe such a complex picture. Few studies have tried to define telework on the basis of different factors, such as the use of information technologies, the geographical location of workers and the nature of contractual relationships. In any case, the concept of telework has remained nebulous. Despite this lack of precision the term has acquired a symbolic value related to the idea of future radical changes in the organization of work (Huws *et al.* 1990).

One of the most important aspects to consider in analysing the evolution of telework is the relationship between locations of work activities and workers' affiliation (Brandt 1983; Olson 1983; Huws *et al.* 1990). In 1983 Brandt pointed out that the spatial dispersion of work was facilitating organizational forms based on a loose control of employees and individual entrepreneurship. Such new forms were going to replace existing organizational forms based on the centralization of functions and fixed payments to employees. The same author, however, believed that a short-term shift from the existing conditions (position A in Figure 4.1) to the new geographical-organizational conditions (position B) was unrealistic. A more realistic scenario depicted by Brandt was a combination of changes towards different conditions described in Figure 4.1.

Brandt's forecast proved to be quite correct, though the geography of possible work location now offers many more options than those he outlined. Some of the new options have been specifically designed to support nomadic workers and teleworkers; others, such as Internet cafés, airport lounges or other kinds of access points, have been designed for different purposes (entertainment, waiting

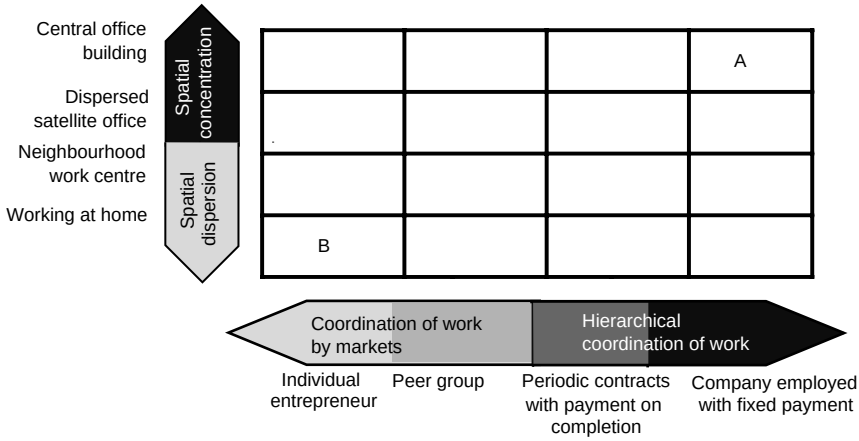

Figure 4.1 Organizational forms and concentration of work

Source: Brandt (1983), reported in Huws *et al.* (1990).

rooms, Internet access) but are often used as temporary working space by those who work far away from their traditional office. A map of the new locations is outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Map of new work locations

Typologies	***Users***	***Residence of users***	***Services***
Urban telecentres	• Small businesses • Home-based businesses • Employees of small companies	• Outer or regional areas • Other cities • Overseas	• Large desks • Computers • Printers • Scanners • Fax/phone • Virtual office • Main software applications • Storage space • Pigeon holes • Private offices • Meeting rooms
Business centres	Businesses that need specialized services (large-format prints and copies, photocopies, etc.)	• Local • Regional and fringe areas • Other cities • Overseas	• Photocopiers and printers (special formats and colour) • Internet-connected computers • Computers with special applications
Serviced offices located in hotels	• Managers of large companies • Participants in conferences and meetings organized in board rooms	Other cities or overseas	• All office services (included secretarial services) for a few days or hours • Highly skilled technical assistance
Serviced offices	• Small business • Business located in other cities	Local, sometimes for limited periods of time	All office services (included secretarial services) for medium periods of time (from 1 month to 1 year)
Satellite centres	Employees of a single company	Surrounding areas	• Office services for the main companies • Main and specific software applications
Internet cafés	• Young people • Travellers • Unemployed • Students (Not necessarily used for work purposes)	• Other cities/countries • Other areas (students from nearby university campuses)	• Computers (no additional desk space) • Printers • Photocopiers • Main software applications • (Sometimes) café services • (Sometimes) low-rate international phone calls

Table 4.1 continued

Typologies	***Users***	***Residence of users***	***Services***
Neighbourhood centres/regional services/libraries	• Unemployed • Students • People living in same area • Young people • People using it for secondary business activity (Not necessarily used for work purposes)	Same or nearby area	• Computers (possibly with some additional desk space) • (Not necessarily) Internet connection • Photocopier • Printer • Fax • Meeting rooms
Airport lounges	• Business people travelling interstate or overseas (sometimes use their own laptop) (Not necessarily used for work purposes)	Interstate or overseas	• Computer or small desk space • Photocopier • Phone fax • 1 or 2 Internet connections
Work at home	• Employees under a telework agreement • Small home business	At home (in the same place)	Tailored software and hardware configuration

When the content of work is information-based, it is possible to store it in any server in the form of bits, and telecommunications makes access to such a server possible from anywhere. Transformation of the physical nature of this content makes it independent of the location of work. At present, part of some employees' working time is spent far from their desks, the traditional workplace being unattended. The need for a physical office has been reduced by the opportunities offered by information technologies. The office is now a 'logical unit' based on information stored in a server, whose location is often unknown to the worker.

New applications in virtual space (Table 4.2) generate virtual configurations which allow an almost seamless connection between remote workers in a working group. People working from different locations can use such virtual spaces to share files, organize online meetings, work interactively on virtual whiteboards, organize pools and mailing lists.

The traditional workplace is now also changing. New solutions are fragmenting the pre-existing space and time frameworks of the central office and generating a totally new relationship between workers and workplaces. A critical issue in the scenario outlined in telework-related studies in the last decade has been the separation of functions that, in previous organizational conditions, were located in the same place. The need to benefit from economies of scale suggests the relocation of entire sections, such as accounting and data-processing and other routine services (Huws *et al.* 1990; Hall 1992). Higher-level services based on face-to-face contact, however, need to remain concentrated in the core

Table 4.2 Applications generating virtual working spaces

Application	*Function provided*
Web mail	Enables electronic mail to be used in any possible location, with no need to set the client computer. This application has boosted the use of Internet cafés.
On-line storage spaces	Users can store (or back up) files, so that they can be downloaded from any possible location.
Virtual offices	Storing files, creating mailing lists or sharing files between members of work teams, organizing pools and sharing databases and links. Text and voice chat are also possible.
Online meeting spaces	Members of a work team can participate in simultaneous meetings. They can also share documents, edit document in real time, interact in real time with text, virtual whiteboards, voice and video conferencing.

of central metropolitan areas of the most highly developed national economies (Hall 1992).

Some companies were already organized in satellite branches before the massive introduction of information technologies (Huws *et al.* give the examples of insurance companies and retailing); nevertheless, information technologies have increased the accessibility to data (e.g. databases) for such branches. The continued development of satellite centres is evidence of structural change in work organization. The traditional organization was based on a hierarchical structure, in which information and control power were concentrated in the main office. In the new networked structure peripheral units are quite autonomous and have the same right of access to information as the main offices.

Fragmentation and recombination of work organizations

The process of old structures fragmenting and new ones recombining involves both work organizations and social and cultural patterns. The concrete expression of the former is the office space, of the latter, the urban space. So far, such places have been identified as physical places where life, people meeting and communication occur. In the new 'post-city' age, outlined in some utopian scenarios (Webber 1968), these physical places were supposed to disappear. But, on the contrary, the new paradigm is not eliminating them; it is changing their role and adding new layers of interaction. Such new layers are no longer based on physical presence but rather on intellectual proximity.

Unlike other paradigm shifts, such as the historical passage to the industrial age, the current shift is acting on the logical links of socio-technical systems, rather than on their physical features. Both the evidence of the old paradigm dissolving and the elements of the new logical framework recombining consist of the transformation of rules, conventions and beliefs that used to tie together the

elements of the old logical framework. Some aspects of the paradigm shift emerge more clearly in analysis of changes in the organizational logic of work and urban structure. However, since the paradigm shift is an ongoing process, it is impossible to define exactly the future social, cultural and technical framework. The elements emerging from the present exploration, reported on in Table 4.3, can only be used for evaluating possible future scenarios.

Fragmentation of the traditional workplace and recombination of the city centres

Companies are now reducing office space and restructuring work activities on the basis of remote work and room-sharing. The traditional workplace is being shrunk; central offices have been fragmented and redistributed into the city in order to reduce office overheads and the costs of facilities and to bring the workers closer to the customers. The remaining reduced office space is then shared on an advance-booking demand basis. Employees work in the main office only few days each month. The traditional nine-to-five office in the central business district is being replaced by new flexible solutions, such as *hot desking*, *motelling*, *hotelling*, *campus-style organizations* and *virtual offices* (Wood 1997).[4]

Although many activities have been relocated to fringe areas, the inner city areas remain the place of face-to-face meeting for activities based on innovation, high specialization and advanced knowledge. The propinquity of many different activities is therefore crucial for the creation of an *innovative milieu* (Castells 1989; Hall 1992). Highly skilled activities remain located in the inner areas because the cities also maintain control over the surrounding regions (Gillespie 1992).

The concentration of core activities in urban areas attracts nomadic workers and temporary activities to those areas, with the consequent creation of a new demand for temporary support services. Urban telecentres and business centres offer essential facilities for those workers, such as short-term rents for offices, working spaces, meeting spaces, Internet connection and copy services. Other services are available on a longer-term basis for activities located in the central areas for longer periods of from one month to one year (Table 4.1).

Other factors, such as the social patterns and living conditions of the inner cities, influence the redistribution of activities in those areas – for example, in some Australian cities, the reduction of office space in the inner areas is creating opportunities for new residences. In the last few years the migration of residents from inner urban to rural areas has almost ceased (Newman *et al.* 1997). The migration back to the city centres is increasing the inner urban quality of life, especially after hours. On the other hand, the repopulation of the inner areas has also gentrified them and, hence, increased real estate costs. This process is excluding the middle and lower classes, who cannot afford the cost of living in such areas.

In the USA the appeal of inner city areas/living is reduced by social problems, which prevent their repopulation. City centres in the largest US metropolitan areas still host the majority of highly paid skilled jobs yet are still

Table 4.3 Fragmentation and recombination of work and urban structures

LOCATION	FRAGMENTATION		RECOMBINATION	
	Work Organization	***Urban Structure***	***Work Organization***	***Urban Structure***
Inner areas Redesign of the traditional office Business services for nomadic/ temporary workers	Reduction of office space	Reduction of business activities	HOT DESKING, MOTELLING Flexible work arrangements Shared urban office space with remote connectivity URBAN TELECENTRES BUSINESS CENTRES VIRTUAL OFFICE Logical working units Logical teams	Rebalancing of work/residential use New residential lifestyles Dual city
Urban fringe Relocation of function and workplaces New services for remote/home workers	Fragmentation of the office social environment	Fragmentation of the urban structure	SATELLITE CENTRES Virtual companies NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES Neighbourhood-based work/social environments	URBAN VILLAGE Place-based communities MULTICENTRED CITIES Development of suburban areas LOGICAL NEIGHBOURHOODS Intellectual communities
Outer locations Telework at home	Isolation of workers (teleworkers/ homeworkers)		HOME-BASED TELECOMMUTERS New work/ family/neighbourhood relationships	RESORT OFFICES Rural education and service centres POLARIZATION Concentration of demands for infrastructure in some remote areas Exclusion of low-demand area
Any locations Mobile working units	Dissolution of the links between work and its time-space features		NOMADIC WORK ELECTRONIC BRIEFCASE Mobile/electronically connected workers	

inhabited by an ethnic-minority population that is increasingly unable to fill such jobs (Castells 1989, 1997, 1999; Hall 1999); Castells uses the term 'Dual City' to describe such an imbalance. Contradictions emerge from the continual contrast between different ethnic and income groups. One of the extreme scenarios this situation may imply could be closure of the inner cities to urban space.

Maldonado (1997) notes that this phenomenon is already visible in the design of some major metropolitan office buildings; these buildings open towards their internal courts and are closed to the urban space. Work activities are undertaken in a type of medieval fortification, which limits access from the urban space dominated by the 'excluded people'. Such cities lead a double life: active and innovative during working hours, but poor and dangerous outside them.

Reorganization of middle and fringe areas

Jobs are being distributed amongst satellite offices and neighbourhood centres located in the suburbs of the big metropolitan areas (Cervero 1995). The new work environment is causing a fragmentation of work and social relationships at different layers. The usual social environment of the office is being replaced by an environment in which social interaction is based on physical propinquity with the neighbours, rather than on work relationships with the colleagues. The 'logical' link between workers involved in complementary activities is often translated to the layer of virtual communication allowed by information technologies, and work teams may be scattered in many different branches or telecentres. Furthermore, the increased presence of the 'virtual layer' supports the generation of content-based communities – groups of workers who share similar professional interests (e.g. mailing lists, newsgroups).

Such a reshaping of work organizations may influence the quality of work. The separation of social layers from formal communication also reduces informal communication, on which the most innovative and creative activities are based. On the other hand, the low social interaction between colleagues eliminates the emotional conflict that can result from physical proximity and generates ideal conditions for the creation of flexible working teams.

The implications of workplace relocation are not easily identifiable in the urban structure. In many cases the new location of work relies on pre-existing urban patterns. Whereas the industrial revolution generated radical changes in the shape of the city, the information revolution does not seem to leave clear footprints. In fact the *soft change* caused by the relocation of work does have consequences in changes to travel patterns and to the identity of local areas.

From the point of view of mobility, the advantages provided by a network of neighbourhood telecommuting centres and satellite centres are supposed to be superior to many transportation strategies available, including road pricing (Cervero 1995). The resulting urban structure should increase job dispersal while reducing trip length (Brotchie 1992, 1995) (Figure 4.2).[5] The reduction of travel distances would improve environmental quality and encourage changes in travellers' behaviour and the introduction of new solutions for urban transport, such as electric cars and flexible public transport. Neighbourhood working centres could also compensate for the negative effects of some factors, such as the real estate costs of some suburban areas, which are supposed to increase travel between suburbs (Cervero 1995; Lehrer and Milgrom 1996). Another possible role of neighbourhood centres is to support

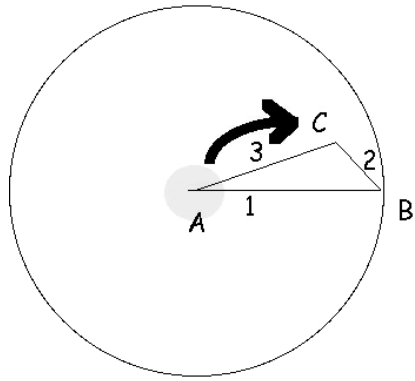

Figure 4.2 Average distance of: 1) Employees from the central business district; 2) Work trip length; 3) Employment from central business district

Source: Brotchie (1992) (re-edited).

nomadic work, by providing a network of points of access to companies' databases. The availability of such a network would reduce the technological sophistication required of nomadic workers, as part of the equipment they need (modems, printers, phone lines, etc.) would be provided by the telecentres. On the other hand, support for nomadic workers may increase travel instead of reducing it.

The second major impact of the fragmentation and relocation of work is the change in the identity of local areas. This trend has an analogy in the situation that existed before the Industrial Revolution, in which residences and workplaces were interwoven in villages. The analogy has inspired a new approach in urban design: the 'New Urbanism'. This approach is aimed at redesigning neighbourhood centres in order to increase self-containment (i.e. the percentage of people living and working in the same area) and improve quality of life of suburban areas in the big cities. Some projects based on such an approach have been proposed in the USA[6] and in Australia (Kaufman and Morris 1997; Energy Victoria 1996). According to this approach, the redevelopment of neighbourhood centres should be based on mixed-use urban centres with medium-density housing, shops, workplaces and a central public transport stop. The new 'urban villages' should have safe, attractive streets, some public parkland and opportunities for recreation. Their design promotes energy efficiency, pedestrian activity and social interaction (Kaufman and Morris 1997).

A dense network of neighbourhood and satellite centres would bring workplaces within walking distance of teleworkers. Teleworking centres would support the self-containment of these areas and generate increased demand for other services, such as education, child care and transportation. The effect of neighbourhood centres in these areas would help to reduce the difference between the richest areas of the city and the suburbs populated by low-income

communities, thus helping to reverse the 'dualization' of the city described by some authors (Castells 1989, 1999; Hall 1999).

The positive aspects of this scenario lie in the reinforcement of social cohesion and the reduction of environmental impact. Quality of life and social cohesion would be expected to increase, because of the strong sense of community that neighbourhood life should support. The relocation of work would mean social contact with work colleagues would be replaced by neighbourhood contact in the local telecentres. The increased use of information technologies within the local areas would also encourage the creation of place-based virtual networks that would back up the normal channels of communication between citizens.

The increased use of telecommunication would not mitigate some criticism directed at the new urbanism approach. Harvey, for instance, argues that the reinforcement of neighbourhoods will not necessarily reinforce the sense of community, and, in any case, reinforcing communities could be misinterpreted as a new form of social control (Harvey 1997).

Isolated telework

Flexible work arrangements and the possibility, for certain occupations, of moving part of the working activity to the so-called small offices/home offices (SOHO) are generating working habits that are liberated from any locational constraints. The trend is amplified by the increasing capability of computer technologies and telephone lines.

However, the percentage of isolated teleworkers is still quite low, despite the general belief that there is a broad diffusion of such work habits. According to some recent estimates, teleworkers make up about 4.8 per cent of the total workforce in the USA and 4.6 per cent in the UK (Wood 1997).[7] The forecast exponential growth in the number of teleworkers (15–20 per cent per year, according to some authors) did not happen. The reasons are probably grounded in the nature of many activities. Many workers still require face-to-face teamwork and social contact. Many activities are interdependent, or depend on the direct control of the employer. Psychological resistance on the part of employees is reinforced by low confidence in their capability to cope with elementary computer problems and by their conviction that isolation from the work environment could be an obstacle to career advancement. Other problems are caused by the new demands being put on domestic relationships and spaces (sometimes homes are completely unsuited to work activity), workaholism, stress and burnout (Forester 1992).

The wider diffusion of other solutions, such as part-time telework, nomadic work, etc., is probably related to the adaptability of such work arrangements to the present social and organizational structure. Nomadic work relies on an efficient network of mobile telecommunications and on the capability of the 'electronic briefcase' of teleworkers. In the future, nomadic work may also rely on a diffused presence of telecommuting centres in urban and peripheral areas.

The possibility of working from the car or plugging the computer into the global network from a teleworking centre is appealing, but not always realistic (because of the quality of mobile communications) or desirable.

Telework between utopia and dystopia

The low diffusion of telework has not discouraged the debate about the possible scenarios that telework, and in particular work at home, could generate. This debate has been developed around the scenario of the *electronic cottage*, proposed by Toffler in 1980. Since Toffler's initial description, the scenario of the electronic cottage has been analysed, amplified and criticized in the debate between utopian and dystopian scholars.

According to Toffler, the wide diffusion of telecommunication technologies is bringing about a simultaneous reorganization of techno-sphere (the sphere of infrastructures), info-sphere (the sphere of knowledge exchange) and socio-sphere (the sphere of social and cultural interaction). Such a process would result in a home-based society atomized in isolated electronic cottages, where physical contact with the work environment would be partly replaced by virtual communication, while social contact with the family and the neighbourhood would be enhanced. Home-telework could be the solution that reconciles work and child care.[8] It could also give more work opportunities to people with handicaps and to people living in remote areas or even in developing countries.

The utopian scenario is based on the hypothesis that a total substitution of telecommunication for physical transport could be possible (in the medium- or long-term future) and desirable. The consequences of such a scenario are quite suggestive, as the seamless patterns of communication that would be created by the continuous on-line interaction would create new forms of communities, no longer based on geographical contiguity, but rather on virtual propinquity. The replacement of geographical neighbourhoods with 'logical neighbourhoods' would redefine cities on the basis of intellectual linkages (Graham and Marvin 1996).

At the same time, teleworkers would enjoy the physical advantages of new non-urban lifestyles, as isolated telework will allow people to live wherever they like, far from the chaotic life of the inner areas. In 1971 Melvin Webber emphasized the new conditions for those pursuing certain activities – for example, the astronomer, who, thanks to telecommunications, could work on a mountain and still maintain intimate, real-time contact with relatives and colleagues in other places (Webber 1971). According to Webber, future scenarios of work would be totally independent of spatial constraints. This condition would reduce the role of cities and introduce a 'post-city age' (Webber 1968).

Webber's forecasts of the dissolution of the city have not come true. They were, however, based on two assumptions that still hold great potential in the development of urban areas and in the diffusion of telework. The first is that liberation from spatial constraints would reduce the difference between urban areas and remote regions. This assumption has proved to be partly true; the relationship between cities and their surrounding areas is indeed evolving from a

hierarchical model to a networked one. The second assumption is that teleworkers' residential choices will no longer rely on distance to work, but on households' geographical and cultural preferences. In fact this is not always possible, because housing prices influence workers' choices.

The dystopian view of the future development of teleworking scenarios considers the same assumptions, but from different points of view. It is true that telecommunications are compressing time-space constraints; however, they still rely on physical support that is unevenly distributed. Gillespie (1992) notes that, although electronic grids are capable of going anywhere, they remain inherently nodal, and a market-based use of telecommunication will increase such nodality. The same author uses the metaphor of railways (instead of the usual metaphor of highways) to emphasize the burden represented by the physical infrastructure in the diffusion of information technology. Telecommunication systems' high dependence on physical infrastructure might be used to exploit some areas and bypass others (Graham and Marvin 1996). In remote areas the cost of access to the global network might become too high for isolated telecommuters.[9]

Even more optimistic analysts of the present change, such as Mitchell (1999), inspired by the recent diffusion of new terrestrial and satellite communication systems (microwave links, wireless cellular systems or low-earth-orbit systems), admit that the difference between central and remote areas cannot be completely annihilated by the latest technological advances. Mitchell notes that, even with such improvements, rural residents will continue to suffer the disadvantages caused by the asymmetry inherent in airborne communication. Providing them with high-speed broadcast services is indeed much easier than providing them with a high-speed channel to pump information back out to the world.

The second assumption implicit in Webber's forecast, that teleworkers can live in their favourite places – mountain cottages, tourist resorts, isolated villages or cultural centres – is heavily dependent on the concentration of infrastructure and the demand for infrastructure. The electronic grid could be stretched to cover areas where spatially concentrated demand is possible, such as holiday villages, areas of particular value from an environmental and/or cultural point of view. And the economy of such places would be revived by telework, as their increased population would create the conditions for establishing new social and public services (schools, transports, banks, etc.). Nevertheless, instead of expanding telecommuters' choices, this may result in the creation of new polarizations. Some areas without particular attractions for telecommuters would become more and more remote with respect to the global communication network. Also, the capability of even the preferred areas to support an increase in residential demand could be limited. If the choice of teleworkers were driven only by environmental or cultural preferences, the local environment of such areas would hardly support the increased demand for residences. Such increases in residential density would be particularly critical for environmentally fragile areas such as parks, cultural capitals or ancient cities such as Venice. Such polarization would stress the absorption capacity of some areas, while others would be completely excluded.

Conclusion: telework in the age of revolution

This chapter is grounded on the assumption that information technologies are generating a radical change in socio-economic systems. Some interpretations of this change suggest that information technologies are bringing about a paradigm shift in socio-economic systems. Typically, a paradigm shift reduces the level of certainty and the range of activities and changes that can be easily controlled by the 'normal' logic of management. The reduction of certainty is caused by the progressive fragmentation of the existing logical parameters of control and by the progressive definition of new logical parameters. In the phase of definition of the new framework, many different, and sometimes competing, solutions are possible at the same time. In this phase the co-existence of many possible future scenarios is also determined by the lack of useful parameters for selecting future directions.

Uncertainty is a constant in human activities, both in 'normal' and in 'revolutionary' periods. Nevertheless, during broad socio-cultural changes such as the present one the areas of uncertainties, formerly limited to complex scientific and technological questions, are wider and involve the real world and day-to-day activities, such as work, and lifestyles.

Some decades ago, at the beginning of the great debate on the potential of information technology, telework was interpreted as the horizon line of a future generated by the new technological opportunities. After some decades, such a line has been revealed to be a wide area of possible configurations of work activity. The intersection of this area with other big issues in the debate about the future change of socio-economic systems – such as the transformation of urban patterns, lifestyles, cultures and social relationships – make telework a wider phenomenon and increase the complexity of the possible configurations.

Some features of the urban future generated by the transformation of working activity can be outlined:

- *Many life experiences will mix in the same place at the same time:* The mix of activities in the same area will become richer. Working activities will share their space with leisure, sports and other possible activities. Furthermore, flexible working times will allow people to experience different aspects of the urban space at the same time. The nature of each area will no longer be defined by one major activity undertaken in it, but will emerge from the mix of different, contemporary activities.
- *Many different work arrangements and places will be used for the same activity:* Each day a large number of workers will be able to choose the most suitable place to undertake their activity. Work arrangements will not be definitive or rigid. However, dispersion and isolation will reduce the range of possible choices, and so new balances between concentration and freedom of residential choice will be sought. The nodal nature of the information networks will influence such structures and increase concentration around the nodes (city centres or peripheral centres).

- *Many logical layers will intersect in the same place and in the same activity:* Each individual working in connection with other colleagues will experience not only a physical belonging to the place in which he/she is working, but also virtual proximity with other people connected through logical links. Teleworkers will act on different layers and connect physical spaces with logical links.

Telework opens a window on ongoing change in social, technical and cultural patterns – although the scenarios suggested by analysis of telework describe just a small part of a bigger, systemic change. The elements emphasized in the present chapter could be the focus around which a new logical framework will be organized. However, the scope of the present change is so broad that many other phenomena may emerge and intersect with the change described in the present paper to address the evolution of socio-economic systems.

Notes

1 However, some production activities, such as those based on high innovative performance and on R&D support, are still based in developed countries and are following the patterns of the information and telecommunications industries (Hall 1992).
2 Such an argument is implicitly or explicitly included in the main contributions of authors like Nilles (1976, 1991; one of the first scholars to analyse the telecommunication–transportation trade-off, in his 1976 publication), Toffler (1980) and Webber (1968). The relation between information and environmental sustainability is more explicitly analysed by Manzini (1995).
3 A major international telecommuting program was undertaken in Los Angeles CA. It involved 500 telecommuters (Jala International Inc. 1993). Other telecommuting programs have been reported by Rathbone (1992) and Henderson *et al.* (1996), but the number of telecommuters involved in these projects was lower than the Los Angeles program.
4 The first examples of the application of such organizational forms to large companies were in the USA, where IBM, AT&T, Ernst and Young, Bell Atlantic, Chiat/Day and Anderson Consulting have promoted this new office approach. The forecast for the next decade is that 20 per cent of US non-clerical staff could be placed in a desk-sharing situation. The revolution in the workplace is expected to reduce companies' real estate costs by up to 20 per cent (Wood 1997).
5 It is, however, worth noting that the dispersal of employment is measured in relation to the average distance of residences from the CBD. The dispersal is measured as a ratio of 3:1 in Figure 4.2. Therefore an increase in dispersal does not necessarily mean an increase in the dimensions of cities. In some cases cities seem to be reconcentrating around the CBD. Such reconcentration is encouraged by the improved quality in the central areas of some cities (Newman *et al.* 1997).
6 A critical review of such approach in the USA has been proposed by Lehrer and Milgrom (1996).
7 Statistical estimates of teleworkers are difficult, because of the elusive definition of telework. Many statistical estimates provide figures about homeworkers, but bureaux of statistics do not distinguish between activities that could fit in the category of telework and other activities (agricultural activities, home-based businesses, etc.). The broad category of homeworkers, however, is still very small. In Australia, for instance, homeworkers make up only 4 per cent of the total working population, and the estimated number of telecommuters is just 1 per cent of the Australian workforce (Forester 1992).

8 This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by some case studies analysed in the last decade. In the telecommuting programs established around the world women often made up the majority of telecommuters.
9 Recognition of low access to information networks in remote areas has been the basis for public-supported initiatives to establish rural telecentres in remote areas in the UK, Sweden and Australia. Public funds and telecom companies supported the telecentres for the first two or three years, on the assumption that they would become self-sufficient thereafter (Horner and Reeve 1991). The results of these initiatives are still being debated. Many telecentres are still active after their first three years, but many problems have emerged after the first three years of public support. Internet communication has been reduced dramatically, because of the cost of using telephone lines, and some telecentres are now surviving by means of educational activities and other initiatives targeted at the local market.

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5 'The gaze without eyes'

Video surveillance and the changing nature of urban space

Hille Koskela[1]

Introduction

When Jeremy Bentham designed the 'panopticon' in the eighteenth century, surveillance cameras were not available. Even when Michel Foucault analysed the panopticon's social meanings, video surveillance was not an issue. Yet the principle of video surveillance is much the same as the principle of this 'ideal prison': to be seen but to never know when or by whom. In industrialized societies around the world the number of surveillance cameras and the amount of space under surveillance have grown massively in recent decades. Surveillance cameras have *electronically extended* panoptic technologies of power, transforming cities into enormous panopticons (for discussion see, for example, Cohen 1985; Davis 1990; Lyon 1994; Oc and Tiesdell 1997; Ainley 1998; Fyfe and Bannister 1998).

This chapter discusses how increasing video surveillance and electronic surveillance are changing the nature of urban space. After describing aspects of how and where surveillance cameras are used, I focus on various dimensions of space. In doing so, a number of theoretical space concepts that can be used as 'tools' to analyse the question of surveillance will be presented. The relationship between surveillance and space is conceptualized from three different angles. First, I consider how surveillance cameras, as a technical solution to crime and fear of crime, mediate the experience of urban space, and how simply the basic *location of things* can readily change the nature of space. Secondly, I endeavour to describe how some of the *power relationships* embedded within surveillance affect the 'production' of space and unequal power relationships within it, particularly gender inequality. Thirdly, I discuss what kind of *emotions and feelings* surveillance creates and assess how these emotions shape space.

In much of the research, the role of surveillance technology has been perceived either over-optimistically (embracing the prospect that all social improvement is technology-driven) or over-pessimistically (believing that all surveillance leads to totalitarianism). As Lyon (1994) has argued, the latter discussion quickly lapses into paranoia, viewing surveillance monolithically as a threat. While my aim is to produce a critical conceptualization of video surveillance, I try to avoid reproducing a form of analysis that would only yield

dystopian images of totalitarian power. The main focus is on *the spatial nature of video surveillance* in concrete urban space. However, I also attempt to demonstrate interrelationships between urban video surveillance and the 'virtualization' of space in the contemporary technocity. Virtual space, it has been argued, offers a space for more intensive and subtle surveillance than ever before (e.g. Lyon 1998; Graham 1998). But the more unified this space, the more it also offers a place for resistance (as discussed below).

Video surveillance is most typically carried out in places where the flow of human movement is concentrated, in crowded city precincts, train stations, speed-control cameras on roads, shopping complexes and tourist areas. Electronic surveillance, on the other hand, is not so adept at tracing embodied movement but better able to monitor digital identities, whether by tracking mobile phone locations, geographical information systems, 'data profiling', tracing users in cyberspace, etc. (see Burrows 1997; Curry 1997; Lyon 1998; see also the chapters by Crang, Graham and Nunes in this book). As Mark Poster has argued, the cross-referentiality of electronic surveillance enables the formation of 'super-panopticons … forming vast stores of information that constitute as an object virtually every individual in society and in principle may contain virtually everything recorded about that individual: credit rating data, military records, census information, educational experience, telephone calls, and so forth' (Poster 1995: 89).

I argue that the relationship *between* visual and electronic surveillance should also be understood as being convergent: electronic kinds of surveillance which are specific to institutional databases and the Internet are becoming central contexts of surveillance and control, at the same time as surveillance in 'real' urban space also contributes in producing 'urban space as cyberspace'.

Defence and exclusion: towards safer cities?

One reason for the popularity of video surveillance in contemporary cities is its ease and presumed effectiveness. Compared to patrolling by foot, video surveillance makes it possible for the same number of personnel to oversee larger spaces, and new surveillance technologies are therefore usually greatly appreciated, for example, by the police (Koskela and Tuominen 1995). Electronic means are beginning to replace informal social control in urban environments: *the eyes* of the people *on the street* are replaced by the eyes of surveillance cameras (cf. Jacobs 1961; see also Oc and Tiesdell 1997; Fyfe and Bannister 1998; Fyfe *et al.* 1998). At the same time, the nature of urban space is changing; space is becoming more defended or 'defensible'. The basic idea of crime-reducing 'defensible space' was to employ architectural design to enable informal surveillance by people; electronic equipment was used only when physical redesign was not possible and video surveillance was 'the only resource open' (Newman 1972: 182). However, we are now in a situation where visual surveillance seems to be the first and easiest option and is accepted with relatively little critical discussion. The ostensible aim of such surveillance has been

to make cities safer, and thus more available to everyone. A crucial question which arises, therefore, is whether surveillance really can be seen as a means of making space more available.

Excluding strangers versus ensuring security

While surveillance is intense in virtual space, it has also become common in various 'real' urban spaces – in private premises as well as in semi-public and public spaces. Surveillance cameras are commonly used to protect high-class private premises – 'gated communities' – but it is also used in semi-public places such as shopping malls, underground and mainline train-stations, on board trains and buses themselves, in police stations and even churches. Increasingly surveillance is being used to monitor city streets and places of public accessibility. Some of these are privately owned (such as shopping malls and privately operated transit systems), some publicly, but the common attribute is that they are, at least in principle, accessible to everyone. In these spaces surveillance has emerged as a means of reducing crime and the fear of crime. It not only aims to protect property but also tries to reduce violence and to achieve better safety and inviolability for people. Indeed, in European countries surveillance has become most common in publicly accessible spaces. Britain is said to have the greatest amount of closed circuit television surveillance (CCTV) of public space in the capitalist world (Graham *et al.* 1996, quoted in Fyfe and Bannister 1998). This, as Fyfe and Bannister (1998: 257) argue, is not the result of an evaluation of the effectiveness of surveillance but, rather, a solution to crime that 'fits with a wider economic and political agenda to do with the contemporary restructuring of urban public space'. In Scandinavia, Finland has the highest number of surveillance cameras (Takala 1998). It has been estimated that Britain and Finland have the most intensive surveillance among the member countries of the European Union (Takala 1998: 33) but, in both these countries, the degree of regulation of surveillance is very low.

In addition, surveillance has a wider context. Companies in Britain and other western European countries, such as France and Germany, are involved in international trade in surveillance technology, which includes sales to countries with non-democratic regimes (Privacy International 1995). Surveillance is used to protect the territoriality of the state (cf. Taylor 1994, 1995). The state can use surveillance both to control access to its territory and to resist unwanted political activity inside its boundaries: this could be called *the political geography of surveillance*. However, the integration of computer surveillance systems and the distribution of visual images via the Internet weaken these boundaries considerably; control is not tied to the boundaries of regions or states.

Policing consumption

Video surveillance has become particularly common in spaces of consumption: shopping malls, the main shopping areas of city centres and inside individual

shops. Shopping malls, in particular, often have an extremely high level of surveillance. They have become an essentially contradictory space – 'space suggesting an openness that is in fact carefully exclusive' (Marcuse 1997: 107). Malls are often privately owned, and most video-surveillance systems are operated by private security firms. Surveillance here has become 'policing for profit' and not for safety (South 1988).

In shopping malls surveillance is easily used to exclude groups that are marginal in relation to the mall's purpose. Judgements made about individual appearance may lead to an individual's exclusion. Appearing to be vagrant, 'hanging around', too young to be a serious consumer, or using a mall as itself a visual site by taking photos of it, can all be reasons for easy eviction (Crawford 1992: 27). One must always look as if one has bought something, or is about to buy (Shields 1989: 160), because presumed non-customers (such as bag ladies, the homeless or teenagers) 'will be asked to move on or will be thrown out' (Judd 1995: 149). The spaces of consumption become 'aestheticized' by exclusion (Duncan 1996: 129) and, as with the disembodied experience of much telecommunication today, the urban experience in the mall is sanitized and 'purified' (Sibley 1995: 78). A shopping mall is like a prison reversed: deviant behaviour is restrained outside (Mäenpää 1993: 29). Thus, ostensibly public spaces are not public for everyone – public space can be seen as if it 'refers to places under public scrutiny' (Domosh 1998: 209) and as an indication of the decline of 'lived' public space.

In many ways, the enclosed mall is something of an archetypal model for analysing virtual surveillance dynamics, a model which has recently been generalized to a wide range of urban settings. In Britain, for example, one reason for cities installing CCTV systems in their centres has been to try to *match* the level of safety that out-of-town business parks and shopping malls have been able to offer (Fyfe and Bannister 1998; see also Brown 1995; Fyfe *et al.* 1998). Shopping malls have, in this sense, become *icons* for urban space. The 'purified' space in a shopping mall can, in some senses, be seen as representing a cocooned environment, continuous with but substitutive of the urban environment (see Crang in this book). While increased safety is a possible benefit of this development, there are other consequences. The 'erosion' of public space will increasingly spread from malls to open, publicly owned urban space. The controlled spaces which 'signal exclusion' (Sibley 1995: 85) will no longer be restricted to particular private premises. And this is likely to change the nature of urban space.

Despite all the policing with surveillance cameras, there is little agreement among researchers about whether surveillance cameras actually reduce crime (Fyfe and Bannister 1998; Takala 1998). There is evidence that surveillance causes the 'displacement' of crime, since, whereas the areas under surveillance become safer, areas not covered by cameras become more dangerous (Tilley 1993; Fyfe and Bannister 1996). Sometimes, however, cameras can 'spread' their influence, so that crime rates are reduced both in areas under surveillance and in the surrounding areas (Poyner 1992; Brown 1995). Studies suggest that the use of

cameras has reduced property crime, such as criminal damage, vehicle crime, theft and burglary (Fyfe and Bannister 1996; Brown 1995). But there is much less evidence to show that cameras would reduce *violent crime*, such as battery and sexual violence. Sexual offences, in particular, are most common in places that are rarely monitored, such as parks, suburban areas and private space. Consequently, the gains of surveillance are quite obvious in relation to property crime, but less so in relation to violent crime.

Solutions for a better quality of life?

An unwanted outcome of trying to guarantee as low a crime rate as possible is that this easily leads to escalating scales of surveillance, and such solutions to reducing crime rates can make the city *less pleasant* to live in rather than a more pleasant place. The massive expansion of protection has been claimed to lead to a vicious circle of defence: while increasing security might make some people feel safer, it also creates increasing fear, racist paranoia and distrust (e.g. Davis 1990; Ellin 1996, 1997). This development has crystallized in cities such as Los Angeles, which has been considered to be the ultimate product of defensible fortress-like architecture (e.g. Soja 1989, 1996; Davis 1992; Jameson 1991). It is claimed that the street environments have become 'sadistic'; that public space is difficult to approach and stay in; and the natural social life in public space has ended: 'the streets are dead' (Davis 1990: 230–2; see also Mitchell 1995).

The difference that surveillance makes could mean, for example, that cities will move closer to the 'absolute predictability' of shopping malls (Judd 1995: 149), that public space – or at least spontaneous social behaviour in it – will be forced to 'die', or that distrust, doubt and ambiguity will increasingly be the dominant feelings experienced there. To achieve a better understanding of this, we must look more closely at urban space. In the following sections I discuss conceptualizations of space in order to develop a clearer understanding of the various dimensions of the space that is under surveillance.

Conceptualizations of space

For a long time geographers have used concepts of space to understand the complexity of the social world (see for example Harvey 1973; Lefebvre 1991; Rose 1993; Massey 1994; Soja 1996). Different forms of spatiality have been crucial in explaining a range of social problems and phenomena, from the circulation of capital to gendered power relations. In addition, the concept of space as derived from Foucault (e.g. 1977, 1980, 1986) is understood to be a fundamental basis for the exercise of power.

Many conceptualizations of space have focused on the difference between material physical space and social space – the distinction between 'real' and 'imagined' space (Soja 1996). Henri Lefebvre's theories can, however, be seen as an attempt to integrate these dimensions, and so to conceptualize space as simul-

taneously physical, mental and social (Madanipour 1996: 341), or 'real-and-imagined' as Soja (1996) has subsequently suggested. Lefebvre (1991: 38–9) understood space as the *perceived space* of daily routine, the *conceived space* as understood by experts and professional practices, and the *lived space* as associated with experience and non-verbal symbols. His theory has been a source of inspiration for numerous researchers (Soja 1989, 1996; Liggett 1995; Madanipour 1996; Simonsen 1996, among others) who have attempted to understand a comprehensive spatiality of social life. Others have focused on spatiality in specific contexts.

Surveillance significantly changes the nature of urban space, or, in fact, is producing a new kind of space. This change can, I propose, be understood in three ways: *space as a container*, *power-space,* and *emotional space*. Although these concepts are discussed separately in the following sections, they are partly overlapping, and not mutually exclusive, dimensions of space – they are present simultaneously in a city that is characterized by high scales of surveillance. While the arguments presented here are not directly based on any previous spatial concepts, they are based on traditions of spatial understanding. The concepts described here do not differentiate between physical, mental and social space – rather, all can be considered constitutively social. However, this does not mean that physical space is ignored. The aim is to focus on both social space and physical space, but on physical space as it is embedded in social meanings and uses.[2]

Space as a container: locations that matter

Space is a container in which social interaction takes place. However, in much geographical thought this conceptualization of space has not been emphasized: rather, it is often suggested that space is not *just* a container but that many processes (production, consumption, power structures, etc.) come together to shape and create it (e.g. Harvey 1973; Massey 1994; Lefebvre 1991). While generally agreeing with this, I would still like to argue that it is useful to conceptualize space as a container. It *does* matter what kind of physical (architectural) frames space offers for social interaction, where objects in space lie (both vertically and horizontally), and how things are located in relation to each other. For example, what kind of frames does video surveillance provide for social interaction? Do the locations of different objects and persons matter, and, if so, to what extent?

'Space as a container' is a passive space. Built forms have been created by and for human beings, and they can function as restrictions or possibilities. While the concept of space is certainly never simply an architectural conception, it is at the same time easy to underestimate the role of physical structures. Architecture is not just a matter of style and image, architecture also promotes or prevents encounter (Newman 1972). Similarly, space as a container is not simply a physical construct – it is also constituted through the locations of people and groups of people in relation one to another.

The hidden behind the visible

For people under surveillance there are several reasons why space as a container can be disorientating and alienating. First, what causes most mistrust about the technical ability of a camera is that a camera mainly operates backwards: it is designed to solve crime rather than to prevent it. However, the benefits of surveillance should lie in its ability to *respond* to a crime (Oc and Tiesdell 1997: 138), although, for a victim of violence, the help a camera offers may come too late. In the case of an attack, it might be possible to use the videotape to catch the offender(s) and use the tape as evidence in court, but this response would not erase the actual experience of violence. This is a particularly serious drawback in relation to sexual violence. Preventing sexual assault is of much greater importance than reacting to it.

Secondly, even if the camera seems to look down from above, *the camera itself has no eyes*. Its lens is blind unless someone is looking through it. Similarly, a camera's location gives no indication of where the people behind the camera are situated: something behind the visible is hidden. There is no personal contact between the security personnel and the public. One does not know whether anyone is looking or, if anyone is, who that person is or how far away he or she is. One does not even know whether that person is *above* or *below*. Surveillance cameras have been considered as being 'literally above' (Fyfe and Bannister 1998): they survey from 'above the crowd', 'from up there'. But quite often this is not the case. The camera seems to be looking at people from above, but the monitoring room may be, for example, in the basement of a shopping mall, where premises are cheaper (Koskela 1995). This makes it very difficult to ask for help through the agency of the camera – the camera *leaves its object entirely as an object*: passive, without any ability to influence the situation.

Furthermore, not only can the monitoring room be in another floor of a building; it is technically possible to have monitoring conducted in a different country. In Finland, for example, there is a temptation to hire guards from Estonia, where labour costs are much lower. In theory, the observation of the streets of Helsinki could very well take place in Tallinn. Hence, with contemporary technical abilities, video surveillance is *placeless*. In addition, the visual images recorded in one place can be distributed all around the world in the virtual space of the Internet. The practice of surveillance can be said to be a major contributor to time-space compression and the so-called 'death of distance'.

Paradoxes in architectural form

Disorientation and alienation can also be created through architectural design. It has been claimed that architecture can reduce a building's obviousness of purpose, and that it is becoming more and more difficult to 'navigate' in the urban environment (Jameson 1991). In the past, buildings representing power and authority were imposing and showy, often built on high, clearly visible sites,

and their entrances were emphasized. By contrast, in contemporary architecture power is hidden and unnoticeable, and authority is represented not through its visibility but rather through its invisibility (Foucault 1977). Entrances and routes are hidden and are known only to – and hence are only supposed to be found by – exceptional, privileged people (Eräsaari 1995). This is most obvious in the spaces of surveillance, which are 'stealthy and slippery': impossible to find and reach (Flusty 1994). While anyone can see the cameras (Fyfe and Bannister 1996: 39), the hidden locations of the control rooms makes it impossible for the public to see from where they are being observed.

It has been pointed out that the American model of urban form, of highly segregated cities and their urban futures, seems to dominate academic discussion in an often uncritical way (Charlesworth and Cochrane 1997; Lees 1998). However, comparable changes in architectural design and surveillance techniques have happened elsewhere. It could be argued that increased surveillance is a form of *globalization*: cities increasingly resemble each other, and their differences and individual characteristics are diminishing. Just as 'virtual tourism' on the Internet may give an impression that all cities are alike, so does the urban experience in public space. For example, on the streets of London, and in most other cities in Britain, clearly visible surveillance cameras are everywhere, but it is almost impossible to know which ones belong to private companies and which ones are publicly maintained and might be accessible to the police. In some metro stations in Helsinki, the mirrors on the wall are windows through which the guards can see the public. Few people know this, and, even if they do, it is impossible to tell whether there is someone inside or not. In one sense, therefore, urban space is rendered less predictable.

What is characteristic of surveillance design is its paradoxicality: forms are at the same time transparent and opaque. While everything (and everyone) under vigilance is becoming more visible, the forces (and potential helpers) behind this surveillance are becoming less so. Forms are transparent from one side and opaque from the other – like the mirror-like windows in Helsinki metro stations. Although the purpose of surveillance is supposed to be to increase safety, its design is, instead, producing uncertainty. Again, this leaves the members of the public as passive subjects in a container: they are subjects in a position of not knowing their own being.

The image displaces reality

Just as the camera and architectural forms of surveillance disturb the public, they are also disorientating and alienating to the people behind them – the police and guards. Such people have less personal contact with the public in the street. Compared to social control characterized by encounters with people, control accomplished through surveillance is faceless. The two-dimensional space in the surveillance monitors is the daily (and nightly) 'working environment' of security personnel. It is 'easy police work' (Channel 4 1993), but the humane side of surveillance is lacking. The use of video surveillance can arguably be said to

affect the ways in which 'reality' is conceptualized and understood. A comparable point has been made about the use of the surveillance camera and home video tapes in television: the so-called 'real life television' is producing a new genre of programmes where an unstable black-and-white videotape picture works as a symbol or a guarantee of 'reality' (Salminen 1997). Furthermore, the amateur video of the beating of Rodney King – the jury ended up discussing whether those parts of a video which were 'out of focus' could be used as evidence or not – was a good example of the controversial nature of the interpretations (see Fiske 1998). What is seen on a videotape or a surveillance monitor is only a restricted image of reality. However, by being positioned behind a surveillance camera (where the world is seen on a TV screen) the real is reduced to the virtual. What counts for social reality is determined by the ability to pan or zoom in – an experience reduced to the visual.

What I wish to argue here is that surveillance actually *makes* space a container in which the surveyor and the surveyed are only connected to each other via an apparatus of an extended gaze. Those behind the camera see the space under surveillance through the monitor (simplified to two dimensions) and look at others as if they were objects. The very absence of direct personal contact and the fact that the overseers are not themselves in the monitored space make them 'see' the space from the outside. In the monitoring room, the two-dimensional 'virtual' space becomes more authentic than the three-dimensional reality outside. The people under surveillance (the objects looked at) are seen as if they were bodies moving around in a container: 'anonymity becomes the norm' (Hannah 1997a: 174). People are reduced to doll-like bodies lacking personal qualities, and surveillance is reduced to the observation of bodily movements. The technical equipment that separates the two sides of surveillance makes it difficult for the space to be recognized as a lived, experienced space. In the practice of visual surveillance, the image displaces embodied interaction.

This particular technologization of space is affecting the nature of space: space is regarded as if it were merely a passive container where the watched objects exist. It is insensitive to who comes and goes and to what his or her feelings or intentions might be – as long as he or she seems to have no intention to commit (a visually recognizable) crime. Furthermore, the space under surveillance is always confined. This space is 'perceived as potentially emptiable' (Herbert 1996b: 568). It is a *stage-like* space that one can enter and exit, and, while one is in it, one is seen as an inactive object of surveillance.

This space can be understood in traditional, but out of fashion, geographical terms. It is *clinical, objectified space*: a condition in which the city (or a part of it) is seen as a laboratory of human behaviour. In this space people are reduced to socially inactive producers of bodily movements and analysed as if looked at from above. The aerial photographs at different scales reproduced uncritically in many old geography textbooks exemplify this kind of space very well, displaying what can be regarded as an 'abstract visualization' of space (cf. Madanipour 1996).

Power-space: to look or to be looked at

Foucault's work shows that space has a crucial role in the exercise of power: there is a reciprocal relationship between power and space. More specifically, it is not only the structures of space – the spatial forms – that matter, but also the social processes that are bound to the production of space. As a number of authors have pointed out, the panopticon-like nature of city surveillance has interesting and important parallels with Foucault's ideas (Cohen 1985; Fyfe and Bannister 1996; Herbert 1996a; Soja 1996; Hannah 1997b; Ainley 1998). In this chapter, my interpretations of Foucault are closely bound to the practical execution of surveillance and are restricted to those parts which most directly consider questions related to observation, scrutiny and surveillance (Foucault 1977, 1980, 1986). A city, like the panopticon, can be seen as a 'laboratory of power' (Foucault 1977: 204), 'both a graphic model and a metaphor for strategic social controls' (Faith 1994: 56). In both cases surveillance 'links knowledge, power and space' (Herbert 1996a: 49). In cities, the routine of surveillance makes the exercise of power almost instinctive; people are controlled, categorized, disciplined and normalized without any particular reason. With respect to surveillance, urban space can be conceptualized as 'power-space': a space impregnated with disciplinary practices.

The power-space of surveillance is constantly shaped and changed by social power relationships. Obviously, the purpose of surveillance cameras is to shape the exercise of power: to control deviant behaviour, to reduce crime and to keep the spaces produced secure. However, this ostensible control engenders other forms of power, either intended or unintended. The politics of seeing, and of being seen, are complex. Who has the right to look, and who will be looked at? What, in a particular context, is regarded as deviant? What kinds of power relation and structures shape the space under surveillance, and how?

Cities versus the panopticon

Foucault describes the panopticon as 'a technology of power designed to solve the problems of surveillance' (1980: 148). Clearly, surveillance cameras are the same: a technological solution designed to solve the problems of surveillance in urban space. However, we are undoubtedly talking about two separate things here: a city is a city, and a prison is a prison. How much are they alike? Is their similarity just a rhetorical trick, or is there something more to it?

Indeed there are important differences between this 'ideal prison' and urban space, and their similarities should not be 'overdrawn' (Fyfe and Bannister 1996: 39). In cities people are not imprisoned and do not 'suffer continuous confinement' (Hannah 1997b: 344). Cities are also not places of punishment or places where persons exclusively experience isolation. Moreover, cosmopolitan cities are places of open diversity and possibility. The diversity of both spaces and social practices makes it impossible to consider urban space simply and directly as on a par with the panopticon. 'Too much happens in the city for this to be true', as

Soja (1996: 235) points out. The objects and perpetrators of the gaze are not always clear in an urban environment: shops, for example, use cameras to monitor their own personnel as well as customers (Takala 1998). Furthermore, what is considered appropriate behaviour in a particular time and place varies according to gender, age, etc. We could add to the above observations the fact that imprisonment, as a punishment, is part of an established legal system, and the forces that maintain urban discipline are not exclusively extensions of the state. Cameras run by private operators outnumber those used by the authorities. It is easy to consider increased surveillance to be increased power of the authorities, but in fact the situation can be quite the opposite: the authorities have very little control over how and where surveillance is used.

For all that it is important to acknowledge these differences, there are several principles characteristic of the mechanism of the panopticon that are clearly present in the surveillance of contemporary cities, and they are worth specifying. The significance of *visibility* is perhaps the most obvious and often-acknowledged panoptic principle (e.g. Cohen 1985; Soja 1989; Hillier 1996; Hannah 1997a; Fyfe and Bannister 1998). The exercise of disciplinary power 'involves regulation through visibility' (Hannah 1997a: 171). To be able to see provides the basic condition for collecting knowledge and being in control. The panopticon embodies the power of the visual. '[T]he major effect of the panopticon' is, in Foucault's words (1977: 201), 'to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.' Just as the prisoner is visible, so are the signs of control, since the prisoners will always be able to see the tower from which they are watched. Accordingly, citizens in urban space will see surveillance cameras placed in visible positions constantly reminding them of their own visibility. A doubled experience of visibility results: 'I see, so I will be seen'.

However, not all cameras are positioned where they can be seen: *unverifiability* is as crucial for maintaining power as visibility. In the panoptic prison, 'the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so' (Foucault 1977: 201). Watching remains 'sporadic', but 'the threat of being watched never ceases' (Hannah 1997b: 347). Accordingly, unverifiability means that, even if one sees the cameras, one can never know whether there really is someone behind them. The camera works as a reminder of possible scrutiny, as a 'deterrent' (Oc and Tiesdell 1997). This perhaps ensures discipline but, at the same time, erodes confidence. The very notion that 'you never know' is one of the most important reasons for mistrust in surveillance environments (Trench *et al.* 1992; Koskela 1999).

Anonymity is another similarity. Like the inmate of the panoptic prison, the public in urban space is often unaware of who is responsible for the surveillance. Moreover, the control of surveillance is independent of who is responsible for the surveillance. It does not matter who is controlling it: 'it could be a computer' (Cohen 1985: 221). Hence, anonymity is another common reason for mistrust. While an official aim of surveillance is to increase safety, if members of the public do not know who is watching them and from where, the effect will be to

create feelings of being *unsafe*. It is thus not surprising that urban authorities experience ever-increasing difficulties in 'maintaining credibility' (Hannah 1997a: 175, see also Mitchell 1995; Oc and Tiesdell 1997). Furthermore, the panoptic nature of surveillance implies the anonymity of the power itself. Power is present; it is exercised but no one possesses it. '[It] exists only in actions' (Grosz 1990: 87). The guards are mere mediators of power, tied to the same process as the public, simultaneously exercising and being subjected to power.

Although it has been argued that the 'militarization' of urban space is increasing (Davis 1990; Dear and Flusty 1998), it is also the case that *absence of force* (Cohen 1985) is one of the panoptic principles currently evident in cities. Panoptic surveillance ensures that there is no need for physical intervention. As Foucault (1980: 155) puts it: 'There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze.' Being constantly aware of being controlled by invisible overseers leads to *internalization of control*. While the panopticon ostensibly keeps the body entrapped, it is in fact targeted at the psyche: in this mechanism 'the soul is the prison of the body' (Foucault 1977: 30). People regulate their own behaviour even when this is not necessary, and they exercise power over themselves. Additionally, databases and electronic forms of surveillance contribute to creating a social condition in which 'discipline of the norm has become a second nature' (Poster 1990: 91). An individual 'becomes the principle of his own subjection' (Foucault 1977: 203). The panoptic condition of video surveillance imposes self-vigilance. Internalization of control means 'easy and effective exercise of power' (Foucault 1980: 148). This is exactly the political argument used to support the installation of new cameras and to defend the expansion of electronic surveillance: it is claimed to be easy and effective.

Additional panoptic principles that are clearly present in urban space are *normalization* and *permanent documentation*. The routine surveillance of city centres ensures the exclusion of deviance and 'the maintenance of normality among the already normal' (Hannah 1997b: 349). Surveillance aims to 'normalize' urban space. It multiplies the effect of 'social norms' which contribute to controlling behaviour (cf. Domosh 1998). As Foucault has argued, an important dimension of the penal system that the panopticon was part of was 'a system of intense registration and of documentary accumulation' (1977: 189). Although contemporary surveillance systems are not all-inclusive in gathering knowledge, there are several overlapping registration systems that work from public urban space to cyberspace, so that the everyday life of an individual includes more registration than ever before (see Lyon 1994; Curry 1997; Hannah 1997b; Graham 1998; Fyfe *et al.* 1998). For example, computerized face recognition systems, which have the capacity to automatically compare faces captured on video with databases of facial images, 'technologicize' space and blur the distinction between real urban space and cyberspace (Lyon 1998; Graham's chapter in this book). The control of activity, time and space is intense.

Finally, both in the panopticon and in the power-space of surveillance, *social contact* is – most often – *reduced to the visual*. While visibility has a very important role in surveillance, it also overpowers other senses: there is nothing more than

that which meets the eye. This has several interesting consequences. Conceptually, the question of the dominance of visuality is part of a wider critique that considers often-concealed *gendered* ideologies in geography (Rose 1993; Nash 1996; Nast and Kobayashi 1996, among others).

The gaze and the politics of looking

Visuality is not without a gender dimension, even in its most tangible forms. It is not the intention of this section to argue that gender relations are understood as the only dimensions through which power is exercised. However, by focusing on gender relations negotiated under surveillance, it might also be possible to understand more about other forms of power and exclusion. First, I will examine the gender relations of surveillance at the simplest level: who occupies the opposite sides of a surveillance camera? If we looked at the places and spaces under surveillance, and the maintenance of surveillance, would we see practices that could be gendered? Is it the case that women in particular are likely to enjoy the 'pay off' (Honess and Charman 1992: 11) of surveillance? How is 'the visual' gendered here?

In public and semi-public space, the places where surveillance most often occurs are the shopping malls and the shopping areas of city centres, and the areas of public transport. The people who usually negotiate and decide upon surveillance are the management, and the people who maintain surveillance are the police and private guards. From this it is possible to draw some conclusions about the gender structure of surveillance. Women spend more time shopping than men; everyday purchases are mostly bought by women; and the majority of the users of public transport are women. Thus women quite often occupy the typical places of surveillance. By contrast, those in charge of deciding on surveillance and maintaining surveillance are mostly men. Thus, *at this simplest level*, surveillance is, indeed, gendered: most of the people 'behind' the camera are men and most of the people 'under' surveillance are women.

However, there are other, yet more complicated features of this gender structure. In the world of surveillance the 'masculine culture' of technology (Wajcman 1991) is reproduced in the masculine interiors of monitoring rooms, as well as in the recruitment of guards for their physical strength and for their tall, muscular appearance rather than suitable schooling or ability to cope with people. The 'cop culture' (e.g. Fyfe 1995) is causing mistrust of surveillance: women do not rely on those behind the cameras, because the guards and the police responsible for the daily routine of surveillance reproduce patriarchal forms of power. Surveillance is interpreted as part of 'male policing in the broadest sense' (Brown 1998: 217). Since video surveillance usually reduces everything to the visual, it is unable to identify situations where more sensitive interpretation is needed. For example, surveillance overseers can easily observe clearly visible but otherwise minor offences, while ignoring situations they might regard as ambivalent, such as (verbal) sexual harassment (Koskela 1999). Sexual harassment is more difficult to identify, and to interrupt, by means of a surveil-

lance camera than by means of police/guards patrolling on foot. This insensitivity of cameras – i.e., their restriction to the field of vision – is an important reason for doubt and disorientation. 'The gaze' becomes gendered. This failure could be understood as a 'passive' relationship between surveillance and harassment. But there is more to surveillance than this. There is a dimension that could be understood as an 'active' relationship between surveillance and harassment. By this I mean it is possible to use surveillance cameras as a means of harassment. There is some voyeuristic fascination in looking, in being able to see. And scrutiny is a common and effective form of harassment (Gardner 1995). One of the very reasons for women's insecurity is their 'exaggerated visibility' (Brown 1998: 218). Paradoxically, women are marginalized by being at the centre (of the looks) (cf. Rose 1993). Harassment makes the gaze reproduce the embodiment and sexualization of women.

Although there is not a great deal of published research on the gendered aspects of surveillance, the points made here can be supported by empirical evidence. It has been shown that there is public concern about the 'potential "Peeping Tom" element' (Honess and Charman 1992: 9), that women are worried about possible 'voyeurism' (Trench 1997: 149; Brown 1998: 218), and that cameras positioned in places of an intimate nature irritate women (Koskela 1999). In addition, there is anecdotal evidence of camera abuse. Hillier (1996: 99–100) describes the case of the Burswood Casino in Australia, where the security camera operators had videotaped women in toilets and artists' changing rooms, zooming in on the exposed parts of their bodies and editing the video sequences on to one tape that was shown at local house parties. In like manner, in the summer of 1997 it was discovered that Swedish conscript soldiers had been 'entertaining' themselves by monitoring topless women on a beach near their navy base, taping the women and printing pictures of them to hang on the barrack walls (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 17 December 1997). The cameras used were of extremely high quality, and, hence, the pictures were quite explicit. These cases are glaring examples of the possibility of the masculinization and militarization of space, of the gendering of surveillance, and of the abuse of control.

What must not be forgotten, however, is that there is always an element of resistance. Control is never completely hegemonic. Surveillance can be turned into '*counter-surveillance*', into a weapon for those who are oppressed. It is possible, for example, to use a surveillance camera to protect oneself – as was recently done in Finland by a woman who had experienced violence. She had to prove that an offender had violated the restraining order made by the court, and installed a surveillance camera on her own front door to catch the offender on tape. Furthermore, there is an interesting element – mainly in the electronic environment of cyberspace – that could be called '*counter-voyeurism*'. The digital 'homecams', such as the well known JenniCAM in the US, which send real time pictures from a person's home, show an interesting reverse of harassment (Jimroglou 1999). Indeed, gender relations of power and visibility can be turned upside down. More generally, new Internet-based social movements can also be said to operate by the reversal of a surveillance gaze. These movements are able

to use Internet networks (WWW, email, listserves and Internet relay chat) to collect information about meetings of powerful global economic groups, organize event-protests on a global scale, and turn media attention on them in a surveillance-like manner.

The superpanopticon

As outlined earlier, visual surveillance can be distinguished from electronic surveillance, in that it converts embodied interaction into images, whereas electronic surveillance reduces everyday life to quanta of information.

Mark Poster claims that 'Today's "circuits of communication" and the databases they generate constitute a Superpanopticon, a system of surveillance without walls, windows, towers or guards' (Poster 1990: 93). As described by Poster, and more recently taken up by Tim Jordan in his book *Cyberpower* (Jordan 1999), electronic surveillance is an extension of disembodied power-containers. What is surveyed, however, is not the participation of individuals in 'public' or quasi-public spaces, but rather, electronic identities or 'avatars' and the electronic footprints they leave in their communication.

For surveillance to be total depends on identity being transmuted into a form in which it is able to be monitored more extensively:

> a Superpanopticon of total surveillance, which results from the archiving of all social interactions in distributed databases interrelated through cyberspace. From bank transactions to newspaper purchases to car travel, it is feared that all social actions will be translated into digital records that can be assembled to form a complete account of someone's life.
>
> (Jordan 1999: 180)

As Poster explains in *The Second Media Age*, the superpanopticon blurs the distinction between public and private almost 'without effort' when, for example, 'private' acts like using a credit card are submitted to public record (Poster 1995: 86–7). This vulnerability of the private to a public realm emerges in circumstances where embodied interaction is replaced by interaction with machines. 'Ongoing surveillance by machines is then a corollary of the feedback of data from interaction with machines' (Morse 1998: 7).

In many ways, the superpanopticon consolidates some of the features of the panoptic 'container' (particularly unverifiability, anonymity, normalization and permanent documentation) but fails to qualify as a power-space at the level of embodiment and identification. Whereas bodies in 'space as a container' are doll-like and lacking any personal qualities, bodies in power-space are different. These bodies have gender, age, race, colour of skin and sexuality. They have different understandings of their relations to society; some are strong, others are marginalized and threatened. The condition of being under surveillance, accordingly, can make people react in different ways: those in apparent positions of power may understand it differently

from those 'on the margins'. By definition, the camera must have two sides: those behind the camera and those under surveillance. Consequently, surveillance, wherever an active gaze is involved, is inevitably a matter of power: it does not offer a neutral space.

Emotional space: the ambivalent experience

Power-space is an important concept in realizing how both visual and electronic surveillance affects people, but it is unable to explain another equally important dimension: surveillance as an emotional experience. Being committed to the feminist notion of identities being constructed through and by power relations, I want to argue that social power relations and emotions are fundamentally intertwined. It is crucial to understand space through individual emotional experience, which is related to, but not exactly the same as, the space as conceptualized by power relations. As social (power) relations, emotions produce space; thus space can be understood as 'emotional space'.

From the experiential point of view, both concepts of space outlined in previous sections remain 'spaces from above', distanced from 'everyday spaces' (Rose 1993) and 'the practices of everyday life' (de Certeau 1984). Although some notions (such as lack of credibility) imply lived, experienced space, the concepts 'space as a container' and 'power-space' emphasize space as seen from the perspective of 'those who control'. They remain 'external viewpoints' (cf. Gregory 1994: 300). The reason for using emotional space as my last tool is to provide a perspective on those who are under surveillance and who *are being watched*. Emotional space is a space 'below the threshold at which visibility begins' (de Certeau 1984: 93, quoted in Gregory 1994: 301).

Emotionally there is a big difference between being looked at by someone directly and being looked at through the lens of a surveillance camera. The variety of feelings surveillance evokes is enormous: those being watched may feel guilty for no reason, embarrassed or uneasy, irritated or angry or fearful; they may also feel secure and safe (Koskela 1999). Quite often people's feelings are ambivalent. Surveillance can evoke positive and negative feelings simultaneously: on the one hand, surveillance cameras increase security, but, on the other, they induce feelings of mistrust. Is this contradiction irrational? How might people feel simultaneously more secure and more fearful?

Traditionally, 'the emotional' has often been regarded as the less valuable end of the rational–emotional dichotomy (Rose 1993). It has been seen as 'the feminine' (based on an essentialistic notion of femininity) and 'the undervalued'. Emotions are often considered to be taken for granted, not worthy of conceptual examination (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990). Moreover, they have been considered as entirely subjective, and no attempt has been made to understand their connections to wider, often extremely crucial, social processes. However, it is important that we understand the broader structures in which emotions are embedded. Whereas emotions themselves are subjective, 'emotional space' is social.

While the work of Foucault provided an important impetus for understanding the first two concepts of space described above, emotional space is somewhat different. Foucault's work did not include the personal experiences or feelings of those being watched (Cain 1993). The 'subject' was seen mainly as an outcome of disciplinary power/knowledge: 'subjects become obliterated or are recreated as passive objects' (Hartsock 1990: 167). Hence, his work will not help in trying to understand emotions.

Emotional space is different from the conventional concepts of space. However, what comes close to this concept in taking emotions seriously is the concept of 'paradoxical space' (Rose 1993), which has its origins in contemporary feminist thought. In paradoxical space, Rose (*ibid.*: 140) argues, 'the spaces that would be mutually exclusive if charted on a two-dimensional map, are occupied simultaneously'. This idea facilitates our understanding of the contradictions that seem so inevitable from the perspective of everyday life, but that remain so untouchable in most scientific discourse.

The very experience of being under surveillance is ambivalent. Whatever form of surveillance is investigated – crime prevention, collection of evidence, invasion of privacy, etc. – this appears to be the case (Koskela 1999). Even if we can work out, for example, how potential criminals would react if watched (and that video surveillance is guaranteeing our better security) this does not mean that we feel more safe. For a lone woman in an underground station subject to surveillance by a camera, the camera (as an object) could represent threat more than security or, even more interestingly, threat *as well as* security. The very same object that is reminding her of (male) power is, at the same time, supposed to protect her from male (power). In such circumstances, internal negotiation is not easy.

Although one of the aims of surveillance is to increase people's feelings of security, being the object of surveillance does not necessarily *encourage* feelings of safety. Feelings of vulnerability are related to lack of control (Smith 1986). To be observed by a surveillance camera – to be 'under control' – does not increase one's feeling of being 'in control'. In relation to the camera, one is always 'an object'. Only by purposely placing themselves to be seen – as the 'homecams' in the Internet show – are women able to reverse the situation and be positioned as 'subjects' despite being seen. In urban space the object of a camera is in the situation of being a *potential victim* without the opportunity to influence his or her own destiny. The object is forced to trust someone else. This is why surveillance raises contradictions. However, while feelings of being under control may not be pleasant, they might still ensure feelings of safety.

Emotional space may be difficult to understand, because it cannot be described in static terms; it evades definitions and remains 'untouchable'. However, emotions such as fear of violence do, arguably, shape one's interpretation of space. The streets of fear are different in length according to the time of the day, who is passing by, how confident one feels at that moment, etc. (Koskela 1997: 315). Emotional space is 'elastic': it is like a liquid – its nature changes according to where one is, what one does, who one is with, etc. It feels like one thing, but then, all of a sudden, it changes to something else. Moreover,

emotional space is essentially ambivalent; it is not logical but internally contradictory by nature. *There is no clear dynamic of power and resistance*. Space can feel oppressive, 'like an enemy itself' (Rose 1993: 143), but reclaiming space can – at the same time – be the precondition for emancipation. Being in space is difficult (*ibid.*: 143) but obligatory.

It is not impossible to appreciate that contradictions in one's feelings and emotions can, in a sense, make sense. For example, intuition and learned knowledge can contradict each other, but one's feelings are often based on both processes (Koskela 1997: 304). Feelings can be disapproving but still sound. Their origins may seem irrational, and their essence may be internally contradictory, but the resulting reactions may be understandable. They are not a mathematical function of actual risks but the complicated products of personal experience and memory. In the context of emotional space, the practical issue of video surveillance is not something that one can either oppose or support. It is far more complex. To be under surveillance is an ambivalent emotional event. A surveillance camera, as an object, can at the same time represent safety and danger. To be protected can feel the same as being threatened. A paradox of emotional space is that it does, indeed, make sense that surveillance cameras can make people feel both more secure and more fearful.

Conclusion

A surveillance camera is an enigmatic object: it has no eyes but it has 'the gaze'. Even though people under surveillance are well aware of the fact that the camera itself cannot see (and thus they do not trust the camera), they are at the same time aware that someone sees (or might see) through it. Although, at a particular moment, people are aware that someone may or may not be looking at them, they are aware of the gaze, and this gaze is (partly) unrelated to the act of looking. The gaze is always where the camera is.

In this chapter I have discussed the variety of implications 'the gaze' of a surveillance camera has for space. The three concepts of space used here as tools of analysis have revealed differing but equally important aspects of surveillance. In relation to surveillance, some ostensibly innocent issues assume great importance. The locations of things and information about locations are essential for credibility but, as I have argued, credibility remains vague and, in many ways, a fragile concept. Similarly, location and design contribute to determining whether surveillance works to 'open' space or 'close' it, whether surveillance increases accessibility or only produces restrictions and exclusions.

The gaze is also a matter of power. In present urban space the obsession with visibility is persistent. By increasing surveillance '[a] dream of a transparent society' (Foucault 1980: 152), a society where everything is subjugated to visual control, has almost been realized. The question here is not about 'crime control' but rather about 'control' in a wider sense. What makes visibility so important is 'fear of darkened spaces' which are 'zones of disorder' (Foucault 1980: 153) that are not to be tolerated, since they constitute a threat. Visibility

ensures normalization and control. It produces 'purity' (Douglas 1966). Visibility is cleanliness: 'light' equates with 'soap'. Surveillance has become a mechanism with the aims of guaranteeing purity and the exclusion of feared strangers: 'the Other' in a literal as well as metaphorical sense.

It must be acknowledged, however, that, just as the new forms of control are widespread, so are the new forms of resistance. It is important to understand that surveillance in cyberspace and in real urban space are fundamentally intertwined, and that the ways these two are linked are ever more complex. At present, the marketing of computer-integrated video-surveillance systems is intense, and the expansion of 'homecams' turns private space into public by distributing real-time pictures to the audience on the Internet. Also, many cameras positioned in public or semi-public spaces distribute images into cyberspace. The Internet is, indeed, more and more often connecting 'local gazes' with the global community (Green 1999). When surveillance cameras are combined with visitors' registers and 'people-finding tools' such as computerized face recognition systems, supervision and monitoring touches a wide range of issues around privacy and human rights. Even though the experience of being under surveillance usually deals with real-time urban space, which has been the focus of this chapter, the contemporary 'superpanopticon' can also be seen to exist in electronic environments (Poster 1990; Lyon 1998; Jordan 1999).

Considering the fact that both embodied and disembodied surveillance are becoming so central to the global transformation of urban space in cities around the world, it is surprising how relatively little critical discussion there has been of this phenomenon. Being able to articulate the different kinds of emotional spaces and spaces of power that are integral to these kinds of surveillance is important also for assessing the implications of the increasing virtualization of everyday life.

Notes

1 This chapter was largely written during my visit to the Department of Geography at the University of Edinburgh, funded by The Academy of Finland. I wish to thank Sue Smith and Gillian Rose for their encouragement and valuable comments on a preliminary version of this chapter (published in *Progress in Human Geography* 24, 2 (2000): 243–65) and David Holmes for his editorial assistance with the present version. Responsibility for the final version remains mine. I would also like to thank Mike Crang for providing me with a copy of the TV-documentary *Videos, Vigilantes and Voyeurism*, and Nick Fyfe for providing me with copies of some essential articles.

2 There is a long tradition of elaborating *three* concepts of space (e.g. Harvey 1973; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996). Within this tradition there is a common thread: the 'third' space is regarded implicitly as the newest, the most 'intelligent', and therefore the 'best' space. Sometimes one even gets the impression that the first two spaces are described in detail simply to create a yardstick against which the third, 'right', space might be measured to its advantage. Although my analysis of surveillance is based on three dimensions of space, my aim is not to postulate three concepts, one of which is the most useful. Rather, I wish to emphasize the complicated and multifaceted nature of urban space and to stress how these concepts of space simultaneously affect the dimensions of human spatiality.

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6 Telecommunications and the future of cities

Debunking the myths[1]

Stephen Graham

Introduction

Urban studies, policy and planning have long neglected telecommunications (Mandlebaum 1986), while communications-studies disciplines have virtually ignored the city as a focus of research (Jowett 1993). It is not therefore surprising that, while popular speculation about what 'cyberspace', the 'information superhighway' and 'National Information Infrastructures' mean for the future of cities grows quickly, these debates tend to be lost in a cloud of hyperbole and hype. So far, most debates tend to generate much more heat than light (Burstein and Kline 1995). Often, they are extremely simplistic, relying on assumed and unjustified assumptions about how current advances in telecommunications will 'impact' on cities.

Typical of such assumptions is an *Economist* survey, which uncontentiously announced the 'death of distance' due to improved telecommunications (*The Economist*, 30 September 1995). In this oft-repeated scenario, plummeting communications costs, combined with the rapid convergence of computing, communications and media technologies into 'telematics', are seen to be the 'single most important economic force shaping society in the first half of the next century' (*ibid.*: 5). Such technological 'forces' are widely seen to be directly creating some truly globalized world economy, society and culture. Within this, place and location will no longer matter; soon it will be possible to do anything, anywhere, and at any time, as it becomes practical to access any information and undertake any interaction through ubiquitous, high-capacity, on-line links. The apparently inevitable consequence is that the large industrial city, as we currently know it, must inevitably weaken its hold over the economic, social and cultural dynamics of capitalist society.

But I would argue that many such accounts of city–telecommunications relations, especially those which fill the media, amount to little more than poorly informed technological forecasts. Often these are aimed at attracting media attention or generating sales and glamour for technological equipment. Hugely powerful interests in the burgeoning communications, computing and media industries are obviously set to benefit from portraying current technological changes as world-transforming (and, of course, world-*improving*) in some simple,

cause-and-effect way. The dominance of such hyperbole, however, has allowed a set of five myths to percolate into popular – and, to a surprising extent, academic – debates about telecommunications and the future of cities. At the least, these are dangerous oversimplifications; at most, they are little more than fabrication. In a recent book co-authored with Simon Marvin (Graham and Marvin 1996), I attempt to explore why these myths have become so prevalent and systematically to address each one in the light of the latest theories about the complex inter-relationships between technology and society.

The myth of technological determinism

First, there is the myth of technological determinism. More often than not, the 'mainstream' of social research on technology and cities sees new telecommunications technologies as directly *causing* urban change (Mansell 1994: 1–7). This is because of their intrinsic qualities or 'logic' as space-transcending communications channels. The forces that stem from new telecommunications innovations are seen to have some *autonomy* from social and political processes (Winner 1978) – what Stephen Hill calls 'apparent intrinsic technological inevitability' (Hill 1988). Invariably, here, modern telecommunications are seen as a 'shock', 'wave' or 'revolution' impacting, or about to impact, upon cities. In these scenarios, current or future urban changes are often assumed to be determined by technological changes in some simple, linear cause-and-effect manner.

The use of simple two-stage models to describe changes in cities and society is often a key support for such simple technological determinism. Cities are seen to be placed in a new 'age' in which telecommunications increasingly have a prime role in reshaping their development. Most usual here are notions that capitalism is in the midst of a transformation towards some 'information society' (Lyon 1988; Webster 1995), 'post-industrial society' (Bell 1973), or 'information age', or that a more general 'communications revolution' (Williams 1983) or 'Third Wave' (Toffler 1980) is sweeping across global urban society. The broad 'technological-cause–urban-impact' approach reflects very closely the 'commonsense' view and experience of technological change, particularly within Western culture.

But such experience and such approaches are unhelpful. This is because they suggest that technological development is somehow separated from society, rather than being designed, applied and shaped within specific political, social, economic and cultural contexts. In fact, the effects of telecommunications are much 'messier' than this simple view suggests, for two reasons.

First, the design and production of telecommunications is clearly socially, economically and culturally biased. Large transnational corporations are the dominant beneficiaries of global, state-of-the-art telematics networks. It is they that gain access to optic-fibre and private networks; people in disadvantaged ghettos are lucky to access a pay phone. On the consumption front, giant media conglomerates are currently developing digital technologies geared towards individual use by largely affluent groups for accessing charged-for services (information, teleshopping, telebanking).

Second, however, this bias doesn't shape all technological effects in all places. Once technologies are available, political and social struggle and actions can redirect their application and change their actual effects in each case – just as political and social influences can redirect the shaping of urban politics and the built environments of cities. This means that the effects of telematics in cities can depend heavily on how they are *socially and politically constructed*. Technologies only have 'effects' through the specific ways in which they become enrolled into social, economic and cultural relations. For example, the computer networks supporting real-time financial transactions between London, New York and Tokyo may be *technologically* very similar to the networks used by, say, global trade unions or Non-Governmental Organizations, but the very different ways in which social action blends with technical support in these cases will allow each to have very different urban effects. We must therefore acknowledge the fact that the relations between cities and telecommunications are complex and *indeterminate*, and that there can be very different effects in different places and times. It is instructive here to look back at Ithiel de Sola Pool's survey of the relations between the city and the telephone. He found that

> We find many relationships between the development of the telephone system and the quality of urban life; strikingly, the relationships change with time and with the level of telephone penetration. The same device at one stage contributed to the growth of the great downtowns and at a later stage to suburban migration. The same device, when it was scarce, served to accentuate the structure of differentiated neighborhoods. When it became a facility available to all, however, it reduced the role of the geographic neighborhood
>
> (de Sola Pool *et al.* 1977: 145)

The myth of urban dissolution: the 'anything-anywhere-anytime dream'

The second myth is that cities are likely simply to dissolve, as new communications technologies allow urban functions to decentralize in a world where *all information will be available at all times and places to all people*. What is usually seen to be the technological key here is the eventual emergence of an interactive, integrated and ubiquitous optic-fibre network, with its apparently limitless capacities for mediating entertainment, work, culture, administration, health, education, and social interaction.

As a result, geography, propinquity and spatial dynamics either cease to matter at all or are likely to be of much reduced significance. This 'anything, anytime, anywhere' dream, and the presumption that it will mean the collapse of the modern city, is, at least implicitly, central to most futurist visions. As Andy Gillespie argues, 'in all … utopian visions, the decentralizing impacts of communications technology are regarded as unproblematic and self evident' (Gillespie 1992: 69). Predictions of urban dissolution jostle for attention here. In Alvin

Toffler's influential 'Third Wave' scenario, for example, people are liberated from having to live in the city and can escape to the rural idyll to live in an 'electronic cottage' (Toffler 1980). MIT's cyber-guru Nicolas Negroponte predicts that 'the transmission of place itself will start to become possible' through new virtual-reality and telecommunications technologies (Negroponte 1995: 165), so eviscerating the locational hold of 'special places' like cities. Anthony Pascal extends this prediction by suggesting that 'with the passage of time [will come] spatial regularity; the urban system converges on, even if it never quite attains, complete areal uniformity' (Pascal 1987: 600). To Pascal, cities will therefore 'vanish' as their chief *raison d'être* – face-to-face contact – is substituted by electronic networks and spaces. New rural societies will emerge as people exercise their new freedom to locate in small, attractive settlements that are better suited to their needs. 'If cities did not exist,' write the futurists Naisbitt and Aburdene, 'it would not now be necessary to invent them … truly global cities will not be the largest, they will be the smartest' (Naisbitt and Aburdene 1991: 34). Even Marshall McLuhan believed that the emergence of the 'global village' meant that the city 'as a form of major dimensions must inevitably dissolve like a fading shot in a movie' (McLuhan 1964: 366).

However, it is now becoming very clear that, as Jean Gottmann put it, 'it does not necessarily follow [from improvements in telecommunications] that the compact city has been made obsolete and that settlements will disperse throughout the countryside' (Gottmann 1990: 131). Teleworking, for example, is growing. But it is being adopted as a way of making work patterns around large cities more flexible, rather than as a way of supporting some mass migration of full-time teleworkers to electronic cottages in remote locations (Gillespie *et al.* 1995).

In fact, urbanization across the world continues apace and is, if anything, *accelerating* rather than slackening. In all continents, the proportion of populations living in large urban areas is expected to rise over the preiod between 1994 and 2025. The proportion of the global population living in urban areas is expected to move from 45 to 61 per cent; in Europe, from 73 to 83 per cent; in Latin America, from 74 to 85 per cent; in Africa, from 34 to 54 per cent; in North America, from 76 to 85 per cent; and in the Pacific region, from 70 to 75 per cent (Steele 1996: 19). As the UN's Habitat II congress demonstrates, the 'mega cities' of the South, in particular, are growing extremely quickly.

Against the prophets of urban dissolution, in fact, I would argue that globalization and developments in telematics actually tend to *compound* the many existing advantages of large metropolises. As ever, the very *specificity* of the urban has much to do with the ways cities facilitate all sorts of communications and exchange, both telemediated and face-to-face. This view suggests that it is no accident that telecommunications use is growing *at the same time* as the world becomes more dominated by ever-larger urban regions. The urban dominance of telecommunications investment and use supports this idea. For 15 per cent of the French population, the Paris area receives 80 per cent of telecommunications investment. For 10 per cent of Japan's population, Tokyo has 30 per cent of

Japanese computers and, in fact, more telephones than in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (Graham and Marvin 1996: 133). As with earlier generations of communications technologies, such as the telephone and telegraph, an intense concentration of telecommunications and computer networks helps to facilitate two things for the city.

First, telematics merely intensify long-established processes where the 'bits' of cities and urban systems become woven together into fast-moving and integrated transactional systems and divisions of labour, of greater and greater levels of complexity, over more remote distances. Here we can extend Gottmann's suggestions about the relationship between the telephone and urban complexity. 'The telephone,' he wrote, 'provides, when needed, quasi-immediate verbal communication between all the interdependent units at minimum costs … It would have been very difficult for all these complex and integrated networks [in cities] to work in unison without the telephone, which made possible the constant and efficient coordination of all the systems of the large modern city … The telephone helped to make the city bigger, better, more exciting' (Gottmann 1977: 312). For telephone here, we could now insert 'telephones and telematics'.

While such trends do not herald the demise of large cities, they do often have clear implications for urban form. Through their support for 'extended complexity' over world-wide systems of cities, advanced telematics linkages tend to facilitate the development of 'extended urban regions' rather than traditional compact cities. With their polycentric 'constellations' of centres, distributed across large areas, such urban regions are becoming the norm.

Second, telematics helps to extend the dominance of urban services into more distant hinterlands. They allow 'action at a distance' and remote control from cities, allowing them to extend their domination over more and more distant places (smaller towns and rural areas). This is especially important given the intense uncertainties thrown up by the volatility, velocity and unpredictabilities of the global economy. In this situation, the cities which head the global urban hierarchy become ever-more important as key nodes for reducing risks, managing uncertainties and co-ordinating financial, investment and media flows and institutional negotiations. Such cities become, in effect, centres for the production of scarce knowledge and volatile information services. As Jean Gottmann suggests, 'in the modern world, with its expanding and multiplying networks of relations and a snowballing mass of bits of information produced and exchanged along these [communications] networks, the information services are fast becoming an essential component, indeed a cornerstone, of transactional decision making and of urban centrality' (Gottmann 1990: 197). At the top of the global urban hierarchy, cities like London, Tokyo and New York are more dominant than ever as global centres for global financial markets, high-level corporate head-office functions and high-level producer services (even though these sectors are 'downsizing' through new technology and using less office space). As Mitchelson and Wheeler argue, 'in times of great uncertainty, select cities acquire strategic importance as command centres and as centralized producers of the highest order economic information' (Mitchelson and Wheeler 1994: 102).

Evidence suggests that telematics may also be used to deliver routine services from large cities. A recent survey in the USA found that large city-regions were benefiting, as service organizations like banks and insurance companies use telecommunications to deliver consumer services to wider hinterlands, so reducing their branch networks in smaller towns and rural areas (Office of Technological Assessment 1995).

Clearly, then, we need to move beyond the dangerously simplistic concepts which continue to feed the myth of urban dissolution. Fundamentally, cities and telecommunications tend to stand in a state of *recursive interaction*, shaping *each other* in complex and diverse ways. As the above quote from de Sola Pool showed, these complex, contingent relations have a history running back to the days of the origin of the telegraph and telephone (as the continued urban dominance of telecommunications investment and use makes clear). Major urban places support dense webs of 'co-presence', transactional opportunities, agglomeration economies, and access to labour, services, infrastructure and 'soft' cultural and social advantages. We should also not forget the roles of large cities as hubs within global migration flows, their functions as centres of governance and administration, their dominance in global media and cultural industries, their pivotal role as centres of booming industries for global tourism and conferences and exhibitions, and their key role as centres for innovation in manufacturing. These cannot – and will not – be mediated by telecommunications. This is because they are vital supports to high-level business activities in a risky and volatile global economy, because the new urban culture relies on them, and because face-to-face social and business life still derives from them. Cities are the key arenas that *bring together* and 'ground' the increasingly globalized dynamics of economic, social, cultural and institutional life within specific places. Advances in telecommunications merely help to further this process of urban development, both by supporting new levels of complexity in linkages and also by allowing cities to further extend their reach into hinterlands and global markets.

The myth of universal access

The third myth is that social access to new telecommunications technologies and services will somehow diffuse to become truly universal and equal. The speculations of 'futurists' about telecommunications and cities generally tend to take a relatively optimistic view of the future 'impacts' of telecommunications on cities and urban life. Often, these commentaries are breathless and excited, offering tantalizing glimpses of how remarkable advances in new technologies will determine future lifestyles that are incalculably 'better' than those today. Almost always this future state is offered as a scenario where 'potentially huge benefits are to be had by all' (Eubanks 1994: 42). Jacques Maisonrouge, for example, argues that 'modern information processing capability creates a society where everyone has an equal opportunity to be information literate … telecommunications and the computer are making information accessible to everyone' (Maisonrouge 1984: 32). Santucci, an officer with the European Commission,

predicts that a 'truly planetary consciousness will spring from the establishment, at world level, of bidirectional information highways accessible to all individuals' (Santucci 1994: 616). Electronic democracy, ubiquitous access to information, overcoming discrimination, disability and frailty – these are some of the other common predictions that have entered into recent discourse about cyberspace. Of course, once again, many telecommunications and computing corporations spend vast sums generating such benign and glossy images for their products, as part of the developing ideology of the information age (Slack 1987). Many academic debates about globalization and the shift towards telematics-based social networks similarly seem to imply some degree of *uniformity* in these processes. Universal access to technology is often assumed or implied. As Doreen Massey argues, even in many critical debates the much-vaunted concept of 'time-space compression', often invoked in these debates, tends to be 'a concept without much social content' (Massey 1993: 59).

Current evidence suggests, however, that such predictions fly in the face of contemporary urban reality. As Pedersen argued, there are dangers that what he calls the 'radical democratic ideal of an information society' popularized by the utopian visions 'may turn out to be a myth' (Pedersen 1982: 254). Urban societies seem to be becoming *more* unequal not *less* so, at the intra-urban, inter-urban and international scales. To a large proportion of the population of Western, let alone Third World, cities, debates about linking homes to the Internet or the 'information superhighway' are about as relevant as science fiction, given the rudimentary arithmetic of jostling demands for food, clothing and heating.

> Inequalities in all of the requisites for being 'on line' are profound, pervasive and possibly growing: physical access to communications and electricity infrastructure; funds to pay connection and use charges; ability to pay for computers, modems and service charges; and literacy, skills and training to make use of services
>
> (Massey 1993: 60)

These inequalities are important because they influence the ability of people to participate in increasingly information-based societies in any meaningful fashion. But they are also important because (usually male) social elites, who have the best access to networks, are able to use them to *reinforce* their social privileges and, in many cases, their domination over those denied access to telecommunications and information of all descriptions. Benign images for technology tend to ignore the fact that access for some groups to these networks and the services on them are an increasingly important means whereby power is exercised over space, time and people. As Eric Swyngedouw argues, 'the increased liberation and freedom from place as a result of new mobility modes for some may lead to the disempowerment and relative exclusion of others. This, in turn, further accentuates economic and social inequalities' (Swyngedouw 1993: 322).

In general it is becoming clear that those social groups with access to sophisticated telematics can often now begin to *transcend* the physical limits and rhythms associated with traditional urban life. Services, amenities and jobs can increasingly be accessed in *electronic* space without (necessarily) moving in physical space (through teleworking, teleshopping, telebanking, etc.). What Hagerstrand called the 'time-space choreography' of everyday life is no longer confined to urban physical spaces (Hagerstrand 1970). For many (usually those with high physical mobility) it also encompasses the use of a multitude of electronic networks and spaces, as phones, faxes and electronic mail are used to keep in touch, distant computers support the petty transactions of everyday life, and the mass media themselves begin to take the form of global electronic networks.

There is some evidence that this intense, technology-based contact can allow the connected homes of affluent elites to become more *disembedded* from their immediate social environment within urban places. In some US cities (such as Los Angeles) it seems that public space, where a range of different social groups interact, is being lost. Replacing such spaces are secure, privatized consumer spaces (malls), a growth of electronic communications from fortified homes (in secure enclave communities) and, of course, the private car as the (increasingly fortified) transporter between work, home and the mall (Sorkin 1992). Manuel Castells, for example, argues that

> homes … are becoming equipped with a self-sufficient world of images, sounds, news, and information exchanges … Homes *could* become disassociated from neighbourhoods and cities and still not be lonely, isolated places. They would be populated by voices, by images, by sounds, by ideas, by games, by colors, by news.
>
> (Castells 1985: 25)

Such trends towards 'cocooning' are being encouraged by growing fear of crime and incursion and by the proliferation of master-planned, gated communities such as those now common in the USA (Dillon 1994).

These trends offer some disturbing hints of the way telematics may be used to support ever-greater social fragmentation and polarization within cities. While intense physical and electronic security closes off such 'urban enclaves' from the wider world, ever-more capable Ethernet-style connections are being planned into the basic infrastructure of these master-planned communities. The result can be an urban landscape of profound fragmentation, where new technologies become enmeshed in the production of a new, 'cellular' urban structure based on preventing contact between affluent elites and those deemed not to 'belong' in their spaces.

Of course, the story is very different for those who remain spatially trapped in the urban ghettos and who have very little, if any, access to the electronic spaces accessible via telematics networks. As Michael Dear suggests, with telematics, 'time-space coordinates have been stretched to as yet unknown dimensions' for highly-mobile elite groups, while, at the same time, 'for minorities, the poor, the

disabled, and women, the time-space prism closes rapidly to become a time-space "prison" ' (Dear 1993: 27). The boundaries between these different social areas in cities can now be considered to be *social edges*, in both physical and electronic spaces. With telecommunications increasingly developing according to the logic of liberalized markets, wide social imbalances in access to networks and the services which run on them are an intrinsic part of their current development. While some see telecommunications to be 'technologies of freedom' (de Sola Pool 1983) I would argue that they tend to offer freedom only to already powerful social groups.

But the varied ways in which telecommunications are socially structured means that these inequalities and differences are also complex and do not derive entirely from the unevenness of global economic networks and uneven wealth. Relationships between access, the degree to which people use telecommunications, and power are complex. On the one hand, for example, many workers in the information back offices in nations like the Philippines, Jamaica and India actually communicate a great deal but have little or no power as a result (Massey 1993: 31). Their jobs remain low-waged, risky to health and subject to military-level discipline. On the other hand, even one low-bandwidth connection to the Internet can now make a significant difference to activist groups and popular demonstrations for getting issues onto the global media agenda – as the recent experience of the Chiapas rebels and the student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square makes clear.

The myth of simple substitution of transport by telecommunications

A fourth myth pervades many futuristic and deterministic writings on cities: the assumption that telecommunications offer clean, *dematerialized* solutions that will offer simple substitutions for the material ills of commuting and pollution in physical spaces. Telematics networking has even been called the 'alternative fuel'. In this vein, James Martin, in his prediction of the oncoming 'Wired Society', suggested that the congested and polluted physical spaces of cities would in the future be overcome by the growth of 'virtual cities', based on the use of telecommunications to replace physical transport and the need for propinquity (Martin 1978).

In reality, however, transport and telecommunications flows tend to grow together, to be mutually reinforcing. There are three aspects of this co-evolution. First, it has long been recognized that, as well as substituting for travel, telecommunications can actually generate or *induce* many new demands for physical movement. Electronic flows are able to act as powerful generators or inducers of movement in both physical flows and spaces. Telecommunications networks can help increase a person's or firm's *conceptual* or *information* spaces. Mokhtarian argues that by 'making information about outside activities and interaction opportunities more readily accessible, telecommunications creates the desire to participate in those activities and opportunities, thereby stimulating travel to

engage in them' (Mokhtarian 1988: 283). As e-mail, fax and telephone effectively increase the number of participants in business or recreation networks, this can then create demands for higher-level and longer-distance forms of interaction between the participants in the network based on interpersonal interaction. This creates a demand for physical co-presence leading to new forms of physical travel that might not have taken place without the telecommunications linkage. The development of cheaper and faster train, automobile and airline networks allows this inter-urban travel to occur.

Second, substitution of travel by teleworking, teleshopping, etc., is never a simple process. The concept of a more or less constant personal travel time budget means that 'the natural result of reducing some travel by telecommunications, is that additional travel is likely to be created to compensate – to fulfil the travel time budget' (Mokhtarian 1988: 283). Here, telecommunications does not necessarily stimulate travel but, by reducing it, creates time for increased travel for other purposes. Telecommuters, for example, may travel greater total distances than before because of longer leisure, social and shopping trips during the working day. These conclusions are supported by long-run analyses of the relationship between telecommunications and travel.

Third, telecommunications also contribute towards the enhancement of transportation networks by increasing the efficiency, safety and attractiveness of different transport modes. Throughout history 'transportation has always been in the vanguard of new communications applications, because control messages must exceed the speed of the transport itself for effective adjustment to delays, crises and accidents' (Boettinger 1989: 288). Transportation in all its forms is controlled by telephone and data lines to dispatch and control traffic. Improvements in these control systems have important implications for increasing the capacity, effectiveness and safety of transportation networks and reducing their cost.

The new control, supervision and data-acquisition role of telecommunications can increase the attractiveness of travel (Cramer and Zegveld 1991). For instance, new computerized systems for booking and payment of travel make it very easy to obtain information and pay for air travel. In turn, more effective methods of managing travel networks can help increase the efficiency of transport networks at all levels – road, rail, air travel – so lowering costs and increasing the attractiveness of travel as an option. It has become increasingly clear that the new technologies of road transport informatics provides ways of overcoming the problems of congested road networks and increasing the effective capacity of these networks at a fraction of the cost of constructing entirely new transport infrastructure (Hepworth and Ducatel 1992).

The myth of local powerlessness

The final myth is that, in the general 'shock', 'wave' or 'revolution' models through which telecommunications are seen to have 'impacts' on cities, there is very little power at the local level to alter the apparent 'destiny' of technology's

driving force. The stress on autonomous technology, positive scenarios and future cities suggests that analytical and policy debates centre around how society can *adapt to* and *learn to live with* the effects of telecommunications-based change, rather than focusing on the ways in which these effects may be altered or reshaped through policy initiatives. Implicitly, local social and political actors in contemporary cities have little or no scope for shaping telecommunications developments within cities. As Robert Warren argues, 'benign projections give little indication that there are significant policy issues which should be on the public agenda' (Warren 1989: 345).

In fact, though, there is currently a world-wide upsurge of urban attempts to use telecommunications as policy tools for economic, social and cultural development (Graham 1994). Telematics have become a natural policy focus as policy-makers everywhere have struggled to reinvigorate city economies, physically regenerate urban areas, market urban spaces as global sites for investment, address social polarization, and restructure public services to address funding crises.

Such policies are leading to wide variations in the ways in which telecommunications are socially shaped in different cities. Four areas where telematics and telecommunications have emerged as key policy foci can be highlighted. First, cities have attempted to develop 'teleports', such as the New York teleport. Such initiatives blend state-of-the-art satellite and optic-fibre networks and are aimed to position cities as global sites for investment and telecommunications competition for multinational service and manufacturing corporations. Roubaix, in France, has based its entire urban regeneration strategy on a teleport aimed at putting it 'on the networks of the future'. Second, cities have developed host computer systems, 'freenet' civic networks, and over two thousand so-called 'virtual cities', like the Amsterdam Digital City, based on the Internet (Mitchell 1995). These are aimed at boosting the 'endogenous' development of cities, by using telematics to try and 'reconnect' the economic, social and cultural fragments that increasingly characterize contemporary cities. Third, many cities are developing innovative programmes through which public services are delivered via telecommunications (Graham and Marvin 1996). Finally, cities are attempting to collaborate across regions, nations and continents, through developing computer communications networks like the 'Telecities' network in Europe. These are aimed at supporting exchanges of information and 'best practice' and co-ordinating lobbying.

Conclusions: electronic spaces, urban places

Debates about cities and telecommunications have an unfortunate tendency to base themselves – usually implicitly – on simplistic and unjustified assumptions. Too often, these 'sediment out' into widely accepted myths and orthodoxies, which have severely restricted progress in understanding how cities and telecommunications genuinely interact. The result is that, while it seems clear that the current growth of electronic-based exchanges is inevitably going to be a key

aspect of future urban development, we are still in a very poor position to analyse exactly how these exchanges and urban change are likely to relate to each other.

I would argue that the above myths need to be discarded, and that more sophisticated perspectives need to be established. I suggest three starting points for such perspectives. First, these perspectives need to accept that society and technology shape *each other* in complex ways. Theoretical models are required which conceptualize the 'social' and 'technological' as caught up in complex and recursive interactions, rather than in separate realms (see, for example, the Actor Network Theory developed by, among others, Bruno Latour (1987)). Second, the new perspectives must acknowledge that what concentration in urban regions, flow by physical transport and face-to-face 'co-presence' offer cannot be simply telemediated, to be substituted by more advanced telecommunications. In fact, transportation and telecommunications flows and face-to-face urban life and electronic exchange tend to feed off each other in positive feedback loops. Finally, such perspectives should recognize that advanced telecommunications networks are being used as systems through which power is being exercised, largely by large corporations and affluent elites, over space, time and socially powerless groups (Castells 1989).

Above all, there is a need to begin viewing the contemporary city as an *amalgam*, in which the fixed, tangible and visible aspects of life in urban places interact continuously with the intangible, electronically mediated transactions, operating across wider and wider scales. Fixed constructions of urban places and buildings in urban places, linked into electronic networks and 'spaces', seem to be the defining constructions of contemporary urbanism. Telematics – the supports for electronic spaces – are increasingly being woven intimately into the built environments of cities; they are also filling the corridors between them as key infrastructures underpinning the shift to global urban and infrastructural networks. Together, the diverse 'electronic spaces' amount to a hidden and parallel universe of buzzing electronic networks. Relatively free from space and time constraints, these interact with and impinge on the tangible and familiar dynamics of urban life on a 24-hours-a-day basis and at all geographical scales. This shadowy world of electronic spaces exists through the instantaneous flows of electrons and photons within cities and across planetary metropolitan networks. These flows underpin virtually all that we see and experience as we approach our daily lives, yet, as we have seen, few have much awareness of them.

But these new technologies don't support some simple shift to a telemediated economy, society and culture. Rather, a complex *articulation* between life in urban places and interaction in electronic spaces seems to be emerging. 'Constructed spaces', writes William Mitchell, 'will increasingly be seen as electronically-serviced sites where bits meet the body – where digital information is translated into visual, auditory, tactile or otherwise sensorily perceptible form, and vice versa. Displays and sensors for presenting and capturing information will be as essential as doors' (Mitchell 1994: 52). As Kevin Robins suggests, 'through the

development of new technologies, we are, indeed, more and more open to experiences of de-realization and de-localization. But we continue to have physical and localized existences. We must consider our state of suspension between these conditions' (Robins 1995: 153). In other words, the contemporary city, while housing vast arrays of telematic 'entry points' into the burgeoning worlds of electronic spaces, is still a *meaningful* place economically, socially and culturally. This is especially so when one remembers that access to new telematics technologies tends to be the almost exclusive preserve of powerful firms, organizations and social (usually male) elites, and that spatial inequalities at all levels in such access remain extremely stark.

It is worth illustrating some examples of this 'state of suspension' between face-to-face urban life and electronically mediated interaction. Thus a car, rail, plane or bus journey, and the physical flows of water, commodities, manufactured goods and energy are supported by a parallel electronic 'networld'. These monitor, shape and control the physical flows under way on a 'real-time' basis. Traffic snarl-ups are now the launch pads for countless electronic conversations and interactions. The development of electronic financial markets now links the centres of global finance capitals across the world in 'real time'. The apparently lifeless world of an office block in, say, the City of London, often now hides an 'intelligent building' – a hub in an electronic universe of 24-hours-a-day global flows of capital, services and labour power. One *single office block* in Wall Street now operates as a node in daily electronic transactions estimated at $2 *trillion* (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development 1995). 'Back office' networks are developing through which routine services such as data processing and insurance processing are delivered from the periphery – often cities in Third World nations – to the centres of large cities like London and New York.

Global media flows like satellite TV are exploding, linking cities into a single, integrated global cultural system. The daily life of an urban resident leaves a continuous set of 'digital images' as it is mapped out by a wide array of surveillance systems – closed-circuit TV cameras, electronic transactions systems, road-transport informatics and the like. The fortressing of affluent neighbourhoods relies on plain old walls and gates linked into sophisticated electronic surveillance systems (as well as phone, cable and telematics networks that allow 'fortressed' home life to link to the world). The most ordinary suburbs of most cities now act as a hub in the growing electronic cacophony of global image and media flows and the ongoing participation of people in virtual communities, often on a global basis. Global 'communities of interest' and place-based communities become linked together, but in ways we are only now beginning to explore. And urban policies and strategies are increasingly directed to try and shape both urban places and electronic spaces.

These examples show that the shadowy world of electronic spaces is as diverse and complex as the landscapes and life of cities themselves. This contrasts with the implication in many popular debates that 'cyberspace' is somehow an integrated whole – a single, globally interconnected, and universally accessible electronic space. Far from it. In fact, the *fundamental purpose* of

corporate, elite, military, finance and surveillance networks is to be secure, proprietary and disconnected from non-authorized users. Software 'firewalls' separate corporate intranets based on Internet technology from the wider 'public Internet'; even this is being rapidly turned into a corporately-dominated electronic domain for 'pay-per' services. As with the geographical landscapes of cities, then, 'cyberspace' has many segmentations, many social divisions and many social struggles under way. There are 'information black holes' and 'electronic ghettos' where the poor remain confined to the traditional, marginalized life of the physically confined, and there are intense concentrations of infrastructure in city centres and elite suburbs supporting the corporate classes and transnational corporations. And, as with geographical landscapes, the results can be 'read' as reflections of complex processes in which social, ethnic, gender and power relations play out against the backdrop of the globalizing political economy of capitalism.

Note

1 Thanks to Simon Marvin for help with the section on transport and telecommunications and to Andrew Kirby for comments on an earlier draft.

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Part 2

Tourist geography as virtual reality

7 Monocultures of globalization

Touring Australia's Gold Coast

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Next to the Pacific Highway, at the northern end of Australia's Gold Coast, lie two of the region's larger shopping centres, Australia Fair and Pacific Fair. They are similar to most of the mega-malls that one finds in large metropolitan centres all over the world, with their familiar architecture of everything 'under the one roof', the relative absence of perimeter windows that address local geography versus the abundance of windows dividing the interior private spaces, disorienting escalators, fluorescent lighting and air-conditioning, and the plasterwork pediments adorning each shopfront which pay homage to a public street culture which they have all but abolished. These shopping malls are not the same as *all* other super-malls, however, by reason of one feature that connects them with global culture in a way other than simply through architecture. At the centre of each complex there is something called a 'tourist lounge', primarily for overseas visitors. Busloads of tourists are taken to these lounges immediately on arrival at the centre – the only shopfronts where one can be delivered right to the door – and treated to an exhibition of the centre's wares.[1] At the Australia Fair lounge, which has been operating seasonally since the centre opened in the early 1980s, samples of what the shopping centre sells are displayed in glass cases, a video of the centre's role on the Gold Coast is run, and a talk is given to tourists about how to use the centre. Following the presentations, the initiated shoppers are informed that they are 'free to wander' the centre of their own accord, have a look around and enjoy themselves.

As places in which tourists (both international and interstate) spend time on the Gold Coast, shopping malls figure very prominently, next to theme parks, the activity spaces of resorts themselves (the pool, the gym, the spa), the beach and day trips inland. As sites of consumption and leisure they are particularly interesting for studying contemporary tourism, because to understand why shopping malls, as manufactured spaces, have become favoured destinations for tourists of all kinds[2] is to appreciate the fact that we are increasingly coming to live in an age of post-tourism (Urry 1990; Rojek 1994). In such an era, typified by the 'tourist' experiences we are about to explore on the Gold Coast, the adventure travelling of pre-media societies has been replaced by the mass organization of leisure and the commodification of holiday-making, in which the tourist seeks not authenticity or confrontation with some 'absolute

other' (MacCannell 1999: 5) but the self-conscious and playful realization of being a tourist consumer, engaged in a game set out by the tourist industry. This commodification, characterized by the managed circuit of travel/accommodation/entertainment known as the 'package holiday', has steadily come to annul the purpose which tourism served in earlier industrial cycles.

Before the advent of commodified tourism, holiday-making generally entailed an annual pilgrimage to seaside or mountainous locations, usually within national boundaries, organized on a regional basis, with cottage-industry accommodation-providers servicing a domestic market (see Urry 1990: 16–39). More global forms of tourism were largely the privileged pursuit of the wealthy, an activity inherited today by what Dean MacCannell has named the 'international middle class', who travel for reasons of adventure, education or the accumulation of cultural capital (MacCannell 1999: 5). A distinctive feature of this travelling international class, as a segment of modern tourism, is that it will often define itself in opposition to 'mass' tourism in its industrial form. At the same time, the culture of the 'traveller' has become transformed by the opportunity to buy pre-packaged holidays that are differentiated by 'status' as a lifestyle statement. For working classes, on the other hand, the tourist industry packages an entire segment of its market for the express purpose of resuscitation, the need to 'recreate/re-create' – or at least to create new relations with environments which relieve them of their Protestant ethics. This latter form of tourism is functional to the needs of the workplace, underwritten by the development of annual leave legislation and characterized by the taking of holidays at fixed periods in the calendar year. As such, holiday-making, while generated out of the need to service the efficiency of the working year and to reclaim lost working spirits, was not originally viewed as a substantive industry in itself. Instead, it industrialized much later when, paradoxically, the industrial conditions it had grown to serve began to shrink substantially. Hence, today, we can speak of the tourist 'industry' as a post-industrial one: no longer directly related to industrial production but providing a more elaborate range of leisure products for the modern consumer, while providing a new and dynamic market for business investment.

At the same time, because tourism has properly become an industry in its own terms, a form of 'culture industry', it is not surprising that it generates experiences that become standardized in a manufactured sense. Contemporary holiday-'making' has become a highly organized event placing emphasis on the pre-arrangement of access to resources and provision, wherein the contemporary nature of the resort destination can actually limit the prospects for recreation/re-creation. That is to say, where a holiday is composed of a managed schedule of events, in environments which replicate the goal-oriented pressures of urban life (as well as experiences continuous with the 'domestic' urban experience), the aesthetic and existential appreciation of 'difference' significantly declines. How many holiday-'makers' return from resorts saying that they need a holiday to recover from the organizational labyrinth they have just experienced?

Aesthetic questions of the cultural authenticity of place, of memory, of the means of experiencing the uniqueness of locale, and of the personal nature of events arise here, insofar as the tourist industry is able to determine in advance that individuals, in a sense, already live the conditions of the tourist before arriving at their destination. Another way to describe this is that tourism is already 'domesticated', insofar as the 'local' increasingly becomes reduced to a function of the multinational manufacture of space.

This is to argue, as will be elaborated, that in the postmodern era, the difference between tourist-worlds and cityscapes is flattening out in an aesthetic sense through the creation of Disneyfied environments, and in an economic sense through the fact that the deindustrialization of cities and regions forces them to establish themselves as international tourist destinations. Insofar as the needs of the tourist industry determine that locale is to be re-experienced as a commodified attraction, the experience of authenticity and cultural difference becomes radically problematized. In the age of post-tourism, in the theme parks, in the shopping malls and the resorts, the holiday-maker no longer collects experiences of difference or of otherness, but has reconfirmed for him or her a relatively homogenous world-space.

In such environments, monuments and memorials, or anything that might otherwise condense cultural or historical memory (see MacCannell 1999: xii–xiii), become *relatively* placeless and historyless. A primary measure of this can be found in the large number of tourists who return from packaged holidays finding it difficult to recount or cherish actual events which will count as biographical and perhaps sacred memories for years to come.

Tourism in the post-Fordist context

To understand how these contradictions arise requires an examination of some of the background cultural and economic changes that have made tourism such a large and rapidly growing export industry around the world: one that has been pivotal for the creation of new markets, new products and the production of new 'needs' in the arena of leisure and travel.

The move away from primary industries (like mining and agriculture) and secondary manufacturing activity based on much more 'fixed' and regulated cycles of commodity production, and towards the production of commodities which are highly transient and changing, exemplifies what is frequently described as a post-Fordist system of flexible accumulation (see Harvey 1989; Urry 1995: 147–51). In its mass-produced packaged form, a tourist holiday more than meets the demands of post-Fordist consumption in its ephemerality, the speed at which it is consumed, and the fact that 'the tourist product is perishable' (Hall 1991: 75). To this can be added the tourist package's lack of exchangeability, and the fact that the consumers are, in a geographical sense, separated from the 'domestic' means of satisfying the use of their own leisure time. In the traditional primary and industrial sectors, post-Fordism is about the introduction of greater flexibility in the labour

process, in negotiating contracts with labour markets, products, and forms of consumption. Indirectly, these changes have also altered the context of tourism, insofar as fractional and flexible work arrangements have seen the breaking down of the cyclical nature of the annual holiday, with working populations taking holidays all year round.

More relevant to the *cultural appreciation* of tourism itself as an industry is 'the emergence of entirely new sectors of production' in which there is a radical acceleration in turnover time for subsistence and lifestyle commodities (Harvey 1989: 147). On the consumption side, this entails accepting a radical compression of the time in which commodities are consumed. In other words, post-Fordist economic processes mobilize 'all of the forces of need inducement' which promote non-renewable and throwaway commodities and services. For example, whereas the typical half-life of a Fordist product was from five to seven years, the products of industries like fashion and 'thoughtware' (video games and computer software and hardware) today have a half-life of, in many cases, less than eighteen months (Harvey 1989: 156). The upshot of this tendency is to create a 'shift of emphasis from the production of goods (most of which, like knives and forks, have a substantial life-time) to the *production of events* (such as spectacles) that have an almost instantaneous turnover time' (Harvey 1989: 157; emphasis added). The immediate examples that offer themselves from the tourist industry are the promotion of specialized tourist markets, eco-tourism, holidays for the elderly or children, holidays for sports enthusiasts. Where the packaged holiday is based on particular spectacles the speed of turnover is even further accelerated. This includes the way in which theme parks need to update main attractions such as semi-virtual experiences based on the theme of a recent blockbuster movie. But, increasingly, it also includes the manufacture of the 'concept' holiday based entirely on a particular event or carnival.

The imperative that this brings about for metropolitan centres to 're-tool' for tourist consumption will have an enormous influence on future urban planning considerations, as the demand for spectacle and display leads to the Disneyfication of cultural forms, while the added demand for safety, attractiveness and cleanliness results in its Singaporization. The corporate response to such demand, as well as the ensuing competition over the commodification of space, lies in providing worlds of consumption that are capable of highly regulated management and commodification.

The model urban setting for such processes in Australia is, I argue, the Gold Coast, where for over a decade the tourist population of four million has exceeded the local population tenfold.[3] At the same time it contains a greater concentration of theme parks, resort worlds and tourist-oriented shopping centres than anywhere else in Australia.[4]

In taking the Gold Coast as a case study, I am going to outline implications that these processes have for the environment, for the contribution that tourism makes to the manufactured nature of postmodern urban settings and their perceived authenticity, and for the emergence of new kinds of inequality

within these settings. There is, I suggest, much to be learned from the Gold Coast, insofar as it is an urban setting that has already achieved many of the conditions towards which post-industrial urban centres are moving.[5]

Tourism and the 'environment': resort worlds as sacrificial spaces

The massive movement of bodies around the world, accompanying the fact that tourism is expected to be the largest industry in the world in terms of trade and employment by the year 2000 (Urry 1995: 173), some see as more harmful to the environment than the population growths of particular countries. The drive of the tourist to find, and the tourist operator to provide, new and 'unspoiled' environments of recreation is said to create a logic in which the frontier of tourist circulation, made legitimate by the institutionalization of 'eco-tourism', must continually imperialize itself. However, while tourism may be seen to have greater implications for the environment than population increases, the increasingly widespread massification of holiday leisure time in resort worlds needs to be considered as a significant countertendency to this process. In Australian tourist settings like the Gold Coast, where the packaged holiday becomes a cultural ritual that is made possible by, as much as results in, increasingly closed circuits of 'resort' consumption, contact with natural landscapes is substituted by contact with manufactured ones.

In other words, the eco-tourists have it all wrong, environmentalism is happening as practice rather than consciousness in those places where tourism and consumption are being increasingly concentrated. If tourism is going to happen, so the argument goes, it may as well be contained spatially and temporally in a time-tracked holiday package. On the Gold Coast, within the confines of compact skyscraping resorts and theme parks, millions of tourists forgo National Parks and large natural attractions such as the Great Barrier Reef to immerse themselves in a rampage of spending and circulation at the 17 theme parks, 31 shopping centres and hotel resorts. Arguably, as a sacrificial space, the Gold Coast (and similar tourist bubbles around the world) can do more for the environment than the deepest ecology movement .[6]

It is not enough, however, to point out the way in which the simulated nature of tourist destinations is replacing natural landscapes, one must also note that the aesthetic reception of the 'environment' in post-industrial societies is becoming culturally transformed anyway. As a physical setting 'the environment' has emerged from the romantic contemplations of visual consumption to a world in which perspective invariably becomes mediated by photography, video-taping and techniques of observation that are more concerned with 'ownership' and privatization of the landscape as other, than they are with the humility that such a confrontation might otherwise bring. In its commodified form, tourism, particularly 'world discovery' tourism, relies most of all on the ability to experience spectacle and monumental spaces, spaces which have a heavily saturated social or historical reference, but whose most important feature is that they can be

gazed at and therefore recorded *in some way* (see, in particular, Urry 1990). Such a sensibility about being able to privatize social and historical difference through photography is one which first became normalized in America and, later, Japan. As Fredric Jameson explains:

> The American tourist no longer lets the landscape 'be in its being' as Heidegger would have said, but takes a snapshot of it, thereby transforming space into its own material image. The concrete activity of looking at a landscape – including, no doubt, the disquieting bewilderment with the activity itself, the anxiety that must arise when human beings, confronting the non-human, wonder what they are doing there and what the point or purpose of such a confrontation might be in the first place – is thus comfortably replaced by the act of taking possession of it and converting it into a form of personal property.
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> (Jameson 1979: 131)

Jameson's theme of 'reification', of making a landscape conform to the privatized technological means of experiencing it, can be applied, on yet a larger stage of spectacle, to the way in which tourist environments are compressed and standardized into the themed worlds and resorts of the tourist/culture industry. On the Gold Coast entertainment resorts are but an architectural extension of such photographic privatization, in which fabricated visual space replaces the 'landscaping' of the 'natural' settings through which definitions of perspective are otherwise encouraged. Instead, perspective is abolished in the hyper-real environments of resort worlds, as the observation of environment is replaced by environments of observation. These environments, be they resorts, shopping centres or themed worlds, structure the experience of the holiday consumer in unique and uneven ways, but within this diversity they also assert the flat homogeneity of multinational architectures. To this degree they affirm a familiarity with the urban landscapes of the metropolis – a consumer monoculture – rather than an adventure of difference by which the tourist is able to confront otherness through the uniqueness of place. By way of the remaking of consumer landscapes (be it residential or tourist) in terms of fabricated worlds, multinational capital empties out the nature of travel itself. Origin and destination become joined by the standardization of features of the built environment at each location.

At the same time, however, resort destinations must, in some way, be *different* from the features of a residential urban world. As exemplified by the Gold Coast, there are usually the seaside, boutique shopping, landmarks made 'famous' by the culture industry, and souvenir markets. Apart from these, the tourist composes his or her own space by connecting activities and events – not arbitrarily, but according to brochure packages. By actively seeking out activity-worlds as a way of organizing the day, the mere volume of consumption combined with the symbolic distance of being away from home ensures recreation/re-creation. My point here is that the achievement of a 'holiday' is determined by techniques of consumption. This usually entails a reversal of

those accumulation processes in which every economic decision is ascetically rationalized.[7] But it also involves an exchange of money for symbolic capital, of the accumulation of glamorous experiences on one's holiday which can only be seized within short time-frames of opportunity. Reflections on the holiday take the form of 'we did Kangaroo World, the Fauna Park, and Discovery World but didn't have time to do Land of Legend'. The glamour of such symbolic accumulation arises also out of the display of the tourist's mobility, and ability to consume things, dependent on physical attendance. These things are denied to the metropolitan consumer. Paradoxically, the fact that the multinational shape of built environments today is flattening the difference between city and resort makes the fact of travelling even more imperative. It is, for example, possible to be a tourist in one's own city, by taking different forms of transport, gazing at the environment from the vantage of different time-worlds (walking around the city, discovering there are actually rivers and creeks under the freeways), and stringing together sequences of monuments, landmarks and events. But such 'life-be-in-it' attempts to review the relationship between oneself and one's own city aesthetically can not match the glamour of higher scales of travelling consumption, in locations that are inaccessible to those tied down to cycles of commitment. Think of the commonplace paradox that individuals who have lived in the same city all their lives may never have visited the museum or the opera house, yet on arrival at another city, will place these venues among their first stops. In themselves these venues may be uninteresting, insofar as they duplicate the way identity is compressed in every city and destination. However, while they may not take on the monumental sacredness they may have had in the past, the mere fact of our pilgrimage to them ensures their exotic quality. Monuments that we might forgo and not even notice in our own city become part of a smörgåsbord of anticipated memories. What makes them exotic lies less in their difference from attractions in other cities, than in the fact that they are part of an international grid of consumption and exchange for which travel, and especially air travel, becomes a glamorized fetish. The obsession with frequent-flying culture and fly-buying is a heightened expression of tourism becoming an end in itself. Through the ritual accumulation of flying points we communicate the desire to attain a citizenship that is compatible with the 'social' character of international exchange. Where we go is less important than the fact that we re-establish the social at 30,000 feet, which, increasingly, may well provide our idyllic sense of place, possessing much more social substance than the placelessness of the post-modern world below.[8]

Compressed worlds – the production of 'virtual' tourist spaces

As I have been arguing, where the globalization of tourism demands that towns and cities develop themselves as international sites of consumption, the difference

between cityscapes and resortscapes levels out. This process is exemplified by the development of the shopping 'resort' and privatized worlds of entertainment that are capable of highly regulated management and commodification.

As the pioneering model for such a metropolitan landscape in Australia, the Gold Coast replicates most of the features of large-city urbanization, but is more distinguishable as a 'pleisure' landscape (Symes 1994: 30). As Symes points out, pleisure environments (pleasure + leisure) are specifically manufactured for tourist rather than civic consumption. Within these environments 'emphasis is on mediated experience, on using technology and engineering to simulate the world' (Symes 1994: 30).

Such pleisure spaces can be found in the 'tourist bubbles' (see Judd 1999) of all large Australian cities. But the difference between the Gold Coast and other Australian cities is that the salient features of this postmodern 'kitchscape' are assembled in a display more concentrated than anywhere else in Australia. This makes the contrast between civic and tourist culture very pronounced on the Gold Coast, a phenomenon that more commonly emerges with 'event' tourism, as is well demonstrated by Gordon Waitt's chapter on the Sydney Olympics, in this volume. On the Gold Coast there are the gyms, the health clubs and the festival markets, but, more importantly for the tourist, the attraction of a multitude of themed 'worlds' as well as the totalizing world of the shopping resort. A holiday on the Gold Coast is almost entirely composed by selecting an itinerary of such worlds; worlds which attract consumers on the basis of their size or their ability to encompass a nostalgia or an ideal. Because of industrial secrecy, the figures for attendances at these worlds are only available in relation to international visitors. Nevertheless, they are very revealing, showing that well over half of visitors attend theme parks – the expectation being that the proportion for domestic tourists would be much higher. Of just under 1 million international tourists who visited the Gold Coast in 1994, just over 570,000 visited one or more theme parks (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1994). There is Seaworld, Wet'n'wild Water Park, Warner Bros Movie World, Skirmish World (the outdoor wargame park 'just near the war museum and boomerang farm'), Cable-Ski Water Park (Australia's first mechanized water-skiing park), Frozenworld, and Dreamworld (a multi-themed world of worlds modelled on the US Disneyparks). The last boasts 11 themed worlds of rides, shows and attractions; they include: wild log rides down rapids; cruises along a man-made canal in a paddle-wheeler; bushranger shows; an 'interactive' tiger exhibit; as well as chairlift rides through 'Koala Country' and 'Gold Rush Country', following which one can view other worlds projected onto 180º screens.

There are four prominent features common to these tourist environments on the Gold Coast which they share with resorts and shopping malls generally:

- First, each of them involves quite large scales of productive capacity and development in order to establish worlds large enough to capture diversity and population. Usually they conform to the vertical, all-under-one-roof concept that is serviced by lifts and multi-storey car parks or the linking of

horizontal worlds by means of miniature trains or monorails, including the specification of internal precincts, which is a common feature of theme parks and super-malls such as Pacific Fair on the Gold Coast. The sheer scale of these worlds and mega-malls can be seen as a direct outcome of the need for 'pleisure' capital to overcome the spatial limits to commodification (see Robins 1989: 147–9; Zukin 1990). Civic worlds of assembly (the street, the pedestrian mall, the town square, the neighbourhood park) are displaced/replaced by highly regulated and privately controlled environments. They are designed in ways which maximize the act of consumption (by encouraging lengthy stays or the need for rest and refreshment). These dynamics are further accentuated for tourists, who are even more separated from the means of producing their own cultural activity and, lacking this means, are generally subject to the logic of such highly controlled and regulated environments.

- Secondly, the typical theme park *metaphorically* compresses physical environments in terms of different kinds of tourist experiences.[9] More often than not, these tourist experiences do not address the local cultural or natural settings in which they operate. Take, for example, Frozen World, a giant cool room in which one can make snow figures, go tobogganing, ice skating and the like while outside the humidity may be 90 per cent. More common is the enclosed, air-conditioned shopping complex itself, so prominent on the Gold Coast, which is not merely for shopping but offers cinemas, extensive games parlours, crèches and restaurants, and functions as a comprehensive world of immersion.
- Thirdly, the tourist environment enacts an *inversion* of cultural, historical and natural contexts. Sometimes this actually involves physically encasing prior forms of cultural and natural contexts in a comprehensive way. The most easily recognizable instance of this is the interiorization of naturescapes, which include everything from aviaries (Marina Mirage), to waterfalls, sacred trees (Australia Fair), indoor forests (Cairns Marina) and landscape gardens. But, more comprehensively, it entails remaking the relations of priority between different levels of built form. Here we can speak most classically of the now-endemic phenomenon of the shopping mall and its multiple layers reconstituting street life. Consider, for example, how the logic of the shopping mall – its appeals to convenience, with everything being under 'one roof' – brings the stripscape of street shopping into an integrated design which we no longer 'walk past', as it were. In fact, in one kind of popular shopping mall design (exemplified by Australia Fair) the panorama of shops opens out to a huge multilevel atrium where a windowed elevator or an escalator from the car park offers the shopper a visual setting of an imploded street. This is a common example of an inversion between a humanly-scaled pedestrian (who once walked past the outside of shops) and a built environment. There is also the case of the enigmatic ancient urn that can be found on the second level of Australia Fair opposite a bed and linen shop: this water crucible, 300 years old and

3 metres high, was imported from England in the early 1980s to add a 'sense of history' to the shopping mall. Large super-malls generally lack any kind of history at all. In a policy remarkably typical of shopping centres all over the world, smaller retailers are required to update their image by changing their shop design, the fascia board and colour schemes in order to make the centre look 'vibrant'. What malls generally lack in permanence of style they often make up for by heritage appropriation and condensing history into an iconic form. Where this heritage comes from is irrelevant – shopping malls don't address the adjacent environment anyway. In the case of the urn in Australia Fair, the plaque on the monument reads: 'Ancient Urn, Once of a pair of Campana (bell shaped) Urns which stood on the Terrace overlooking the maze at Hever Castle in Kent. It is the birthplace of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII and mother of Queen Elizabeth I of England.' This urn, once sitting under open skies in Kent, now stands about 12 inches below a regulation fire sprinkler outlet; symbolically and physically it becomes subordinated within the operative culture of the complex and to the gaze of the tourist.

- Fourthly, tourist worlds are spaces of totalizing *displacement*. The largest of the shopping complexes on the Gold Coast regularly fails to address the outside world except for motor-car entrances which induct the motorist into a labyrinth of internal lanes whose linearity cannot be reversed or transgressed.[10] We emerge from our car (the location of which is mapped according to alphanumeric codes, rather than a place on the street) to enter the familiar 'airlock', a sort of halfway foyer that seals the air-conditioned spaces of the shopping resort proper. Having become pedestrians we are at the mercy of three dimensions of disorienting shop-fittings and architecture. This architectural disorientation provides the means by which the shopping resort achieves its displacing status (see Baker and Garner 1989). Without being able to reference a co-ordinate outside the shopping mall, the individual's understanding of place is confined to the self-referential mapping of the complex itself, which becomes its own reality.[11] The displacement achieved by such technological worlds often rests on appeals to function over aesthetics. These include the projected convenience of shopping in a concentrated space, or the diversity of experiences possible within the one theme park. So often these experiences simulate an experience that is available in uncommodified form. Consider the case of the now popular 'wave pool' that can be found in many water recreation parks around the world. On the Gold Coast there is a 3.1-million-litre pool at Wet'n'Wild water park where it is possible to body surf on 1-metre high waves and pay high entrance fees for the privilege, instead of going to the adjacent 35-km-long surf beach.

The displacement/privatization of civic spaces through the production of resort worlds is a trend likely to be multiplied in the tourist precincts of cities all over the world. They are attractive to developers because they provide a

basis for monopolizing pleasure spaces, and their Disneyfied aspect cheapens their cost of production, insofar as they are a repetition of developments elsewhere. Governments can promote the tourist revenues as well as claim to be adding an infrastructural service to the 'community'. At the same time, these precincts meet the health, safety and image demands of the Singaporization of public space by allowing highly controlled and regulated cleanliness, safety and attractiveness.

The multiplication of such worlds becomes more viable as cities increasingly become service centres for the tourist industry. However, the implications for local communities are profound, as cities no longer provide the normativities that are developed over very long periods of time. Individuals endlessly have to negotiate between different levels of belonging, between local versus global citizenship, insofar as tourist globalization contributes to the tension between markets of exchange and their local expression. Whereas cities once supplied the normativity by which trade and travel gained its outer context, today, in the age of post-tourism, the local experience of urban geography is thrown into crisis. It becomes harder to live urban environments in a *compositional* way as the market, in its super-charged global-information form, itself becomes the normativity – an experience of context – which is paradoxically characterized by unfixity. On the other hand, for the tourist, the ideal subjectivity that late capitalism privileges, there is no crisis of social context, as the diversity of city worlds becomes redivided into standardized frames of experience.

Tourist communities and the waning of locale

If the modern-day tourist has become a privileged identity within late capitalism, an identity heavily glamorized by the advertising industry, he/she carries an image which can be easily aspired to and identified with. The experience of transcendence, of a certain freedom, comes out of the physics of travel as much as the fact that, for a specific period of time; we gain the autonomy of being able to buy an entire lifestyle, until such time as we are re-integrated into our domicile existence.The contemporary globalization of citizenship, as well as the status which is attached to tourism as an activity, beckons us to explore the question of community in relation to questions of space and sense of place.

On the Gold Coast the division between tourist communities and the local community is a very stark one. Tourist culture is overdeveloped and the residential culture underdeveloped. Too many services for tourists, not enough for residents. The number of people who have built up anything of a significant history on the Gold Coast is very small compared to the millions who pass through it every year. For Australia's sixth-largest city, it is astonishing that residents of the Gold Coast, on average, only stay there for four-and-a-half years. But then, compared to the tourist (who is spending time on the Gold Coast within the sheltered cocoon of a fully programmed 'package', where happiness is primarily equated with consumerism), the experience of the local is one of relative anonymity.

The over-regulation of the tourist by way of identification with his/her own heavily advertised and mediatized image, compared to the under-regulation of the local, as virtual strangers in his/her own city, is something which emerged in a study examining the role of shopping malls of the Gold Coast. The study, *The Malling of the Gold Coast: A case study of shopping complexes and their role in urban interaction* (Holmes 1998), drew attention to many anomalies around questions of community according to which a startling division emerged between the views of locals and those of tourists. Three hundred shoppers were interviewed over a 15-month period[12] across a sample of five shopping malls including two tourist malls,[13] two suburban malls[14] and one mega-mall. The most outstanding and unexpected finding to emerge from the survey was that it was tourists, rather than locals, who perceived the Gold Coast to be characterized by a strong sense of community.[15]

Factoring in the number and nature of interview refusals, numbers of tourists using the shopping malls surveyed exceeded one third of the total number of shoppers. However, of the shoppers surveyed, tourists spent much longer hours in the malls for recreation. This is reflected in the spending demographics: on an average day the residential population spends only one-and-a-third times as much as the visitor population, even though it exceeds the visitor population fourfold.[16]

Across all kinds of shopping complex, just over half of the interviewees (53 per cent) perceived that as an urban setting the Gold Coast had a strong sense of community. However, this figure becomes much more significant when broken down according to the different kinds of mall, which revealed the divide between tourist shopping and local shopping.[17] Both the sample groups in the suburban malls identified a weak sense of community on the Gold Coast (61 per cent), while in the tourist malls the reverse was the case (40 per cent). These figures should also be tied to the fact that, when asked if 'visiting this centre is a social outing or a way of getting what you need', only 5 per cent of visitors to suburban malls (i.e. non-tourist, non-speciality malls) believed it was the former, as opposed to over 25 per cent for the tourist malls. At one suburban mall *no-one* felt that shopping at their local mall was a social outing.

The results have brought up some very interesting questions about the status of community in post-industrial urban centres. If, as the survey suggests, it is the tourist populations who (during their brief stay) feel much more of a sense of community on the Gold Coast than the locals do, what does this say about contemporary citizenship and the temporal/spatial aspects of contemporary identity-formation in such settings?

There is much local resentment towards tourists on the Gold Coast.[18] While tourism is by far the largest industry on the Gold Coast and a high employer of local labour, locals frequently report indignation at having to play the role of a service class to a leisure aristocracy.[19] The seasonal nature of work in the tourist industry makes the labour market very unstable, and resentment builds around the lack of permanent employment. This lack of stability can also be cast as a major factor in the relatively high incidence of self-employed workers on the Gold Coast – which, together with the Sunshine Coast, has had the highest

national rates of self-employment in Australia for over two decades (cf. Mullins 1991; or, for a discussion of the role of the self-employed in 'tourism urbanization', see Mullins 1994). In the 'low shoulders' of the annual tourist cycle, the informal economy of the Gold Coast emerges with rates of petty crime soaring inversely to the declining number of tourists. Per head of population the Gold Coast has the highest number of pawnbrokers for laundering goods of anywhere in Australia.[20] The economic extremes – created by the coastal town-house and fibro-cement villages of itinerant and unemployed workers sitting side-by-side with multinational enclaves of resorts, hotels and theme-parks – bring together at the level of built form the worst excesses of the conflict between affluence and deprivation capitalism.[21] The tourists, who are free to construct their lifestyle as *flâneurs* and nomadically interact with strangers without the consequences of reciprocity, stand in stark contrast to the Gold Coast residents, whose common culture is having to share being strangers in their own city.

This estrangement resulting from the social divisions created by the tourist industry finds expression in a range of characteristics. Besides being a city of extreme transience in which, as the Malling study suggests, levels of public interaction between locals are relatively low, indicators which point to weak forms of social integration include: very high levels of middle-age suicide, youth homelessness, family dislocation, petty crime, drug and alcohol abuse. At the same time, the level of welfare services on the Gold Coast is very low. By contrast, the local council is always funding tourist innovation programmes, which include everything from meter maids (bikini-clad women who refill motorists' parking meters as a courtesy) to monuments of resort developers or bronzed surf lifesavers as icons of local and national identity. Sometimes the 'beautification' programmes are linked to removing the visibility of the unemployed service classes – as in the case of the recent removal of public facilities (stage area, fountains, and sculptures) outside two pedestrian malls; these provided shelter for homeless people as well as sites for busking and skateboarding. It is this negative side of this tourist dialectic – aspects of locale which resist glamorization – which becomes repressed.

What public space remains on the Gold Coast, which has been left primarily in the tourist 'precincts', has today become highly patrolled and monitored by surveillance cameras. Add to this the other kind of objectifying 'surveillance' which is borne of the tourist gaze, and the local resident is even further marginalized. Assembly and expression by non-tourists in public space is stridently discouraged by local government acting on behalf of the tourist industry. What is replicated, by means of a state apparatus, is what is already commonplace in the corporate privatized worlds of shopping centres, theme parks and resort complexes, where vagrancy, taking photographs, doing sociological surveys or appearing to be someone who is not spending money can lead to easy eviction by internal security staff.[22]

Sometimes it takes only a very short step to cross the dividing line between this whirl of consumption and the manufactured side of the tourist industry. To return to the 'tourist lounges' where I began this chapter, for someone living on

the Gold Coast, as I was at the time, it was only by accident that these lounges became a curiosity for me. When it is operating, the lounge at Australia Fair is located away from the vehicle and pedestrian entrances and exits used by local patrons, in a place which only becomes apparent after studying the laminated maps displayed randomly throughout the centre. Upon entering this lounge, which is essentially a microcosm of the display culture in the world above, the opportunity presented itself to ask staff about the function and status of the lounge. 'Are you a tourist?' I was asked. 'No, I am a local,' I replied. 'Well, there is nothing that would interest you here, sir.'

Notes

1 That a shopping centre could be a destination for a tourist is not entirely new. In America there are hotels at some of the very large malls, such as the Mall of America, where shoppers are able to recover from their daily rounds of consumer adventurism.
2 On the Gold Coast tourists stay, on average, three times longer than residents on any given trip to a shopping complex (Holmes 1998). The average tourist also spends just over three times as much as a local on any one day (derived from ABS Household Expenditure Survey 1988–89, Gold Coast Region; Robina Town Centre Marketing Statistics commissioned by Thomas Consultants (1996) and ABS *et al.* 1994).
3 In 1996 the number of tourists passed 4 million, while the resident population reached 340,000.
4 The Gold Coast, with 17 theme parks and 31 shopping malls, not only has the highest ratio of theme parks and shopping centres to resident population of any Australian urban area, it also far outstrips any other in terms of numbers of shopping centres, retail square metres, and car-parking spaces. At the same time, shopping malls are a significant destination for tourists who, on average, spend more hours in a speciality super-mall on a given day than do locals (see Holmes 1998). The fact that there are few public spaces of assembly on the Gold Coast outside beaches makes the privatized nature of shopping malls, together with theme parks, highly significant.
5 To date, few social analyses of the Gold Coast as a tourist or urban setting have been undertaken. The following articles give further background to the themes I discuss in this chapter: Birrell *et al.* (1995); Mullins (1991, 1994); Roberts (1994); Symes (1994).
6 This substitution tendency should be weighed against two opposing factors. First, attracting tourists to the Gold Coast also leads to incidental eco-tourism in surrounding regions (on the Gold Coast or, for example, Lamington National Park), in which case these too become sacrificial spaces, and their management becomes much more critical than elsewhere. Secondly, the vast scale of construction involved in building artificial pleasure-worlds can also be a huge drain on environmental resources.
7 The contrast between slowly and conscientiously saving for a packaged holiday and the cathartic practice of accelerated consumption encapsulated by the advertisement's appeal to 'get wrecked' somewhere, can be read as a manifest illustration of the way late capitalist culture seemingly polarizes production and consumption into ever-greater extremes.
8 This particular argument about tourism as a means of realizing the social character of consumerism can be seen as an extension of the 'commodity abstraction' argument of Alfred Sohn-Rethel (1978) in his *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A critique of epistemology*. Extending Marx's commodity fetishism argument, Sohn-Rethel proposes that consumerism is the most social activity possible within late capitalism, because it is by this means that individuals are able to commensurate the value of their labour

with abstract strangers. Thanks to innovations in travel technology, tourism brings this commensuration to a new level at which it is not commodities but bodies that are able to traverse the globe with increased circulation, thereby 'catching up' with the gap that is both created and overcome by commodity exchange.

9 Ethnographies of tourism look at experiences ranging from the recreational, to the experimental, to the experiential, to the existential (see, for example, Cohen 1979). It would be interesting to compare these enthnographies with the kinds of environments offered by themed worlds.

10 Margaret Crawford (1992) notes the stark visual contrast between the exterior and interior of large shopping centres. From the outside, they resemble 'an ungainly pile of oversized boxes plunked down in the middle of an enormous asphalt sea, surrounded by an endless landscape of single-family houses'. Inside, on the other hand, 'the mall presents a dizzying spectacle of attractions and diversions' (Crawford 1992: 3).

11 Recent studies of shopping malls as managed environments of experience and fantasy have come to characterize them as virtual realities. They share with theme parks a number of characteristics which qualify them in this regard: they are sealed, quasi-private environments which have little reference to the immediate environment, but instead stylistically refer to other malls around their world; they are internally self-referential; and the consumer's movement within them is highly 'programmed' by the architecture (see Morse 1991; Ostwald 1997).

12 The mega-malls, regardless, however, of their 'mix' of visitors, are most readily identified by their considerable scale. The consequence of this size is that the centres contain multiple national supermarket chains, distinct food courts, additional or specialized services and 'scaled-up' car parks (cf. Crawford 1992: 4).

13 The tourist centres are phenomena of the coastline, in both location and meaning, and have a greater emphasis on 'display' features and on design and layout considerations which encourage visitors to linger. These centres, however, also benefit from a walk-through effect, as people entering the centre briefly become visitors on their way to and from the beach or other entertainment opportunities.

14 The suburban centres are distinguished by their relative compactness, the open car-parking spaces, the single major tenant, their distance from the coastline, and the fact that they address a relatively small residential, suburban catchment.

15 All shoppers were asked 22 questions including: 'Do Shopping Malls add to a sense of community or do they damage it?' and 'Do you think there is a strong sense of community on the Gold Coast?' These questions, wherein shoppers were asked to equate community with a sense of solidarity, were followed up by index questions asking how often they met friends, revisited the same shops, etc.

16 According to a 1996 marketing survey for Robina Shopping Town, on any given day there is an average of 83,000 tourists on the Gold Coast – approximately one quarter of the population of 340,000 residents. In 1996 tourists spent $A1.37 billion on the Gold Coast, whereas residents spent $A1.86 billion (Knight Frank Leasing Agents (1995) 'Robina Town Centre: The facts', in *Robina Town Centre: The art of marketing a masterpiece: Marketing programme 1996*: 5).

17 As far as differentiating sample groups, only 21 per cent of interviewees at the tourist malls were locals, while at the suburban malls there were no tourists at all.

18 A resentment emerged anecdotally in the interviews. For example, most locals regarded the tourist centre of the Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise, with disdain, proclaiming: 'I never go there. What is there for me anyway? It is all just tourists.'

19 In a 1986 census, 'wholesale and retail' and 'recreation, personal and other services' accounted for 38.3 per cent of Gold Coast employment (see Mullins 1991).

20 With a total of 70 pawnbrokers, the Gold Coast has three times more, relative to population, than its nearest 'rival', Perth.

21 At the 1986 census the Gold Coast had the highest unemployment levels in Australia (16 per cent) after the much less populated Sunshine Coast (19.7 per cent).
22 Cases of locals being evicted from shopping malls on the Gold Coast are numerous. Young people who, according to the survey *The Malling of the Gold Coast*, spend longer hours at malls than any other age group, are also those most frequently evicted or asked to move on.

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8 Identity tourism, virtuality and the theme park

Michael J. Ostwald

> What is it that is exactly the same about every single vacation you have ever taken? You … you are the same. No matter where you go, there you are … it's always the same old you. Let me suggest that you take a vacation from yourself. We offer you a choice of alternative identities for your trip …
>
> (Verhoeven 1990)

Consuming identity

Throughout history particular urban spaces have been linked to the loss or dilution of regional, social and cultural values. From the *agora* of ancient Greece to the eighteenth-century salons, the Parisian boulevards of the nineteenth century and the shopping malls of the twentieth century, certain urban spaces have been viewed as promoting global rather than local concerns. These same sites not only advance globalization, they are also tourist spaces. The *agora*, the salon and the mall all encourage a singular mode of consumer behaviour that values the commodification of space, culture and experience. All these urban spaces also invite a more rarefied form of consumption that is becoming increasingly available in the modern, technologically mediated world. Not only do tourists wish to explore other spaces, cultures and experiences, they want to sample other identities as well. Whether or not the desire is to be immersed more fully in another culture, to experience something new, or to take a holiday from oneself, the answer is still the same – sample another identity.

According to Jennifer Craik, 'tourists seek transcendence from everyday life through engagement with Otherness or escape from the familiar' (1997: 114). For this reason tourism is defined as being motivated by the desire to suspend quotidian existence and enter a fugue state in which normal behaviour and identity are reversed. Priscilla Boniface and Peter Fowler argue that all tourism inevitably involves a change of identity. When people leave behind their domestic lives and travel to other locations they begin to 'behave in a touristic sort of way' and 'they inhabit and use characteristic artifacts' (1993: 155). For Boniface and Fowler this represents a clear shift in identify, because in a person's 'home' environment the tourist is an intrusion, yet that same person can become a tourist the next day as they 'zoom off not just to a different geography and a new daily life

deriving from that locale but to a different patterning of [their] own behaviour' (1993: 155). John Urry describes this constant interchange of identity as a natural part both of the tourist experience and of the modern world, which renders all people touristic in their behaviour. Urry argues that 'Post-modern society ushers in much more open and fluid social identities' (1995: 87). Another lesson of post-modernism is that touristic behaviour is inherently transformative; the tourist is an agent of both globalization and fluid identity (see Ricoeur 1961).

Susan Fainstein and David Gladstone maintain that the tourist's gaze inevitably transforms the people viewed by the tourist into 'cast members' (1999: 28). Philip Crang (1997) describes this transformation as a type of mutual performance, in which the tourists, already assuming false identities, automatically create a range of superficial or stereotypical narratives to interpret the people they are viewing. Moreover, Craik notes that tourists dislike it when the locals refuse to accept the position of cast members. This reaction is readily apparent in parts of Asia, where the locals 'are changed by contact with Western cultures and, for example, exchange traditional dress for Western clothes' (1997: 115). When this occurs the mutual performance falters; the tourist's assumed identity is undermined by the unwillingness of the locals to conform to the fantasy. As a consequence, the tourist is forced either to confront the inauthentic nature of the masquerade or to retreat into an 'environmental bubble' or 'tourist bubble' that allows a deeper, stronger or safer form of identity shifting.

An 'environmental bubble' is any clearly delineated space that is safe, controlled or mediated. Because the tourist cannot completely control the cast members present in the modern city, they need to enter a tourist bubble to complete the process of self-delusion. Craik claims that, while 'tourists think that they want authenticity, most want some degree of negotiated experiences which provide a tourist "bubble" ' from which 'they can selectively step to "sample" predictable forms of experience' (1997: 115). Within the tourist bubble all cast members are professional and can be relied upon to perform their roles with equanimity. As a consequence of this predictability, the tourist is able to appropriate deeper or more overt identities which invert their quotidian existence. Urry repeats Gottlieb's (1982) argument to propose that, within the environmental bubble, a 'middle-class tourist will seek to be "peasant for a day" while the lower middle-class tourist will seek to be "king/queen for a day" ' (1990: 11). In the environmental bubble the tourist is able to change their own identity, race, gender or age. This is known as 'identity tourism'.

Lisa Nakamura describes identity tourism, or 'passing', as the appropriation of another identity for 'recreational purposes' (2000: 715). While she admits that passing has historically been associated with the intent to deceive, she also recognizes that identity tourism offers the chance to exploit the cultural boundaries of the 'marginalized Other' (2000: 715). The identity tourist is not content with the regulated consumption of other cultures or places. Instead they seek to experience another person and other spaces or cultures through that lens. However, for passing to be a safe practice it must occur in an environmental bubble. This is why certain clearly defined and controlled urban spaces, including the *agora*, the salon

and mall, have, throughout history, encouraged identity tourism. Recent advances in virtual environments have been the catalyst for widespread identity tourism in a new form of environmental bubble, the Internet. Yet, despite this recognition that passing has occurred in relative safety for many hundreds of years, the exact nature of this form of mediated consumption is still largely unknown (Ostwald 1997a).

This chapter is concerned with the issue of fluid identity in both Cartesian and virtual worlds. Its aim is to recognize the spatial characteristics of identity tourism and to question its validity as an 'original' or 'authentic' mode of experience. This analysis will draw parallels between the most ephemeral of urban spaces in the physical world and the most prosaic of zones in the virtual world. Specifically, the chapter will consider the theme park, in both its 'real' and its 'virtual' incarnations, as environmental bubble *par excellence* and as a site of identity tourism.

Environmental bubbles

The capacity for identity to be either fixed or fluid is linked to the way in which the individual is prompted, by the characteristics of the environmental bubble, to alter their projected persona (Van Gelder 1991; Ostwald 1993, 1997a; Nakamura 2000). This implies that certain spatial forms, like tourist bubbles, act as catalysts for 'cross-dressing', 'racial passing' and 'gender grazing'. The relationship between environmental bubbles and fluid identity is readily apparent in various historic urban spaces, although to really understand the mechanisms of identity tourism a close study of a specific spatial type, the theme park, is necessary.

The ancient Greek *agora* was a defined or framed zone within the city which functioned as both a market-place and a place of public assembly (von Meiss 1992: 54). Within the *agora* different cultures came together to exchange produce, news and traditions. For this reason Lewis Mumford describes the *agora* as a site of 'cultural seepage' (1991: 121). Within the *agora* it was even permissible to temporarily appropriate the dress, customs and behaviours of another race or culture. Outside the *agora* this practice was considered inappropriate and even sacrilegious. Like the *agora*, the salons and boulevards of Paris in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were clearly defined spaces within the city. The salon provided a window through which other cultures and locations could be viewed in relative safety and with little effort. Department stores on the Parisian boulevards imported, distilled and displayed other cultures in their windows for the edification of the *flâneur*. The Rabelaisian consumers that experienced these exhibitions delighted in the controlled excesses of both the window displays and the crowds that gathered to view them. For the writers Baudelaire and Zola the phantasmagoric department stores and the baroque salons of Paris seemed to merge the *flâneurs*, tourists and prostitutes together until they were almost indistinguishable from one another (see Vidler 1986). Elizabeth Wilson identifies the salon and the boulevard as sites of identity tourism. Wilson records that cross-dressing flourished in the salons and that a form of cultural passing was common on the boulevards and in the museums of the Victorian world (1988: 44–55;

1991: 61–2). Like the *agora*, the salons and boulevards were primitive tourist bubbles where passing could occur in relative safety.

In the last century two types of Cartesian spaces have superseded the *agora* and the salon as sites of fluid identity. The first of these, the modern shopping mall, is a controlled space for the sale of goods, information, culture and experience. Michael Sorkin (1992) describes the modern mall as a transformative device; anything displayed in the mall is sanitized and rendered banal by its setting. However, the mall is also a highly temporal and simulated environment which renders it among the most virtual of spaces in the 'real' world (Ostwald 1993, 1997b). Dennis Judd argues that the mall establishes 'the atmosphere and the context of a "utopian visual consumption" ' (1999: 49). The modern mall is no longer simply a site for the regulated consumption of goods, it is now a place where experience is consumed and controlled. While this renders the mall a relatively efficient environmental bubble, the most important post-modern bubble is the theme park. Craik describes the theme park as the 'extreme form of the tourist bubble' (1997: 115), and Judd claims that the theme park is the perfect example of a tourist environment currently available today (1999: 39). Wilson describes the theme park as 'a kind of infantile paradise cleansed of all adult emotions or concerns' (1991: 14). Wilson's description could equally apply to almost any tourist bubble but it is particularly apt for the theme park.

The theme park is a controlled environment that entertains visitors through the simulation of space, place and experience. It is the element of control that is initially most important in defining the urban space, because the theme park presents itself as a safe, indeed sanitized, environment wherein conventionally dangerous or arduous activities can be undertaken without fear of their consequences. The desire for control leads to the necessity of simulating or fictionalizing each and every space and event that the visitor to the park will experience. For this reason theme and amusement parks often treat their buildings as façades and their inhabitants as cast members. Because all the experiences in the theme park are simulated, the environmental bubble both enables and ensures the safety of the identity tourist. A further, more extreme, version of the tourist bubble is found in virtual theme parks.

In 1993 Sierra Games published an advertisement for The Sierra Network (TSN) in a number of computer journals and Internet magazines; it read, 'Welcome to the World's First Cyberspace Theme Park'. The fine print details on the page advised that those people who had a personal computer, a modem and an account on one of the various electronic networks could gain access to 'the hot new place to interface'. The text exhorted the reader to 'dive right in' to a world full of '100's of people just like you' (Sierra Games 1993: 83). Internet theme parks, like TSN, are not new. From Habitat and FM Towns to more than 200 Multiple User Dimensions (MUDs), the Internet is replete with themed amusement spaces.

In both its real and its virtual incarnations the theme park is the ideal environmental bubble for identity tourism. In the following sections both real and virtual theme parks are examined to identify their spatial characteristics and the nature of the identity tourism they promote.

Cartesian theme parks

In 1897 George Tilyou created Steeplechase Park on Coney Island in New York City. Enclosed by a wall this space could be considered to be one of the first theme parks in the modern world. Tilyou had a vision of a new kind of space where all the world would be on display. He recorded his obsession in his notes at the time: 'If Paris is France, Coney Island, between June and September, is the World' (McCullough 1957: 291). In an early and unconscious attempt to produce a post-modern spatial form Tilyou discovered that, through the construction of simulacra of famous landmarks, he could condense distance and produce a completely simulated and controlled experience. For example, Tilyou could construct a scale replica of the Eiffel Tower adjacent to a scale replica of Big Ben, thereby seeming to remove all the wasted space and travel time needed to visit the world's monuments. Despite the success of this concept, the central attraction at Steeplechase Park was an electronic horse-racing track on which visitors could ride equine automata and compete for actual winnings. Tilyou's park used these themes of spatial compression, the excitement of the race and the ability to temporarily become a jockey, to encourage visitors to return and spend money.

Such was the success of Steeplechase Park that a few years later, on Coney Island, Frederick Thompson opened Luna Park. This theme park built upon the ideas of spatial compression and excitement by allowing visitors to temporarily play roles other than those they were used to. Luna Park sought to turn visitors into travellers through outer space. The theme park was intended to be

> not of this earth but part of the Moon. On entering, Luna Park's masses are turned into astronauts in a conceptual airlock through which they all have to pass … Once on board of the great airship, her huge wings rise and fall, the trip is really begun and the ship is soon 100 feet in the air.
>
> (Koolhaas 1994: 38)

In this environmental bubble the production of a fantasy setting, where all things are possible, is coupled with the idea that all visitors are treated as if they were playing the roles of astronauts. Upon reaching the simulated Lunar environment visitors were encouraged to enter the 'Barrel of Love' wherein they walked down a rotating pipe which forced them to fall against each other, thus, according to the park managers, breaking down the alienation of space travel experienced by the young men and women. The combination of spatial compression (from the earth to the moon in five minutes), excitement (travel to strange and exotic lands), and identity tourism (passing as astronauts and lovers) ensured the success of Luna Park.

The third New York theme park, Dreamland, opened within a few years of Coney Island's Luna Park. Planned by William Reynolds, Dreamland attempted to take the simple formula of the previous theme parks further. Instead of having just one environment, as displayed in Luna Park, Dreamland featured replica sections of various historical buildings and events in such a way that time as well as space

could be folded. For Reynolds this transformed the visitor into a tourist who could travel to different places and times without leaving the safety of the theme park. One of the most famous attractions at Dreamland was a partial reconstruction of Pompeii, with simulated eruptions on the hour. Elsewhere the tourists were encouraged to enter a multi-storey building and to take their places on the sixth floor. Once in place they were encouraged to act out the roles of office workers; meanwhile the building was actually being set alight beneath them. With fire as the impetus the tourists were transformed into terrified office workers waiting to be rescued by carefully trained firemen (cast members). Once rescued, the tourists returned to their roles as *flâneurs* in the theme park (Ostwald 1996). Revising the dominant concepts employed by both Steeplechase Park and Luna Park, Dreamland combined the compression of space and time to encourage identity tourism.

In the United Kingdom, in 1984, a proposal was made for WonderWorld, a theme park on an unprecedented scale that was planned to meet the leisure needs of the United Kingdom (Walker 1982: 2–4). WonderWorld's prospectus outlined its key strategy to ensure the success of the proposal. This strategy is most clearly displayed in certain sections of the theme park where visitors were encouraged to cast aside their everyday identities and take on the costumes, characteristics and motives of famous characters from fiction (Ostwald 1997a). The images that accompanied this proposal suggested that young men and women could become famous characters from the fiction of Conan Doyle or Tolkien. The key to this strategy, though, is re-enactment; Holmes and Watson are strictly confined to their own *milieu*, as are Aragorn and Gandalf, and these pairs of characters can never meet. WonderWorld sought to allow the visitor to leave behind their own identity and to replace it, while inside the theme park, with the identity of a fictional character or a form of character stereotype. People would thus be allowed to become not new selves, but carefully delineated replacements. However, the replacement personae at WonderWorld were designed to conform to rigid and preordained limits, and the aim of each 're-enactment' was to teach a moral or ecological lesson (Walker 1982: 14–17)! In essence, WonderWorld aimed to erase the identity of the tourist and replace it with a non-identity; a world where all people are simulated entities, striving to retain conformity rather than difference.

In more recent theme parks, including the piratical Mundomar on Spain's Costa Blanca, Warner Brothers Studio on Australia's Gold Coast, and Universal Studios in Los Angeles, the idea of identity tourism has become widely accepted as a means of promoting excitement and pleasure. The new generation of electronic theme parks, including Virtual World in San Diego, Acurinto in Nagasaki, and SegaWorld in Sydney, have even accelerated the speed with which identities, places and events can be sampled and exchanged. Yet, in all these environmental bubbles, the identity tourist is simply participating in an increasingly efficient layering of inauthentic personae. With each successive layer the tourist may appear to be gaining freedom from their own everyday existence yet they are, paradoxically, undergoing a drastic reduction in individuality and freedom. Each layer of identity is a new form of control.

This reduction in individuality in the theme park was evident in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1907, when the writer and critic Maxim Gorky visited Coney Island, he observed that the 'visitor is stunned; his consciousness is withered by the intense gleam; his thoughts are routed from his mind; he becomes a particle in the crowd' (Gorky, quoted in Koolhaas 1994: 68). The fantasy scenes enacted repetitiously for visitors to the theme park do not affirm the presence of difference; in effect they confirm the absence of it. The folding of space and time in the theme park does not result in the projection of active and singular identities; rather it encourages the projection of roles and façades which are controlled, sanitized and globalized.

If, then, the Cartesian theme park spatially promotes the creation of stereotype identities, does the cyberspace theme park do the same? In order to answer this question two virtual theme parks are considered. The first is a Multi-user-dimension or MUD; the second is The Sierra Network (TSN).

Virtual theme parks

The term MUD has variously been used to describe Multiple User Dimensions, Multiple User Dungeons and Multiple User Dialogues. MUDs and MOOs (MUDs using Object-Orientated programming codes) are a form of real-time simulation of a 'role-playing' game using the Internet to link many thousands of users simultaneously. There are many types of MUD, and the distinction between each sort is rarely clear-cut or definitive. Some MUDs which use the prefixes 'Tiny' or 'Teeny' are social gatherings that are formed about communal structures reminiscent of extended families or tribes. MOOs, including the famous LambdaMOO, are often academic spaces for the exploration of NET activities. Rheingold, in *The Virtual Community*, aptly described MUDs as places 'where magic is real and identity is a fluid' (Rheingold 1994: 145). Like the Cartesian theme parks, MUDs are places where the normal restrictions of life do not apply.

Conventional MUDs are text-based environments which offer a first-person description of a space using language to evoke a sense of place. A person entering a MUD would be greeted with a description of the large-scale topography of the virtual location for orientation purposes. Consider the following example from the Belgariad MUD, a virtual theme park that was popular in the mid-1990s and was based upon David Eddings' fantasy novels. The user who logs into this MUD finds themselves reading a note explaining that they are in a common room.

> There are numerous cots and blankets arranged in rows in this room. Although the accommodations are spartan, they are clean and cheap. The floor is covered in blue carpet, and rather faded, plain tapestries hang on the walls, keeping out some of the chill of the cold Rivan winters. This is the common room of the Silver Wolf Inn, where weary travellers can get a night's rest for only a few coins. The only exit is the door to the east, leading out into the hallway.
>
> (Anon 1994)

By typing directions the textual world can be navigated, providing further descriptions of virtual spaces. However, in order to move around a MUD and interact with other people, a visitor or tourist needs to create an identity, role or character for themselves that is specific to the MUD.

Like WonderWorld, the early MUDs concentrated on producing simulated experiences derived from popular literature. The first MUD, produced in 1979, relied upon people assuming the identities of Tolkienesque fantasy figures. The same formula has since influenced many subsequent MUD environments. In the typical MUD of this kind the individual assumes an identity which is not their own and participates in a competition with other real or simulated parties. In order to enter this type of competitive MUD the participant has to select a persona, or design one from a series of options. Typical options include choosing a name, age, sex, moral code and selecting a profession for the new character or identity. Typical professions include warrior, thief, assassin, knight, or magician. In most MUDs identity-generation is a controlled process using strict guidelines concerning the abilities of the new character. For example, a MUD might specify that a character's quantifiable attributes are classified into five areas: strength, agility, mental powers, faith and charisma. Each of these characteristics is set between a range of one (very poor) to five (very strong). The first-time visitor to the MUD would then be given fifteen points to split among these five attributes, thus giving the impression that the new identity is particular to the person who designed it. Despite this illusion the created identity rapidly begins to conform with a number of distinct stereotypes. For instance, a knight needs a minimum strength of five, charisma of four and faith of three. Some elementary arithmetic quickly confirms that all knights are almost exactly the same.

MUD designers argue that this approach may limit the starting identities for the tourist, but each identity will acquire idiosyncratic traits through their 'life' experience in the MUD. This is not the case. Even after the newly created character has been allowed to interact with the MUD world, and with other characters created by fellow tourists or cast members, it is still likely that there are many almost identical characters in the bubble. Although the new character created by the identity tourist may now be called 'Conan the Destroyer' (a seemingly strong statement of identity, even if it is derived from fiction), it is highly likely that they will soon meet other identities, including 'Krull the Destroyer' and 'IronGron the Killer'. Moreover, as success in the MUD world involves the completion of various standard 'adventures', there is a good chance that each of these other identities will have exactly the same experiences. This lack of singular or original identity is exacerbated in those themed MUDs that are derived from specific works of fiction. For example, in the Belgariad MUD visitors delight in re-enacting favourite scenes from the books and often use language and personalities copied from the original novels. The Belgariad MUD is also an ideal example of the tourist bubble for the purposes of racial passing, because Eddings' literary world relies upon strong racial stereotypes; all people of the Rivan race have pale colouring and an even-tempered demeanour, and all Drasnians are

small, sneaky and conniving. With such a range of closely defined racial stereotypes the ability of the visitor to create an original identity is seriously constrained. Originality is also consciously limited by popular consensus in the MUD as well as by vested authority. Bernard Aboba records that while within the Belgariad MUD he was sent a news message stating that 'no further brothels will be built. There will be a wizmeeting soon, probably Monday night, open to the public, to discuss this and other matters. Your cooperation is expected' (1992: 252). The terminology of this missive is consequential. The 'wizards', or programmers, demand the presence of the MUD populace to ratify their decision that 'no further brothels will be built'. The construction of brothels within the MUD was seen by the inhabitants as faulting the environmental bubble which governed acceptable behaviour and which allowed their identity tourism to occur.

Certain MUDs, like real-world theme parks, spatially promote what Gorky has identified as the 'withering of originality'. In this context there are distinct similarities in the manner in which theme parks and MUDs encourage and control identity tourism. However, the strongest parallels between the theme parks in the Cartesian world and those in the virtual world are found in self-proclaimed 'on-line amusement parks' like TSN.

TSN's gaming network is centred on a graphical user environment which uses on-screen text and graphics, some of which may be manipulated, to simulate their theme park spatially. The centrepiece of TSN is the 'cyberspace theme park', ImagiNation. Pictorially ImagiNation is displayed as a cartoon 'town with a map of services and attractions' (Sierra Games 1992: 64). ImagiNation, like Disneyland and other real-world theme parks, is modelled around a combination of themed locations and a supporting or parasitic community which is often a representation of 'Mainstreet USA'. Navigation around the community of ImagiNation is by way of a combination of icons and text. Places which may be visited include a Town Hall (for news and events), Post Office (for sending Email), Mall (for on-line shopping) and Help (a corner store with a blue striped awning and answers to frequently asked questions). The community zone is surrounded by themed locations including MedievaLand, LarryLand and SierraLand.

As with any theme park, TSN revolves around the idea of personal illusion and, as with the MUDs, to enter TSN a tourist needs to create a new identity for themselves. Whereas entry to a Cartesian theme park is customarily defined by a portal or gate, TSN presents the newcomer with a device called the FaceMaker. This device allows the visitor to choose how they will be graphically displayed to others entering the virtual space. A cartoon identikit program provides the visitor with a choice of hair styles, noses, eyes, mouths or skin colours. To quote Vince Geraci, an identity tourist, 'I experimented with the FaceMaker and changed my hair to a Mohawk style, put on a cool pair of shades, slipped into a nifty sport coat, and gave myself a giant nose' (1991: 64). Using the FaceMaker, Geraci was able to create a static portrait or personal icon for fellow tourists and cast members to view. This icon acts as a signifier for fluid identity; it is the graphical manifestation of a presented persona. Moreover, visitors to TSN are actively discouraged from creating a representation of their 'real' self for use in the town

of ImagiNation. At all times Sierra's designers wanted visitors to TSN to be confronted with the idea that anything is possible and that identity tourism is enjoyable. The FaceMaker not only encourages the tourist to present a false persona; it also mentally prepares them for understanding that any other personae met in the theme park should be assumed to be false. This reading of lack of identity is further intensified if the visitor wishes to set foot in any of the themed zones around the virtual town. In order to enter any of the specific gaming spaces of the theme park the tourist must create a further persona which is more appropriate for the specific setting. Geraci recalls that each 'area in TSN features a new version of the FaceMaker' so that every tourist will have several different identities (1991: 64). As the experiences of the visitor in TSN are built up they are not accumulated in one virtual persona – rather they are split between multiple characters, each carefully tailored for a different environment.

However, as identity becomes more fluid in the theme park there is an associated loss of individuality. In TSN this is accomplished through the combination of multiple layers of false identities and the tightly controlled nature of the possible characters available (see DeBaun 1993). Significantly, Kurt Busch, a visitor to TSN, describes using the FaceMaker as a process which involves selecting a 'stock' character:

> TSN provides a number of stock characters for the novice … The first screen allows you to select name, race, guild, sex, and alignment for your character. Up to six characters can be stored in your account, but only one can be played at a time.
>
> (Busch 1992: 61)

Busch's description of TSN contains a number of references which are consequential to any analysis of identity tourism and the theme park. Notably he describes the process of developing a persona as choosing from a selection of characters. The implication of this is that, like WonderWorld, the visitor does not appropriate a new identity; rather, their own personality is constrained within a two-dimensional character suited to specific tasks. The FaceMaker is also the invisible mechanism of political and cultural control. For example, various items of clothing and jewellery are only available for identities of a specific sex. Beards are only for men; veils, breasts and most forms of jewellery only for women. The identity tourist is controlled by the FaceMaker. People attempting to present unusual façades or cross-sexual images are discouraged by the very nature of the interface. Curiously, the end result of all of these restrictions is that genuinely unusual identities cannot exist in TSN, while banal and potentially offensive racial and heterosexual stereotypes can. Ironically this does not stop identity tourism; rather it forces the tourist to sample only a limited range of alternative viewpoints and behaviours.

Geraci, in one of his articles on TSN, confesses to being guilty of cross-dressing. In mock chagrin he admits that he has become addicted to the idea of changing external personae to suit any situation. During his first three weeks in

TSN he describes turning 'into a masquerading maniac with a menagerie of character personas'. One minute he was 'a sensitive, bespectacled, and bearded older man named Leo', the next he was 'Stella, a rich chick from Dallas with an attitude' (1993: 72). Geraci's cross-dressing reached its dramatic, if anticipated, conclusion in the following weeks when he entered TSN's LarryLand (an 'adults only' environment) intent on playing poker in the on-line casino. However, as the tables were full and no partners were available he was turned away. The spatial nature of the theme park, though, provided an alternative to missing out on a game. Geraci returned to the FaceMaker and proceeded to create a female identity. His criteria were explicit: 'long blonde hair, slim, buxom, full lips, perky nose, sophisticated jewelry accessories and good taste in fashion'. Clearly choosing his persona to perfection Geraci, now 'Lola', was allowed to play poker and soon became the centre of attention at the casino. Countless blatantly sexual offers followed Lola's arrival, and Geraci records how before long a particularly insistent 'guy started complimenting me on how attractive my persona was'. After leaving ImagiNation in an unseemly rush Geraci reflected that, rather than feeling any of his identities intensely, the multiple layers of identity allowed him a kind of extreme 'anonymity', and that this, in itself, was a form of protection (1993: 72).

Despite the antics which occur in LarryLand, TSN is closely aligned to Disney's utopian ideals. The characters are carefully controlled and conform to commonplace images; the stereotype personae themselves encourage further stereotypical speech and actions. TSN, like the Disney theme parks in the real world, is a sanitized, moderated space; identity is controlled, despite the appearance of flexibility. Disneyland and theme parks, Wilson educes, present 'an illusion of freedom and choice' but actually pre-empt choice (1991: 14). TSN is the ultimate tourist bubble; up to six layers of identity can be worn in sequence, and identities may also be created and discarded with ease. But what about the feeling of anonymity recorded by so many identity tourists?

Losing face

Gorky's understanding that theme parks encourage the loss of identity is one of many realizations that certain spaces promote the production of stereotype images which distance the user from themselves. The theme park imposes a series of folded layers of simulated space and identity. It is this extensive folding which reduces the identity tourist's ability to project a complex and singular persona. Indeed, the layering of identity effectively erases any semblance of individuality. This can be seen in a description from the writer and critic Sylvia Lavin of her attempts to log into a WELL conference at the request of an associate Cynthia Davidson:

> I logged on to my computer quite happily … I used my password, my alias and computer persona … Once I got to the WELL, however … since I am not a member of the WELL, I had to log on as Cynthia … Having negotiated this second masquerade, I discovered that the conference was private,

> which required me to find yet another identity to wear … During this latter phase I became Greg Lynn. After all these rites of passage through which I had progressively become less and less the person I thought I had started out being, I lost my nerve. Instead of joining the discussion and sending a letter, I merely lurked for a while, lost within my multiple personae
>
> (Lavin 1995: 42)

The uncanny layering of complex identity, even for a regular user of the Internet, soon caused Lavin to feel unaccountably lost; the folding of identity, far from reinforcing individuality, obliterated it. Rather than being liberated from her conventional identity, Lavin simply felt confused as she was palimpsestically erased by each new layer.

Ultimately the layering of identity experienced by the tourist creates a fugue state of behavioural inversion. A single change in identity does not assist the tourist to escape their quotidian lifestyle, but multiple layers distance them from reality. This implies that any identity, however fictional, stereotypical or banal, can help the tourist find a state of anonymous enjoyment. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that anything less than a stereotype can ever be inhabited for such a short and undemanding period of time. This suggests that it is the stereotypical nature of the personae that allows a person to operate within an environment where identity is fluid.

While all these reasons are potentially useful in explaining the positive dimension of identity tourism, they cannot escape the patently inauthentic nature of the touristic experience. This is significant for those theme parks, in both the real and the virtual worlds, which claim to focus on regional rather than global concerns. A range of modern theme parks, including the evolutionary themed Darwin Centre in Edinburgh and the Urawa Living Museum (1995) in Urawa, promote local eco-tourism as a 'real' or 'authentic' experience. In such parks the layering of identity is intended to encourage a more detailed appreciation of the environment. Given the inability of the tourist to appropriate anything other than a stereotypical persona, and given the extreme loss of individuality encouraged by the layering of space and identity, it seems unlikely that such goals are achievable. The dense layering of fictional personae erases difference and withers originality as it encourages the global tourist fugue state.

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9 Architectures of entertainment

Brian Morris[1]

> The question today therefore is no longer if cinema can do without place but if places can do without cinema. Urbanism is in decline, architecture is in constant movement, while dwellings have become no more than anamorphoses of thresholds. In spite of people nostalgic about History, Rome is no longer in Rome, architecture no longer in architecture, but in geometry; the space-time of vectors, the aesthetic of construction is dissimulated in the special effects of communication machines, engines of transfer and transmission.
>
> (Virilio 1991a)

> So, more than Venturi's Las Vegas, it is Hollywood that merits urbanist scholarship.
>
> (Virilio 1991b)

Over twenty-six years ago Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour packed up their suitcases and drawing boards and literally took their Yale design studio 'on the road' to that famous conglomeration of neon frontages in the Nevada desert. The book resulting from that trip, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), was instrumental in persuading critics to turn their attention to the over-scale signs that grace the 'decorated sheds' of the Las Vegas landscape and to re-evaluate their function in the construction of urban space and place. In the years following the publication of that classic work urban critics have also become more aware that not only do theorists and theory 'travel', so too do places, and that 'Las Vegas' designates both a particular urban site in the Nevada desert and also an 'imaginary-real' place dispersed across the globe through various cultural technologies and texts. The ubiquitousness of that dispersal of place inspired Paul Virilio (1991a: 26) to suggest in 1980 that perhaps today we should be looking to Hollywood films about Las Vegas for clues to the nature of contemporary urbanism, rather than travelling to Las Vegas itself.

Today, as the new millennium establishes itself, Virilio's observations on the relationship between urban form and popular entertainment can be credited with a considerable degree of prescience; particularly in light of the recent emergence of a number of distinctive mixed-use, large-scale, entertainment-oriented urban developments around the world. These developments point to

the increasing centrality of a globalized cultural field of entertainment (which includes, of course, forms like cinema and television as well as a host of new multimedia technologies) both to representations *and* to the material fabric of the contemporary city. For the most part, critical writing on entertainment-oriented urban developments has focused on either theme parks (see, for example, Sorkin 1992) or mega-mall projects such as the West Edmonton Mall in Canada and the Mall of America in Minneapolis (Shields 1989; Crawford 1992; Gibian 1997; Ostwald 1997). Besides their over-scale nature, the latter projects distinguish themselves from the established mall form through their construction as 'destination entertainment centres' (Gibian 1997: 279). As new sites of entertainment these urban developments chart an important shift: from a focus on amusement as an effect secondary to the experience of commodity consumption *to a focus on entertainment itself as the central commodity on offer*.

The global entertainment corporations that have either formed or consolidated in the past two decades as part of the general shift to a post-industrial or information society have often been at the forefront of these projects in which 'entertainment' attains an unprecedented centrality (Gibian 1997: 279; Hannigan 1998). At Universal Citywalk in Los Angeles, for example, MCA-Universal's cinematic expertise has been channelled into a retail precinct that attempts to recreate, in a city where practices of walking have been marginalized to an unprecedented degree, the feel of 'authentic' pedestrian street life. In Las Vegas another instance of this new integrated architecture of entertainment is witnessed at the MGM Grand, which bills itself as 'the city of entertainment' and brings together the spaces and technologies of the cinema, casino and theme park.

Indeed it is at sites which include gambling activities that the production of 'the entertainment experience' tends to be most intensely cultivated, and thus the urban innovations witnessed in Las Vegas require as much consideration from critical theorists as those taking place in Los Angeles (which is often referred to as a paradigmatic postmodern city) (cf. Davis 1998). But 'Las Vegas', as Virilio suggests, is no longer fixed to a stable location in the Nevada desert, and consequently its particular features have been widely dispersed. What I am interested in examining in this chapter is one of the many global sites to which the 'lessons of Las Vegas' have travelled – namely Melbourne, where the enormous Crown Casino Entertainment Complex opened in 1997. This (eclipsing Sydney's Star City) is not only the largest casino and physical structure of its kind in Australia, but easily the largest in the southern hemisphere.

This chapter focuses on the Crown Complex and argues that it provides an instructive example for discussing virtual urban futures. More specifically, I examine the relatively unexplored question of entertainment's relationship to architecture in a post-industrial age, and the kinds of 'new' experiences and virtual aesthetics of space and place that are consequently enabled. In the process of uncovering some of these emergent relationships, I show how older cultural practices central to the notion of entertainment (such as carnival and shopping) are being refigured by the increasing convergence of virtual and

Cartesian space (Holmes 1997). At the same time my discussion problematizes notions of the straightforward 'exportation' of a particular urban form (in this case, the Las Vegas casino and American mall) from the metropolitan centre to the periphery, thereby producing an Antipodean 'variation on a theme park' (Sorkin 1992). I argue instead that the Crown Complex is simultaneously an exemplary and unique (non)place, due to its production within a historical/geographical matrix specific to the Australian state of Victoria, as well as a site indelibly marked by processes of globalization.

Learning from Crown: globalizing Melbourne through the transnational entertainment economy

The presence of the Crown Complex in Melbourne is writ large through its waterfront 'sign' of eight towers that shoot enormous gas-fed fireballs twenty metres into the air, once an hour, every night. When those fireballs explode, light, heat and sound combine to produce an ethereal moment that seems to temporarily transport you out of central Melbourne into some other place and time. Crown's spectacular 'billboard' bears out Virilio's assertion that we should look to cinema, or forms of entertainment, for clues to the nature of contemporary city – to cross one of the nearby footbridges and walk towards the complex as the fireballs erupt is to experience a truly cinematic moment. As Walter Benjamin (1979: 85) writes of the urban billboard, '[t]he genuine advertisement hurtles things at us with the tempo of a good film'. Walking or driving towards the Crown Complex, the spectator's mobile body functions like a camera zooming in on its object. Like the now conventional establishing shot of many Hollywood films, the object of the camera's initial gaze in this scene is the city from afar. More specifically, the flames that erupt at the Crown Entertainment Complex eerily evoke the first few minutes of *Bladerunner* (1982), in which the imagined future cityscape of Los Angeles in the year 2019 is similarly punctuated by gas fireballs. As that film progresses, and we descend from our aerial vantage point and travel inside and around the city – and here I would suggest a direct parallel with a walk inside and around Crown – we find a curious mixture of the familiar and the strange, the industrial and post-industrial, past and future, the utopic and dystopic, co-existent spaces and times, and the problems that beset negotiating and living across these different moments and affects.

Built on approximately nine hectares of prime central city river-front land, the Crown Complex advertises itself as a 'world of entertainment' and includes a 500-room hotel tower, extensive conference facilities, 40 bars, 25 restaurants, 25 retail outlets, a multiplex cinema, three night-clubs, a showroom, eight themed gaming spaces (which collectively feature 350 gaming tables and 2,500 electronic poker machines) and parking for 5,400 cars all under the one roof. Crown employs approximately 8,000 people, runs its own training college, leases private jets to fly in international gamblers, and also owns a golf course for the sole use of its most exclusive customers.

While it was financed and built entirely from private capital, the Crown Complex stands as the flagship of the then incumbent Victorian State Government's attempts to globalize the local economy. When it officially opened in May 1997 the new complex launched itself with a lavishly staged one-off celebration that cost $A14 million and included a massive firework display, performances by local and international celebrities (including Elton John and Ray Charles) and a half-hour broadcast on prime-time regional commercial television. However, the launch represented not just a celebration of the complex itself but, more importantly, marked the celebration of Victoria as an 'event' state. By promoting Victoria as a site known internationally for its tourist attractions and its staging of mega-entertainment events the state hopes to distinguish itself within the competitive but potentially lucrative global entertainment and tourism market. Through a combination of development incentives and fast-track legislation, the state government has played an extremely active role in ensuring that worldwide tele-events, such as the Australian Formula One Grand Prix (which had until recently taken place in another Australian city), are now staged in Melbourne. Each event like the Grand Prix, or tourist attraction like Crown, is a crucial component of a wider strategy that seeks to position and circulate the sign of 'Melbourne' within the global space produced by the international entertainment economy.

One productive way of beginning to describe the local and global aspirations expressed by Crown, its architectural form and the social structures and relations that organize it, is through an examination of it as an *architecture of entertainment*. The use of the term 'architecture' in this particular conjunction is one that encompasses not only the 'structural' elements of built forms but also the mobile networks of interdependent social relations and cultural practices that form the basis of its users' everyday lives and experiences. Simultaneously material and dematerialized, local and global, the architecture of entertainment is brought into being by the intersections and convergences of historical forms and spaces of entertainment, such as theatres, arcades and gaming clubs, with technologies such as cinema, television, computers, and satellites – cultural technologies that have radically reshaped the way in which we conceptualize and inhabit urban space.

Taking the Crown Complex as an exemplar of newly emergent architectures of entertainment, I will discuss three of the central aesthetic characteristics of that architecture through the tropes of *spectacle*, *screen*, and *port*.

Spectacle

As a round-the-clock, 365-days-a-year site of entertainment, the Crown Complex is an exemplary instance of David Harvey's argument that a key symptom of postmodernism in the city since the early 1970s has been both the institutionalization of urban spectacle and its more or less permanent insertion into the city fabric. Today, Harvey (1989: 91) argues, spectacle is primarily associated with the integrated fields of consumption and leisure, resulting in a

proliferation of sites and events distinguished by their production of 'transitory participatory pleasure, of display and ephemerality, of *jouissance*'. Furthermore, he notes, spectacular spaces provide a means through which cities can image themselves and 'attract capital and people (of the right sort)' (Harvey 1989: 92). Yet it is not my purpose here, *pace* Harvey, to argue for the postmodern status of the Crown Complex. Such an argument, I would suggest, is no longer (critically speaking) that useful or interesting and, perhaps more importantly, is both politically and methodologically problematic (see Morris 1992). Instead, I want to shift my analysis to how spectacle at Crown operates to produce and shore up certain hegemonic structures and processes, and to link these structures to powerful narratives of place. More specifically, I would argue that spectacle is used here to consolidate Melbourne's status as a post-industrializing and emergent global city. While many of the spectacular pleasures and anxieties produced and experienced at Crown may appear to be ephemeral, these affective apparatuses are nonetheless strongly articulated to broader cultural and economic changes. As Guy Debord (1995: 12) put it, spectacle is not just about the proliferation of images in contemporary society, 'it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images'.

In his study of the relations between hegemony and the institutionalization of pleasure in Blackpool, Tony Bennett (1986: 144) argues that the 'discourse of modernity … always the articulating centre of Blackpool's self-image, was most effectively condensed … in the sedimented forms of the town's architecture and its pleasures, made concrete, as Gramsci insisted an enduring hegemony must be, at the level of the mundane and the particular'. Similarly, I would suggest, discourses of progress and state/nationhood are effectively embedded in Crown's post-industrial architecture of entertainment. The terrain of popular culture – here, the kind of spaces and experiences produced at the Crown site – is the landscape through which regional and national narratives of 'progress' are enunciated, reformulated and contested. At the Crown Complex, the architecture of entertainment is one that privileges particular representations of the world; in this sense, this architecture is part of a wider struggle concerning the frames of reference that govern our experience of the everyday.

The connections between spectacle, the social and architecture most vividly materialize at Crown in the cavernous five-storey atrium located next to the hotel lobby of the complex, which adjoins the eastern entrance to the main gaming floor. Architecturally, the atrium evokes the form of the theatre, structured as it is by a central 'stage' surrounded by viewing balconies. Stylistically, it also alludes to the 1920s picture palaces through its tiled and highly polished 'decadent' surfaces, its sensuous curves reminiscent of an opulent art-deco aesthetic, and the extravagantly wide grand staircase that ascends to the next floor. The atrium functions as a hub or concentrated point of arrival and dispersal for those entering the complex from its eastern end.[2] From its dimly lit interior, a space that marks your passage from Melbourne 'proper' to Crown's city within the city, visitors are invited to explore different possible affective routes or pathways of entertainment, whether via the lengthy main gaming floor

or the parallel strip of restaurants, cafes and retail outlets. As an 'in-between space', a space of transition, the atrium primarily endeavours to produce a sense of anticipation of the experience *to follow*. In other words, the atrium is not only to be appreciated as a visual feature but, more importantly, it works to produce for its users the entertainment *experience* that Crown identifies as its central product.

Integral to the production of that atrium 'experience' is a computerized sound, light and water show entitled 'Seasons of Fortune' which operates for most of the day and night. The atrium is not, however, just a site where consumers are invited to (passively) gaze at the spectacle produced around them. Rather, these viewers constitute an active part of the spectacle itself. Hence, along with its state-of-the-art show, the social space of the atrium (along with the other major points of entry to the complex) simulates the older (European) entertainment experience of the carnival and festival. This is borne out by television advertisements promoting the complex, in which figures such as the joker and his cast of performers move about a highly technologized landscape that also bears the traces of dominant contemporary entertainment experiences such as television, thus indicating something of the contemporary displacement of simulated practices of carnival from Cartesian to virtual space. In the advertisement, viewers are invited to participate in gambling activities historically coded as risqué or morally dubious according to bourgeois norms. At Crown, it is the *affect* associated with carnival, that of indulgence and a potential sense of transgression, that is copiously on offer. Yet any sense of a practice of 'transgression' in this new environment, I would argue, is no longer attached to the temporary Bakhtinian revolutionary moment of carnivalesque but finds itself recoded in terms of a logic of social mobility (or the 'transgression' of one's place within the social hierarchy). That potential for mobility finds a material symbol in the atrium's grandiose staircase. While the atrium floor is usually crowded, there never seem to be more than four or five people using the staircase, which is permanently cordoned off from the public and strictly supervised by security guards. Wandering around the democratized space of the atrium floor, the viewer finds his or her gaze is inevitably drawn to the top of the stairs. At the top of the stairs lie those elite restaurants and private gaming rooms that mark the attainment of high-roller status. In the space of the atrium, 'transgression', in the carnivalesque sense, is transposed from a celebration of the inversion of social hierarchies into a performance of the *potential* for social and economic mobility through the social order. That mobility is presented as being attainable via the mysterious contingencies of fortune that rule both the nearby gaming tables and the rhetoric of so-called 'free-market' economics that marks both state and national discourses. In a smooth convergence, then, the spectacle, as it is enacted at Crown, functions to (re)produce contemporary economics as a form of entertainment.

If the spectacle that is produced in the atrium combines narratives of nationhood with those of social and economic mobility, then who is the addressee? What kind of subject is being 'hailed' here, given that this site of entertainment

is patronized by a mixture of local and international visitors (Crown is Melbourne's most visited 'tourist attraction')? Part of the function of Crown, I would argue, is to produce what Meaghan Morris (following Robert Somol) refers to in her discussion of the building of Sydney's Centrepoint Tower as a new type of urban subject, the 'citizen-tourist'. For Morris (1990: 10), Sydney Tower functions to doubly interpellate Sydney residents as citizen-tourists; first, they become one with 'foreign' tourists in their gaze at their city, while at the same time they are also 'the potential living *objects* of that self-same tourist gaze'. When revisiting the tower, however, Morris (*ibid.*: 12) discovers that the initial interior displays that she viewed (including those that produced a sinister racialized narrative linking tourism and the place-history of Sydney) have been replaced by a display that contains no narrative of place but, rather, simply presents 'an itinerary of [touristic] movements about to be performed', thus effectively forgoing any address to Sydney residents in favour of one addressed solely to international tourists. By way of contrast, at Crown, where sixty per cent of Crown's revenue comes from those *not* designated as 'overseas high-rollers', economic imperatives function to ensure that distinct forms of address to a newly globalized but still *local* citizen-tourist must be maintained. But, as I have observed, not just economic imperatives are operative here, for spectacle at Crown provides both a framework for the articulation of parochial narratives of progress and citizenship just as much as it provides a framework for the globalized space of entertainment.

Screen

The trope of the screen offers a further way of theorizing the complex workings of the architecture of entertainment and its realignments of space, place and time. Consider, for instance, the giant television screens that flank several of the main entrances to the gaming areas, that line the walls of passageways, and that are omnipresent in the bars and cafes in the complex. For the most part these screens show pre-recorded scenes of the gaming area only metres beyond them. In these virtual representations of the space beyond, local and national celebrities gamble alongside a permanently enthralled series of 'everyday individuals', thereby producing the illusion of a utopian *elsewhere*, a classless and timeless non-place. Thus walking through Crown means engaging with an experience of distraction in which the self is constantly split between a *here* of the casino floor and a virtual *elsewhere*.[3] That split is mediated primarily through the cultural technology and trope of the screen. While the main gaming floor, for example, seems on the one hand to be a coherent space that continues on without end, it simultaneously incorporates design features, such as changing decor, small bars and cafes, and clusters of lounge chairs, that function to construct a number of spatial breaks – what we might think of as different television channels – that simultaneously encourage you to slow down, to stop and engage afresh with a series of micro-spectacles and potential entertainment vectors. That tele-ambience is further enhanced by masses of poker-machine screens and clumps of

ceiling lights that subtly pulse at different levels of brightness; in other words, the space of the gaming floor simulates the experiences of flow and distraction that mark the televisual.

The screen at Crown also casts new meanings onto older forms of visual consumption, themselves the forerunners of contemporary forms of entertainment. The eastern end of the casino complex contains an upmarket shopping strip (including exclusive international outlets such as Prada, Armani, and Gianni Versace) that simulates the experience of the nineteenth-century bourgeois arcade. A number of the conspicuous window-displays of these shops feature mannequins dressed in the stylish designer outfits of Euro-American internationalism. A psychoanalytic reading of these displays might focus on the pleasure and power of looking, and the possibilities of narrowing the gap between one's real and imaginary ideal self through the mediation of the commodity form and the reflections produced in the glass.[4] However, these displays are more interesting in terms of what they suggest about the relations between social and geographical mobility. It is possible to argue that the large window-displays of these shops invite the viewer to fantasize along the lines of class mobility and social fluidity by *transporting* them to an internationalized realm of consumer revelry. Older forms of identification, in this context, are supplanted by virtualized reveries of speed and displacement. Like the goods displayed in nineteenth-century arcades, 'the shops passed in review are themselves a kind of high-speed transport, the displacement of goods produced in mass quantities in unknown elsewheres into temporal simultaneity and spatial condensation' (Morse 1990: 204). The virtualized nature of this practice is also apparent, in that most passers-by do not enter the shops because the windows and front entrances are, in a sense, identified as screens or electronic walls – they are something you 'watch' rather than 'enter'; they invoke the pleasures of particular practices of viewing (again of televisual flow and distraction) rather than (related) practices of 'browsing' which can be enjoyed elsewhere in the complex. Despite his hyperbolic tendencies it is still Baudrillard (1983: 126–7) who captures that shift most cogently when he describes the contemporary consumer landscape as one in which 'the scene and the mirror no longer exist; instead, there is a screen and network. In place of the reflexive transcendence of mirror and scene, there is a non-reflecting surface, an immanent surface where operations unfold – the smooth operational surface of communication.'

Screens also dominate the western end of the complex, where the principal attractions include a large multiplex cinema featuring plush wide-screen theatrettes with large recliner seats, in which you can eat 'first-class' food and drink champagne, and the two large restaurant-cafes, Planet Hollywood and the All-Star Cafe. The latter two spaces are internally dominated by screens that project images from film and television history – they show, for instance, your favourite Bruce Willis clips while you eat a burger and sip a Coke. These increasingly common spaces of what has been coined 'eater-tainment' mark out a new conjuncture between older notions of entertainment (the viewing of films and television) and everyday practices of eating and drinking in a quasi-public

environment (see Blair 1997). Such a conjuncture suggests a new hybrid space that combines the private lounge room and the semi-public space of the cinema or cafe.

The distinction between public and private bodies is similarly blurred on the main gaming floor at Crown, but this time in relation to the categories of consumption and work. Here we witness 'the reinvention of labor as spectacle' in the form of a seemingly never-ending panorama of bodies at machines and gaming tables (Sorkin 1992: 228). What initially looks like a Fordist production line, instantaneously morphs into an attractive, leisure-oriented, post-industrial world. As a billboard promoting Brisbane's Treasury Casino and featuring a poker machine succinctly puts it, 'Some machines make work easier, ours make it unnecessary'. What the screen of the poker machine *anticipates* in this post-industrial context is not the actual erasure of work but its merging with leisure. At the poker machine, then, the repeated pressing of the spin switch evokes both the tasks of the production line or the computer keyboard and infinite 'leisure' in the form of television-watching and channel-surfing.

In Crown's 'screened' spaces, the body is continually experienced as a virtualized form. Recently, I learned to play Blackjack. Sitting at the table, one quickly realizes that playing this game is no longer just a case of learning card values, combinations and probabilities, but is simultaneously about learning particular bodily performances that take their cue from the screen. The movements of the body, particularly the hands, become part of a dance performed for the surveillance camera. The croupier cannot let the game proceed until the performance is verified by the camera. To gain another card you must clearly hit the table *this way*. To 'sit' on your hand you must gesture *like this*. You must not hand your money to the croupier – it must be placed on the table *this way*, so that the exchanges taking place can be recorded by the camera. In his notes on gambling, Benjamin noted that games of chance contain 'the workman's gesture, for there can be no game without the quick movement of the hand by which the stake is put down or a card is picked up. The jolt in the movement of a machine is like the so-called *coup* in a game of chance' (1968: 177). What linked the two movements together was the principle of *shock*: a defining experience of modernity according to Benjamin. Today, as Patricia Petro (1995: 275) comments, we live in a 'post-shock economy' where 'leisure as well as labour time becomes routinized, fetishized, commodified'. Not only does the screen begin to condense the bodily actions of work and leisure into one, it also electronically shores up a continuity between these ostensibly separate spheres of activity via its surveillance functions. At Crown, in a gesture to a Benjaminian kind of process, these bodily movements performed for the thousands of cameras quickly become second nature.

Could Benjamin have anticipated the degree to which, in the age of micro-surveillance, the worker's gesture has been deftly woven into the televisual fabric of everyday life? The more obviously placed screens in the complex are rumoured to be supplemented by (a not implausible) 3,000 cameras. One anonymous dealer told an interviewer (Lovett 1997: 9) how he 'cleans' or opens his

hands to the security cameras over two hundred times during a shift: '[y]ou put cash away – clean your hands; count out chips – clean your hands. It's funny because you find yourself doing it in other situations, like cleaning the dishes at home; put away a cup, show the camera an open hand'. Thus the architecture of entertainment at Crown with its televisual economy of screens and networks (both visible and hidden) provides us with a premonition of a post-industrial space in which we witness the erosion of the divisions between work and leisure, as all fields of life become subject to tele-mediation.

Port

While the tropes of spectacle and screen are essential components of the architecture of entertainment found at Crown, they don't give us an adequate sense of Crown's physical locus (*versus* its electronic dispersal) and its role in the historical-geographical development of Melbourne. For, whatever its other meanings, the Crown Complex (to paraphrase an observation by Michael Sorkin) rhapsodizes on the relationship between transportation and geography (1992: 210). And it is here that the notion of the port is a useful conceptual category.

Opposite the Crown site, on the northern bank of the Yarra River, a recently installed memorial (in the form of a small wharf and sizeable sculpture) acts as a marker of one of Melbourne's two competing civic foundation narratives. The memorial signifies the place where the pioneer John Fawkner arrived on his ship, the *Enterprise*, and laid claim to the stretch of riverside land that became central Melbourne (Davison 1978: 239–40). The exterior form of the Crown Complex (with a little imagination) itself resembles a ship with funnels illuminated in neon each night. In any case, through its riverside location Crown inevitably inserts itself into Melbourne's historical narrative. The semantics of 'enterprise' have, however, been re-aligned here: once upon a time the word spoke directly to the project of colonization and the extraction of natural wealth from the reaches of empire, but now it finds itself re-articulated with a particular kind of free-market, global economics more attuned to the contingencies of information and entertainment flows.

Viewed from another perspective, the exterior of the Crown Complex resembles the low-rise form of the airport terminal, which, according to Paul Virilio, is the new gateway or 'face' of the city, superseding the port and railway station (1991b). In terms of its interior, much of Crown's architecture resembles that of the generic international airport terminal, with its seemingly endless interior 'lounges' and transit spaces; the glossy but sterile upmarket shopping strip, with its exclusive international stores, further reminds the stroller of the duty-free section of an airport terminal. At the beginning of 2001, the Crown Complex became a literal extension of those lounges and shops, due to the completion of the Citylink freeway development. One key part of this two-billion-dollar large-scale reorganization of the circulation of bodies and goods through metropolitan space will be the seamless linking of Melbourne's international airport to the central city by a single freeway corridor.

Ackbar Abbas (1997: 4) has recently described Hong Kong as not so much a place as a space of transit. It has always been, and will perhaps always be, a port in the most literal sense – a doorway, a point in between – even though the nature of that port has changed. A port city that used to be located at the intersections of different spaces, Hong Kong will increasingly be at the intersections of different times or speeds. Crown Casino, as a city in miniature and a representation of a possible future Melbourne, operates somewhat similarly. While the bodies of the (predominantly Asian-based) high-rollers who bring almost half of Crown's income arrive on privately leased jets, their wallets travel almost instantaneously via an exclusive international version of EFT-POS (Bartholomeuz 1997; Silvester *et al.* 1997). For those who arrive at the Crown Complex by more conventional means the promise of high-speed global travel is always – virtually speaking – just around the corner in the Las Vegas or Monte Carlo Room. Yet, at the same time as speed is responsible for what Paul Virilio (1991a: 64) describes as the 'disappearance' of urbanism and architecture into 'the space-time of vectors' and 'communication machines', it simultaneously reinscribes and affirms more traditional notions of the city as a specifically located place. At Melbourne's Crown Complex, that affirmation of place is based on the belief that new technologies – which find an apt metaphor in the figure of the computer port – will nullify the geographical barrier of distance that has historically kept Melbourne globally isolated, that the city will become a nodal point in the networks of vectors that organize the global exchange of bodies, capital, information and entertainment. Plugging into the information economy is central to a process in which Melbourne and Victoria are being reimagined and concretely refashioned as a post-industrial city/state. At a concrete political and economic level this shift has been marked by the Victoria state government's persistent courting of investment by information industry transnationals (Riley 1997: 53–4). For many of these information-technology companies it seems that geographic location is no longer such a determining factor when choosing regional headquarters. The manager of one such firm, which has recently established its Asia-Pacific headquarters in Melbourne, mentioned 'a strong airport infrastructure that made the region directly accessible' as one of the most important factors in choosing the city (Riley 1997: 54). For Victorians, hailed as citizens of this post-industrialized city/state, Melbourne's (dis)location on the disorienting global map of information networks and global vectors is not experienced as an erasure of the local; rather, discourses of locality are refigured and strengthened through discourses of mobility and globalization.

Crown is a port of multiple speeds that is linked to a globalized network of entertainment, a network which is becoming a key sector of the corporate economies of capitalist countries (see Breen 1995). Much of the impetus behind this increased production of entertainment commodities can be linked to the development of new technologies. Most significantly, the last decade has witnessed the general merger of 'the intensified entertainment economy to the global telecommunications-computer infrastructure' (or so-called 'information superhighway') (Breen 1995: 498). While much recent urban and theoretical

discourse has focused on the western shift to 'information economies', the actual category of 'information' has tended to remain vaguely defined and unexamined. Manuel Castells (1996: 366) has recently observed that 'for all the ideology of the potential of new communication technologies in education, health and cultural enhancement, the prevailing strategy aims at developing a giant electronic entertainment system, considered the safest investment from a business perspective'.[5] In the light of Castells' claims, perhaps we might reconfigure this shift towards what Poster (1990) termed a 'mode of information' in terms of a mode of entertainment (or even infotainment?). The forms and spaces of this mode of entertainment are not necessarily radically new or completely unfamiliar; rather, the *architecture of entertainment*, exemplified by Crown, jacks itself in to older entertainment spaces and practices to create hybrids of old and new forms. While a great number of Crown's critics have dismissed the complex's defence of itself as an 'entertainment complex' rather than a 'casino', in some ways their critiques are misplaced. Crown *is* certainly now inextricably part of a wider architecture of entertainment (you do not have to look too hard to find Crown on television, at the sports ground, sponsoring a festival, etc.). At the same time, as those critics quite rightly observe, and Crown's management has acknowledged, gambling is still the engine of the casino and is expected to generate up to 75 per cent of the overall revenue (Gibson 1997: 1). My analysis of Crown so far, however, indicates that the 'leisured' practice of gambling is difficult to separate out from a host of other practices of leisure at Crown. It is reasonable to speculate, therefore, that what Crown represents is an audacious attempt to reshape the field of entertainment so that gambling is relocated nearer the centre of a new economy of leisure. As Berland (following Marshall McLuhan) has noted, historically new forms of entertainment have tended to adopt the 'content' of their predecessor – or, to put it in information technology terms, 'cultural hardware precedes the software that will constitute its content. As Brecht said of radio, it finds a market, and then looks for a reason to exist' (cited in Berland 1992: 43). In the case of Crown, then, both the market and its hardware (the spaces and forms of entertainment ranging from carnival to television) precede the arrival of gambling as a cultural practice central to entertainment.

Conclusion

Marc Augé (1995: 94) has noted that for Walter Benjamin the 'glass-and-iron' forms of the nineteenth century, such as arcades and department stores, embodied 'a wish to prefigure the architecture of the next century, as a dream or anticipation'. A number of those industrial forms and their associated cultural practices are certainly apparent in contemporary architectures of entertainment. What future architectures are presaged by forms like the Crown Complex? One might note, for instance, that a number of major airlines have recently announced their plans to install in-flight gambling facilities. In Benjaminian fashion, then, it might be possible to argue that the casino as airport anticipates

the aircraft as casino. Or is it the other way around? Despite its lack of a clear teleological trajectory, however, it is not the case that an even more mobile and diffuse architecture of entertainment signals the disappearance of local place as such. On the contrary, the development of 'non-places' is, as I have argued, dependent on the survival and reassertion of 'place', as the Crown Complex and the post-industrialization of Melbourne more generally bear witness. What we can learn from Crown is that becoming global must always simultaneously be about becoming local. Bound up in this new production of the local is a problematic fantasy, however, for one of the place-effects produced by Crown is an impossibly utopian vision of a world in which the vectoral flows between global nodes such as Melbourne, Hong Kong and Los Angeles are staged in equitable terms, rather than just being a reconfiguration of the decidedly uneven flows of earlier imperial moments. The recent so-called 'economic crises' or 'meltdowns' taking place in various Asian economies have shown the limits of such a fantasy, insofar as Crown's international high-stakes gamblers are now considerably less eager to visit Melbourne, and thus the economic viability of the entire operation has been thrown into considerable doubt.

Despite its precarious economic status, Crown nevertheless provides us with an instructive example of the ways in which the production and experience of urban space is increasingly intersecting with, or being mediated by, the broad (globalized) cultural field of entertainment. As a result of that intersection we are witnessing the emergence of a distinct virtual urban aesthetic that finds itself expressed through material metaphors, such as the spectacle, screen and port, which are visibly embodied within the kind of architectures of entertainment discussed in this chapter. While that aesthetic is not radically 'new' – in fact, its formation can be traced in earlier industrial spaces, forms of entertainment and experiences of urban life – it does precipitate new modes of inhabitation and experience in the post-industrial city, and the ongoing challenge for urban critics is to chart the mobile contours of the rapidly evolving environments produced by such an aesthetic and the particular types of local-global citizenship they engender.

Notes

1 Thanks to Chris Healy, David Holmes and Tania Lewis for their generous suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

2 The spatial configuration of the Crown Complex is an elaborate variation on the basic 'dumb-bell' shopping mall design in which two anchor or magnet stores are connected by a pedestrian mall. At Crown, the west end (with multiplex and cafe-restaurants) is one anchor, the atrium at the eastern end is another, and the main gaming floor is the connecting 'mall'.

3 See Morse's (1990) excellent discussion of an *elsewhere* that inhabits the landscape of the everyday in 'An ontology of everyday distraction'. Also see Day (1997).

4 This kind of reading can be found in Fiske *et al.*

5 Entertainment, as Castells (1996: 366) notes, is one of the fastest-growing industries in western economies. Recent figures for the United States, for example, show that the entertainment industry accounts for 'over $350 billion of consumer spending per year, and about 5 million workers, with employment increasing at 12% per year'.

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10 The city as tourist spectacle

Marketing Sydney for the 2000 Olympics

Gordon Waitt

> At Circular Quay, just across the water from where unwanted white men and women fixed the city with unsavoury origins two hundred and five years ago, the people rejoiced at being wanted by the world … They had chosen the biggest circus on Earth, hoping the circus would bring its own bread.
>
> (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 September 1993: 1)

Place-marketing is one feature of the post-industrial city that includes gentrification, event-led planning and the growth of themed parks, malls and heritage sites. Each emphasizes the city as a site of spectacle, giving new priority to aesthetic processes (Jacobs 1999). Such urban transformations are explained by the logic of so-called 'cultural capital'. This term, used by Zukin (1990: 38), defines various sorts of capital invested in culture industries in which 'symbolic' consumption practices provide a basis for capital accumulation. Global sporting spectacles are perhaps the ultimate example of the city as tourist spectacle, given the million dollar budgets, world markets and the rapid turn-around of capital. Spectacle and aestheticization are not exclusive to world-cities. A range of tourist events is offered throughout the urban hierarchy, including fêtes, fairs, expositions, shows, firework displays, festivals and parades. Culture (understood as the aesthetic) has been appropriated by entrepreneurs and government organizations and given centre stage in the process of capital accumulation. For Jameson (1984) and Harvey (1989a) such an extension of market power signalled an essential condition of postmodernity. For Harvey (1989a), Sorkin (1992) and Zukin (1991), the city as tourist spectacle represents postmodernity itself, with image, illusion and fantasy given priority over substance, 'reality' and the 'authentic'.

The argument employed here is that Sydney's bid for the 2000 Olympic Games exemplifies the priority given to aesthetics, in which marketers identify certain familiar elements of a city's identity, lifting them out of their contexts and editing them back together, depriving them of their initial meaning. Denial of historical difference and individual context is internal to a place-marketing philosophy that trades only in oversimplifications (i.e. the reduction to one trait), stereotypes (amplification of one or more traits) and labelling (where a place is deemed to be of a certain nature) (Shields 1991). Confirmation is provided for

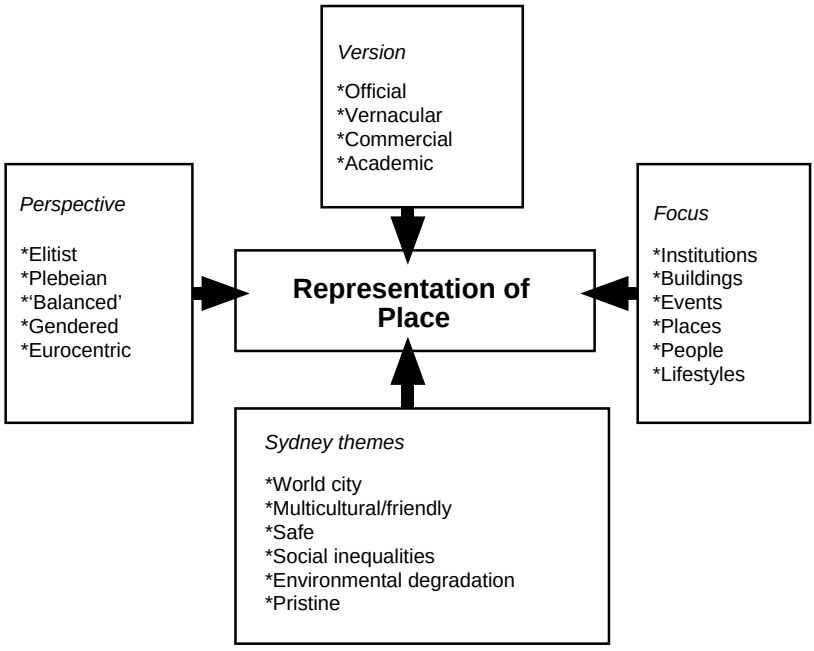

Figure 10.1 Competing variables in the representations of Sydney
Source: Adapted from Dayton (1995).

arguments that the logic of marketing places generates decontexualization, sameness and blandness through an indifference to the 'real' difference of places, playfully mixing social, cultural and historical forms into one undifferentiated image (Harvey 1989a). In social theory Giddens (1990) refers to this process in which subjects are taken out of concrete space and time as 'time/space distanciation'. In this chapter Sydney's bid is demonstrated to illustrate the archetype of the promotional culture antics, an assertion also made for previous Olympic Games by Boorstin (1973), Debord (1973) and Ley and Olds (1988).

Furthermore, the institutionalized, authoritative voice of the bid organization is argued to silence alternative 'stories' or 'readings', particularly those by and about the city's disadvantaged people. A multiplicity of possible versions, themes, perspectives and foci of any city can be provided. The objective of this chapter is not to prioritize one version of Sydney over another, nor ascribe greater 'truth' to my own interpretation of Sydney over the projection of the bid-makers. Instead, it is to expose some elements of what the bid-makers preferred to silence. In addition, social movements arose in Sydney with an agenda of redressing the bid's glossy image, and arguably its irrelevance to 'realities' of local histories, localities and culture. This reaction is similar to tourist promotion elsewhere (see Mullins (1991) in the case of Australia's Gold Coast). Local

activism in cities often coalesces around place-specific impacts and the local residents' concerns for their own locality and their rights as local citizens (Boyle 1997; Warren 1996). In Australia, as in other former colonies, post-industrial city sites of tourist spectacle also intersect with legacies of colonization. Campaigns of resistance were centred on the social injustices of inherited colonial legacies including *terra nullius* and Social Darwinism. Often non-governmental organizations have helped to represent and mobilize local and community concerns. In this case, however, the Sydney Olympic Bid Committee (SOBC) attempted to silence all contesting voices by deeming them 'un-patriotic'. In Sydney's case, reactionary bid politics were effectively nipped in the bud, and activists were disempowered by the entrepreneurial planning system.

Sydney's Olympic bid and the post-industrial city

Promoting Sydney to host the 2000 Olympics epitomizes three characteristics of the post-industrial or 'postmodern city'. First, city marketing demonstrates government policies informed by entrepreneurial, rather than welfare, goals to address deindustrialization. Olympic bidding demonstrates local politics' transformation from a bureaucratic to an entrepreneurial role. Appointed chairpersons on bid committees have become those with acclaimed dynamic, charismatic and inspired business leadership (Cochrane *et al.* 1996). The composition of the Sydney Olympic Bid Committee (SOBC) illustrates this transformation. It contained seven business people as opposed to nine government officials. In this way the responsibility of marketing Sydney was ceded to business.

Second, as leisure experiences, the Olympics demonstrate the functional transformation of the city's landscape. Previously city landscapes exercised a moral capacity and acted as signifiers of personal identity, the place that people come from or have moved to (Sennett 1991). Today, they have been altered into a product to generate 'cultural capital'. Advertisements produced by the culture industries are examples of 'post-industrial commodities' which are literally signs (Lash and Urry 1994: 193). This has led to the city being predominantly reconstructed as a centre for postmodern consumption. As Zukin (1992: 221) argued, the city is a site of spectacle, a 'dreamscape of visual consumption'. Sydney's Olympic bid illustrates this visual transformation of the city's built and social environment into an aesthetic product symbolizing friendship, safety and a pristine environment. Not surprisingly, Sydney's place-image exactly matched Baron Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic vision.

Finally, images have gained greater importance in the so-called 'promotional culture' of marketing places (Harvey 1989a). As spatial boundaries diminish in an increasingly global economy, what different world locations actually or apparently contain is argued to become more rather than less important (Harvey 1989a). Unlike product marketing, which can stimulate increased consumption, cities must compete with each other in 'place wars' (Kotler *et al.* 1993) for their 'market share' of jobs and investment, and as capital becomes increasingly mobile, this competition intensifies. Hosting the Olympics arguably gives the city

a higher world-market profile. As Ward and Gold (1994: 1) argue, the stakes are high for such a hallmark event: 'the victors not only earn success in one specific contest but also enhance their promotional *curricula vitae* compared to their rivals'. Success not only attracts the spending of large international audiences but also is believed to help foster positive images for potential corporate and government investors and the retention of the interest of professionals and white-collar workers (Bonnemaison 1990). Even if the Olympics themselves run at financial loss, the act of hosting the Games is believed to attract other investment forms.

In bidding for an Olympic Games, the social, cultural and historical elements of a locality are mixed and matched by marketing strategies, arguably as means of achieving both capital accumulation and social control (Harvey 1990). Sydney's places were imaged for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as unique, attractive, winning and uplifting urban environments. As a political device, the bid was employed to engender social consensus in an era distinguished by a sense of alienation, anomie and increasing social and economic inequalities. The SOBC (1993a) invited Sydney residents to '*Share the Spirit*'. Harvey (1989a) referred to spectacle in this role as that of 'bread and circuses'. Attributed to the Romans, this formula of social control assumes a public mass consciousness and argues that providing the disadvantaged with a taste of bread and a day of entertainment will lead them to forget their troubles and believe in the authority's advantages. Historically, spectacle has frequently been deployed to create this sense of social solidarity and loyalty to place.

Marketing processes have been strongly critiqued as destroying a place's integrity by dismissively rearranging cultural and historical resources into new patterns that might earn money and acceptance (Harvey 1989b; Zukin 1992). Sydney's bid exemplifies this process of decontextualization that removes anything controversial. The promotional language employs a universal vocabulary that describes Sydney as 'the most beautiful', 'the most exciting', and 'a city of friendship' (SOBC 1993b). Despite the appearance of making Sydney's attributes unique, the bid harnessed only the city's surface differences.

Analysis of Sydney's bid

This chapter's argument is drawn from an analysis of Sydney's 2000 bid documents, comprising a three-volume bid book, a monthly magazine (*Share the Spirit*) and, perhaps most critically, a video presentation to the IOC (22 September 1993). These sources are analysed as part of a culturally defined system of communications in which 'meanings are encoded and decoded by specialist groups of producers and decoded in many different ways by the groups who constitute the audiences for those products' (Burgess 1990: 139–40). Considered in this way, three different emphases can be identified in the study of promotional messages: the image as part of the tourism

production system; latent meanings of the message; and the audience's differentiated consumption. This chapter addresses the first two of these themes.

The first theme addresses the bid material itself as part of the tourism production system, viewing the activity of place-imaging as a manifestation of the specific needs of the communicators and as a product of the broader socio-political system. Within the context of Harvey's (1989a) theoretical framework of time-space compression, this section examines why the role of hallmark events has acquired renewed significance in the service of place promotion.

The second theme concentrates on the SOBC's messages, searching for the meaning of the signage in the material that is selected, encoded and communicated. This section examines the ideological and rhetorical meanings of these city images within the theoretical contexts of 'social spatialization' (Lefebvre 1991). Social spatialization is not simply an 'imagined geography' but rather part of the social control and co-ordination of perceptions based upon hegemonic systems of ideology and power relations. The term social spatialization was coined to unite the social relations, meaning and physical qualities of space (Merrifield 2000). Planning techniques of the state through place-marketing are argued to be one mechanism by which the process that organizes and represents space occurs.

Time-space compression and restructuring Sydney's urban economy

The restructuring of Sydney's urban economy and the role of place-marketing can be understood within the broader process of economic globalization and the theoretical framework of time-space compression, which bring some places and people closer together. According to Harvey (1989a) time-space compression is an outcome of entrepreneurs' continual search to find new markets and to reduce the amount of time it takes for money advanced to finance the cost of new production to be returned with a profit through the sales of goods and services. Together, the time of production and circulation are termed the turnover time of capital. Time in a capitalist economy literally costs money. Therefore, reductions in the turnover time of capitalism enhance profit levels. Each sub-mode of capitalism (mercantile, industrial, monopoly and global) organizes space in such a way as to best facilitate the growth of production, the reproduction of labour-power and the maximization of profit. Capitalism is able to overcome periods of crisis and establish a new sub-mode of capitalism through the reorganization of space and time. The annihilation of space by time is integral to explaining the marketing places phenomenon because it is an integral part of the complex shift from monopoly to global capitalism. Investigating the marketing places phenomenon within the context of time-space compression helps explain:

(i) cities repackaged as centres of consumption, not production;
(ii) the importance of the image to differentiating places;

(iii) increased competition between places;
(iv) spectacle as the ultimate consumer attraction; and
(v) urban entrepreneurism.

Sydney as a city of consumption

As the nature of capitalism altered from Fordism to post-Fordism a new spatial fix was required for Sydney, shaped by global capitalism's demands. Sydney was not immune to the older capitalist world's political-economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in deindustrialization (Murphy and Watson 1990; Lepani *et al.* 1995; O'Connor and Stimson 1995). One strategy employed by property developers in Sydney's Central Industrial Area (CIA) was to restructure the economic and industrial base of the area around 'high-tech' industries (Watson 1990). An alternative strategy employed by NSW state governments was to refashion the city to facilitate a form of accumulation emphasizing consumption rather than production activities. Since the early 1980s these plans have included a heritage precinct (The Rocks), a festival place (Darling Harbour), a casino (Star City, Pyrmont) and waterfront revitalization projects (the finger wharves of Woolloomooloo and Walsh Bay). Refashioning the city in this way emphasizes the transformation of what is produced in cities from manufactures to aesthetic commodities (quaternary services) that satisfy individual needs for entertainment, education and culture. A transformation of the function of cities has occurred from centres of production and places of attachment – i.e. 'home' – to that of collective consumption (Pinch 1985). A city's social and physical attributes become commodities to be consumed and rendered attractive through marketing, as capitalists would expect of any product (Urry 1995). In terms of time-space compression, refashioning the city to provide consumer attraction (sports stadia; convention, entertainment and shopping centres; marinas) increases the turnover of capital in comparison to the production of manufactured items.

Sydney as an imaged city

Time-space compression resulting from technological innovations in transport and telecommunications has enabled the increasing mobility of labour and tourists, the globalization of markets, and the freedom of activities to locate without cost constraints imposed by physical distance (Ashworth and Voogd 1990). This freedom, according to Harvey (1989a), does not mean that the significance of places decreases. In contrast, as barriers to physical distance diminish, actual or imagined place characteristics become more important. Harvey noted the paradox: 'the less important the spatial barriers, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the variations of place and space, and the greater the incentive for places to be differentiated in ways attractive to capital' (1989a: 295–6). Ironically, despite time-space compression bringing a new emphasis to the geographical differences between places, the universal language of promoters – 'first',

'longest', 'largest', 'best' and 'safest' – replaces distinctive place attributes with a stereotyped and superficial gloss (Holcomb 1994).

Place promotion to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities to a target audience is not itself new (Jones 1946). In Australia during the 1920s the Commonwealth Immigration Office commissioned advertisements in British newspapers to entice white migrants to venture into *terra incognita* (Whitlock and Carter 1992). Nevertheless, current place promotion is both qualitatively and quantitatively different from the past as a result of the spread of market principles. No longer is place-marketing the province of local business and government; today it is a multi-billion dollar industry employing advertising agencies and public-relations firms under contract to the city. For example, the advertising agency Clemenger Sydney was appointed for the bid, spending over A$20 million, with financial support from the corporate sector, the federal and NSW state governments. Promotion of cities has therefore reached a new status in keeping with Ashworth and Voogd's (1990: 3) argument that the perception of cities and the mental image held of them become active components of economic success or failure. Imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban space by, for example, hosting the Olympic Games is an important mechanism for attracting capital and people in a period of intense interurban competition and urban entrepreneurism.

Sydney competing to host the Olympic Games

In a global economy, cities, having undergone massive deindustrialization, are themselves also increasingly in competition with each other for new forms of investment (Paddison 1993). Each city is eager to present itself as attractive to potential investors, employers and tourists (see Kearns and Philo 1993). In this competitive promotional environment two new sets of city attributes – amenity and services – have become prominent locational determinants (Ashworth and Voogd 1990). City amenity includes an appreciation of the quality of the natural and built environments. The service theme addresses the city as a place in which to live, work, play or invest. Together these themes indicate the increasing focus on cities' quality of life. The city has to be imaged as an invigorating, exciting, yet safe place for residents and tourists to play and consume in. Time-space compression, by placing cities in a new competitive environment, therefore involves a greater importance of advertising to promote the city's positive, unique and differential amenity and service attributes.

Sydney's successful bid was itself the culmination of intense competition, both domestically and internationally. Among Australian cities alone, competition for all hallmark events is intense, as evidenced by the rivalry over hosting the Australian Formula One Grand Prix and the Olympic Games. Sydney's bid was the third successive attempt by an Australian city (Brisbane bid for the 1992 Olympics and Melbourne for those in 1996).

Internationally, Sydney competed with Beijing, Berlin, Istanbul, Manchester and Milan. Reluctance to host the Olympic Games, for fear of repeating

Montreal's indebtedness (the city's residents are still paying for a 1976 Games debt of US$1 billion), had been offset by indirect and direct economic rewards achieved by host cities since the Los Angeles Organizing Committee corporatized the Games. Competition throughout the promotion period was evident in the smear campaign run by the rival cities. For example, in Australia the Channel Nine TV Network ran a documentary on Manchester portraying the city as a grim, drizzly wasteland. In retaliation, the British newspaper the *Daily Mirror* (1993: 1) ran an article headed 'Aussies Build Olympic City on Poison Waste Dump'. In addition to reporting that Homebush had a toxic industrial legacy of pesticide, herbicide and paint plants, the article portrayed Sydney as a city of sex shows, hard porn shops, violence, rape and dirty beaches, and one that had twice as much rain as Manchester!

In this competitive environment the marketing language configured Sydney's facilities and services in a similar fashion to an Olympic athlete's body, with an emphasis on precision and winning by being the strongest, fastest, or most efficient (Bale and Sang 1996). The depiction of Sydney's environment also followed this configuration and was portrayed as pristine, free from contaminants. The intense competition that now characterizes the bidding process has ensured, as in Olympic sports themselves, that priority is given to winning over participating, achievement over failure, and performance over bodily experience.

Sydney 2000 as spectacle

Hallmark events are an integral part of state and federal government economic restructuring policies. Harvey (1989b) argued the Olympic Games as spectacle is the ultimate consumer attraction, illustrating the rapid turnover times sought by entrepreneurs. The 2000 Olympics were scheduled for only sixteen days. In this time they attracted to Sydney 111,000 international visitors and a worldwide television audience of 3.7 billion (ATC 2000). The turnover time was almost instantaneous!

In economic terms, however, hosting an Olympics remains highly speculative. While, apart from the Montreal Games, each Olympics held in the past three decades has returned a 'profit', this is because, since the precedent set by the Munich 1972 Games, costs are calculated in a budget that separates operational costs (accommodation, catering, publications and media) from infrastructure costs. The SOBC argued the Olympics were an imperative part of securing Sydney's status as an Asia-Pacific regional headquarters and international tourist destination. The Australian Tourist Commission (ATC 1993) estimated an extra 2.1 million overseas visitors between 1995 and 2004, generating an estimated A$16 billion in tourism. KPMG Peat Marwick's (1993) independent economic impact study became widely publicized even before the announcement of Sydney's successful bid (see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 1993). According to this report the benefits derived from the capital spending on Olympic projects were an estimated A$7.3 billion. Responding to the bid's success, the then State Premier, Mr John Fahey, stated that 'the Olympics represented an economic

boost that could be achieved by no other single event' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September 1993). Paul Keating (the then Prime Minister) is alleged to have said at this time that Australia was now 'in the swim with the big boys' (*The Australian*, 25 September 1993). Later, Mr Rod McGeoch (1994), chief executive of the SOBC, reflected that winning the bid coincided with the Australian economy's climb out of recession. In these narratives spectacle was positioned as an economic saviour.

Less publicized were academic and government reports that suggested hallmark event capital and tourism flows are easily exaggerated. In Sydney's case, Turner (1996) and Leiper (1996) offered a far more cautious predictions. Leiper based his argument on the history of too optimistic predictions for inbound tourism at previous hallmark events such as the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Such criticisms are well founded. In 2000, official tourism figures are substantially lower than those first quoted in 1993. Estimates of Olympic-induced visitors are at 1.6 million (1997–2000), while the economic benefit to Australia has been revised down to A$6.1 billion (1997–2004) (ATC 2000). Furthermore, regardless of the Games' success and claims to being the most watched television event in history, the ATC recognizes that further marketing campaigns will be required in order to capitalize on this exposure.

In addition, as with many past Olympic Games, figures published for the costs and profits for Sydney 2000 remain controversial. In 1990 official figures suggested that projected profits would be around only A$50 million, with a projected revenue of A$1,692 million (advertising, media, ticket sales, souvenirs) and an expenditure of A$1,619 million (Sydney Olympic Games Review Committee 1990). In 1993, and again in 1998, these estimates were radically revised, with expenditures of A$3,232 million and then A$4,900 million respectively being revealed. Studies by Booth and Tatz (1996: 11) and a Commonwealth Government Committee predicted only marginal gains to the national economy (Griffiths and Bevis 1995). According to the former, the annual injection into the national economy represents only 0.125 per cent of the Australian GDP. Similarly, the latter concluded that the estimated effects of the Games on Australia's GDP over the next 10 years would be less than 0.2 per cent. In short, as Cox *et al.* (1994) have argued, there may be good reasons for questioning the view of spectacle as panacea for economic difficulties.

Sydney's urban entrepreneurism

The refashioning of Sydney must also be contextualized within the shifting relations between the state, capital and tiers of the Australian tripartite political hierarchy. In Australia the emergence of aspects of an entrepreneurial state are well documented (Pusey 1991; Winter and Brook 1993). Since the 1970s Australia's urban governments, like those elsewhere in the advanced capitalist world, have embraced an 'entrepreneurial', rather than the previous

'managerial', approach to address the widespread economic erosion and fiscal crisis of large cities (McGuirk *et al.* 1996). Urban entrepreneurism embraced ideas informed by the 'New Right' agenda, including the virtues of individualism, self-help, public–private partnerships and private property (Harvey 1989b). Within urban entrepreneurism obstacles to attaining economic growth included planning regulation, public participation and social equity considerations. Privatization of social services and the emergence of entrepreneurial public–private partnerships for redevelopment and revitalization of city ventures signalled both the severe constraints on public finance and a disillusionment with a political ideology of state intervention. Not surprisingly, given the direct participation of private capital in planning ventures, city agencies are behaving like private real-estate developers. A blurring of the distinction between public provision for social goals and private production for economic opportunity and individual profit has thus occurred. As governments focus on the perceived economic benefits of hallmark events 'the entire urban core is presently looked upon as a recreational environment and as a tourism resource' (Jansen-Verbeke 1989: 233). Rather than policies of welfare provision, the 'business' of urban development increasingly uses the promotion strategies and tactics of the profit-making sector to increase its share of the capital investment from entrepreneurs, tourists or local consumers (Roche 1994). Dunn and McGuirk (1999: 21) identified at least four problematic outcomes of entrepeneurial elected and non-elected governing authorities: subsidizing private-sector interests at the cost of public concerns; the dilution of local planning powers; the limitation of public participation; and the homogenization of community opinion.

Sydney's 2000 bid epitomizes the actions and problems of the entrepreneurial state. First, the SOBC itself was a public–private partnership. Indeed, it was registered as a limited company. Each of the tiers of the Australian tripartite political system was represented, as well as corporate interests. Second, public participation in the bid was restricted to SOBC-sponsored and -organized promotional events, including hijacking celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Harbour Bridge opening and the 1993 City to Surf Fun Run. These events were used to give the impression of public solidarity behind the bid. The concept was further sold to Sydney's residents through a television advertising campaign and by launching fashion designs. Yet, without any formal public participation, the bid presented the homogenous community opinion, claiming not only that 'our people [Sydney residents] … have given their unqualified support' but also that 'the Sydney Games has the support of all Australians' (SOBC 1993b). Third, justification for the Games rested upon the logic of capital accumulation through the speculative construction of Olympic venues (McGeoch 1991). The SOBC encapsulates the very essence of urban entrepreneurism by the way it gives priority to the interests of capital through emphasizing efficiency above equity, wealth-creation above redistribution and place-imaging above substance.

Sydney as a site of tourist 'spectacle': social spatialization and representations of place

Places are more about myth than substance, as is illustrated by the attachment of an assemblage of customary social practices and norms to the notion of Sydney as 'Botany Bay', 'Bondi', the 'Emerald City' or the '2000 Olympics'. As demonstrated by the Sydney examples, place myths are changeable, and a number of myths relating to different social spaces overlie each other. 'Social spatialization' (Lefebvre 1991; Shields 1991) enables investigation into questions regarding how meanings of different localities are created and recreated. This provides a framework for investigating the social-construction processes of spatial cultural notions and practices. Space itself is understood as a site of struggle, because meanings of space are constantly produced and reproduced. To analyse space three elements are identified which together provide a unified theoretical structure (Figure 10.2). First, there are 'spatial practices', ranging from individual behaviour and routines to the systematic creation and naming of territories, regions or zones. Second, there are representations of space, the forms of knowledge and practices which organize and represent space, particularly through marketing, films and the media. These definitions of space are not ideologically neutral, but are deeply implicated in processes of social reproduction: that is, power relations, gender roles and divisions of labour are ordered according to a specific mode of spatial organization. Third, there are the 'spaces of representation' or the collective experience of space. These are the individual and collective fantasies that are experienced at places and individual resistances to the dominant practices. Resistance is underpinned in many instances by ideological struggles over the meaning of how space is represented. Public space may conflict with the dominant official definitions. Understanding the cultural construction of place therefore requires addressing a range of process from individual behaviour and experience to the encoding practices of institutions involved in the representation of space.

Social spatialization enlightens the marketing-of-places phenomenon by first illustrating both the enormity and complexity of manipulating the social-cultural identity of a given place. Marketing of places is only one component in the cultural construction of space. Nevertheless, as Harvey (1990) argues, the importance of marketing cannot be understated, given that it is one of the most powerful space-time compressions arising from the latest sub-mode of capital accumulation.

Second, representation of places also contains a hidden ideological content of codes and practices based on hegemonic values. Promoting the ideology of an authoritative group in society through hosting spectacular events is not itself new. Such manipulations of culture and historical elements are simply contemporary examples of a long history of the involvement of society's powerful groupings in imaging places for their own economic and self interests (Urry 1995; Jarvis 1994). Similarly, a particular ideology remains inherent

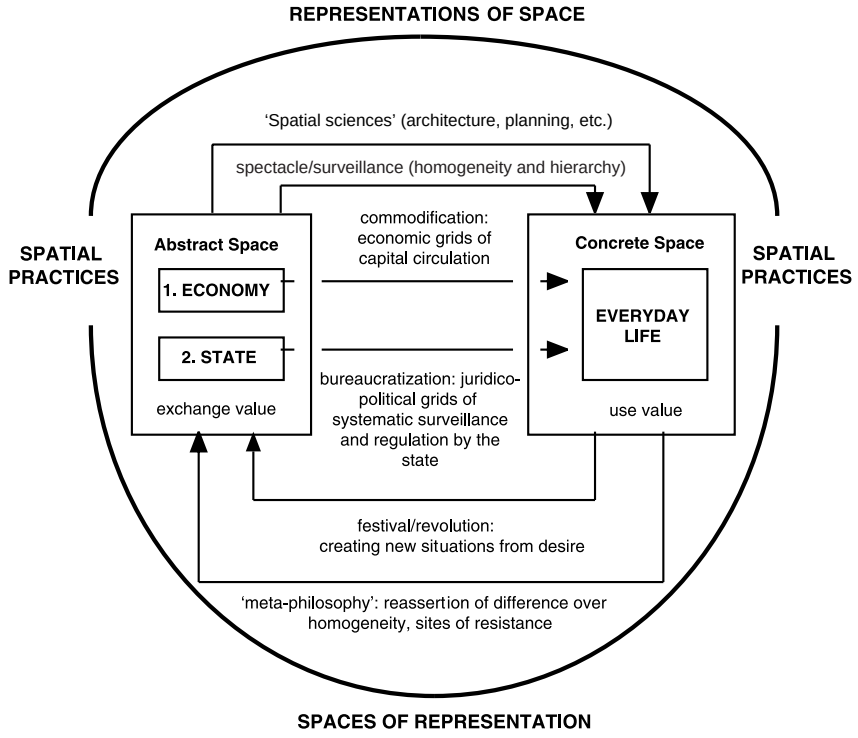

Figure 10.2 Lefebvre's typology of spaces
Source: Adapted from Gregory (1994), p. 401.

in the hosting of an Olympic Games, one which proclaims togetherness, unity, equality, winning, modernization, progress and achievement. Moreover, this results in a certain tautology between the representations and 'reality', as the city is remade to fit a promotional Olympic image. Hallmark events, particularly the Olympics, thus become a potential mechanism of social co-ordination and control. Sydney as the site of Olympic 'spectacle' may help divert attention from the city's economic malaise, environmental degradation and inequalities. Richter noted that 'no other event in contemporary society equals the impact of the Olympic Games on a region's economy, sense of self and perceived role in the world economy' (Richter 1989: 18–19). Given the low expected profits and the potential expenses arising from infrastructure costs, federal and state government support were perhaps only justified by the ideological and political gains arising from distracting media and public attention from the economic recession. The SOBC's marketing practices in promoting and legitimizing its particular version of Sydney is illustrated in the bid themes of multiculturalism and nature.

Sydney: a celebration of multiculturalism

Social equity, unity, friendship and safety were given prominence in Sydney's bid because of Baron Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic vision of the movement bringing peace and harmony between peoples. The SOBC utilized the dominant public discourse of Australia's successful multiculturalism to promote Sydney as a city without inequality. Multiculturalism was therefore understood as the coexistence of ethnic communities, differentiated by language, food, costume and festivals (Anderson 1993). For example, the Monte Carlo script for Anita Keating (wife of the then Prime Minister) stated that, 'In Sydney, attitudes, language, religion and food mix easily in *friendliness* and *fairness*. The result is a rich cultural *community*, a city of 140 cultures and over 180 languages' (SOBC 1993b; emphasis added). The themes of cohesive unity in diversity were emphasized in Tanya Blencowe's script (an eleven-year-old pupil from Bangor Public School): apparently 'Sydney is a friendly city, where it doesn't matter where you come from, we are all Australian together, we eat together and play sport together' (SOBC 1993a). Underpinning this statement is the SOBC's definition not only of Sydney but also of the nation as an imagined political community. Australians are conceived of as possessing a deep horizontal comradeship and sharing a common bond in sporting activities. Indeed, the bid described sport as part of the Australian way of life. The bid also portrayed Sydney's multicultural character as personifying the very essence of the Olympic Movement's charter of international goodwill. This 'reality' is contested by examining alternative portrayals of Sydney through considering socio-spatial polarization, ethnic concentrations and indigenous peoples.

Issues of diverging socio-economic circumstances and life-chances over time within Australian cities generally, and in Sydney in particular, unsettle claims of fairness and social equity (Badcock 1997). So-called socio-spatial polarization in Australian cities has been identified in a number of recent studies, including Gregory and Hunter's (1995) urban 'research panel', Burbridge and Winter's (1996) localization of urban poverty, and Walmsley and Weinand's (1997) 'well-being' and settlement type analyses. Employment change underpinning the process of economic restructuring is reasoned to be the fundamental cause of social spatialization (Woodward 1995; O'Hare 1996). The cost and benefits of economic restructuring are argued to be spread unevenly across the city as this restructuring overlays existing patterns of residential segregation and a population differentiated by ethnicity, gender, age, skills and education levels. Very simply, the higher-status suburbs, with their existing economic bases and highly educated, managerial and professional workforces, could adapt to the demands of an increasingly service-oriented economy. In contrast, lower-status suburbs, which experienced the full impact of the manufacturing sector's rationalization, had a higher proportion of people in blue-collar occupations, with fewer qualifications and low incomes, and also higher proportions of non-English-speaking migrants and unem-

ployed. Employing averaged socio-economic measures, Sydney's suburbs are now divided east–west between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' (Connell 1995).

Exacerbating this east–west divide is the media discourse, portraying Sydney's 'western suburbs' – disadvantaged by economic restructuring – in stereotyped modes of a 'westies' sub-culture (Hodge 1996). Mee (1994) has shown that the rich diversity of peoples and lifestyles are ignored, replaced by negative stereotypes of Western Sydney as a blackened and uniform 'nowhere-land' and its people as uneducated, unemployed and dangerous. Once again, the literature on socio-spatial polarization and the 'politics of difference' would suggest that the SOBC claims of social equity are nothing but imaginary. Yet, socio-spatial polarization is itself a contested issue. To support their portrayal the SOBC could draw upon the work of Travers and Richardson (1993) and their study of material well-being levels. Their conclusions argued that Australia is a relatively egalitarian society with little evidence of polarization into two nations. Drawing upon this analysis, Withers *et al.* (1995) suggested that, by international standards, the level of inequality is low, and a high level of intergenerational mobility in Australia might, in many cases, act as a remedy for socio-spatial polarization. Such defences are less apparent when the topics of ethnic concentration and indigenous peoples are considered, however.

Unquestionably, it would be reckless to develop a counter-argument that large numbers of culturally diverse people have not successfully settled, and been accepted, in Sydney (Wooden *et al.* 1994). In particular, where migrant use of public space is constructed as the 'exotic' (as in Darling Harbour's 'Chinatown', Cabramatta's Freedom Plaza, or the Asian restaurants of Newtown, Concord and Marrickville) there is little resistance from the Anglo-Australian community; multicultural – understood as food or entertainment – is widely accepted throughout Australia. Of course, friendship between all peoples in Sydney exists only in official discourses of multiculturalism. A measurable level of prejudice and hostility exists towards migrants (and between migrant groups). There is less acceptance of cultural difference when defined in terms of spatial concentration, social injustice, unemployment, displacement and drug abuse, or where different land uses are perceived as threats to local dominant norms. Religious public spaces are the sources of greatest conflict, particularly where minority religions' planning applications for proposed mosques, chapels, statues and temples are concerned.

Sydney has always had suburbs associated with particular ethnic groups. Most recently, the readily apparent ethnic concentrations of Vietnamese-Australians in Fairfield have been questioned by academics (Birrell 1993), politicians and the media. Blainey (1988:18) asserted his intolerance with Fairfield's Cabramatta by labelling it as a 'ghetto' and 'Little Saigon'. In 1996 the politician Pauline Hanson voiced her intolerance for multiculturalism in her maiden speech to the Australian Parliament and later claimed that Australia was in danger of becoming a mini-Asia. In her view, multiculturalism was promoting ghettos and destroying the Australian value system. Sydney's print media demonstrated its own prejudice by portraying Fairfield's Cabramatta as the

centre of crime, organized gangs, drug magnates and violence (Brown and Sampson 1988). Murphy and Watson (1997) termed such portrayals of ethnic difference as post-colonial racism, arguing cultural differences were feared as threats to the Anglo-Australian identity. This fear arises, particularly among the rural Anglo-Celtic communities and the older-established suburbs in which they cluster, in an era where a sense of place and belonging is threatened by rapid and radical economic change. Thrift and Glennie (1993) argue that these people search for security in the familiar and the nostalgia of the past, undermining any multicultural sentiment. Whatever the explanation for post-colonial racism, among sections of Australia's press and academia ethnic discrimination is apparent in their portrayal of ethnic concentrations. Fairfield is the most notable example for illustrating the continuing prejudice and hostility that exists towards non-Anglo-Australians that results from ethnic segregation. Yet, concurrently, it must be emphasized that Fairfield reflects Australia's complex multicultural composition, with substantial numbers of residents born in Australia, Italy, Lebanon, Turkey, Malta and elsewhere (Dunn 1993). Castles *et al.* (1997:128) concluded that there is little justification for claims that immigration is creating serious social divisions, undermining social cohesion and weakening Australian national identity. For some, however, the portrayal of multiculturalism as the equivalence of culture and the right of all Australians to express their individual cultural heritage remains restricted to official multicultural policy statements (OMA 1989) and marketing myths.

Undoubtedly it is among Sydney's indigenous peoples that the themes of togetherness, friendlessness and unity held least legitimacy. The Aboriginal Australian population has been subject to racist ideologies and practices that started with a policy of genocide, shifted in the 1950s to an attempt at forced assimilation and, in the 1970s, to the partial recognition of the need for separate policies under the rubric of 'self determination' (Castles *et al.* 1988). Multiculturalism also was challenged as a way of avoiding understanding, of ignoring or censoring the fate of indigenous Australians (Langton 1994). Within the multicultural agenda, Aboriginal peoples were increasingly redefined as the 'first Australians' rather than as indigenous people (Morris 1988). Those Aboriginal Australians, who believed they were not just another ethnic community, but the original inhabitants, challenged the concept of cultural equivalence. Furthermore, in the view of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the degree, form and cause of indigenous peoples' disempowerment by the forces of colonial capitalism are so radically different from immigrant circumstances that alternative polices are required. In Sydney, the moderate degree of residential concentration of people identifying as Aboriginal in suburbs such as Redfern, Blacktown and Campbelltown is a reflection of such marginalization processes and the reliance upon public rental housing caused by low incomes, discrimination and high unemployment rates (Forster 1995).

Consequently, many Aboriginal communities became a voice of dissent. Despite more than twenty years of rhetoric on equity and participation Aboriginal people are still the casualties of structures of racial exclusion. For

many Aboriginal voices the Olympics presented a stage for resistance, exposing the hypocrisy of Australia's self-presentation as a multicultural and just society (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 September 1992). Aboriginal elders called for all people to mourn and not to celebrate the Olympics and for athletes to boycott them (*The Age,* January 28, 1998). Such objections centred upon past Federal Governments' human-rights records towards Australia's indigenous people and the belief that relations between the Federal Government and Aboriginal Australians have deteriorated during the Howard administration. Such arguments were sustained by cuts to Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islanders Commission (ATSIC), the refusal to apologize to the stolen children and the ten-point Wik Plan to change the Native Title Act (1993) that officially recognized that Australia was not unoccupied before European arrival (Nyungah Circle of Elders 2000). However, Aboriginal Australian voices were not unanimous. For example, in regard to the cultural tourism opportunities presented by the Olympics the Pwerte Martne Martne Aboriginal Corporation of the Arrernte-speaking people wrote about 'Going for Gold' (Pwerte Martne Martne Aboriginal Corporation 1997). Whatever the complexities of the Games evaluations by Aboriginal Australians, the marketing myth of Sydney as a city of equity became meaningless as initiatives for Olympic-inspired reconciliation (for example, the seven-day Global Challenge, 9–15 September, and the Sydney 2000 Opening Ceremony) took prominence during the Games.

Sydney: a celebration of a pristine 'natural' environment

Environmental concepts played a major role in the bid's portrayal of Sydney because of the generally high value assigned to pristine 'nature' in Western society. The bid represented Australia's environment as pristine by employing signifiers of both 'paradise' and 'wilderness'. In the bid's visual texts the promise of a paradise is symbolized by vibrant colours, sunshine, sunsets, dolphins, beaches, palm trees and luxuriant tropical vegetation. In addition, a pristine 'wilderness', signified by the absence of human presence or artefacts, is represented in visuals of Australian deserts, mountains and oceans. Furthermore, the spectacle of Australian nature is underscored by images of the remarkable, including kangaroos and koalas. The everyday is noticeable for its absence. In the SOBC's Sydney, suburbia disappears, and Sydney Harbour is portrayed as if surrounded by tropical rainforests.

The bid also suggested that, despite being home to approaching four million people, Sydney has, if not a pristine environment, at least an extraordinarily unsullied one. Sydney's air and water quality were reported on in the most favourable terms possible. Furthermore, the inclusion of a twenty-five-page document titled *Environmental Guidelines* (SOBC 1993c) entwined the concept of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) within the bid. The bid's environmental measures were marketed as setting new Australian standards, as leading the world in the Earth Summit's (UNCED 1993) concept of ESD. According to the SOBC (1993d: 2) the bid's environmental guidelines addressed five major

global and environmental concerns: global warming; ozone depletion; biodiversity; pollution; and resource depletion. The bid's proponents listed environmental commitments for the construction of Olympic facilities that included reusing building materials, passive cooling systems, solar power, water-recycling, cycle-ways and ozone-friendly refrigerators. Second, a promise was given to remediate the degraded Homebush Bay environment, contaminated with dioxins and heavy metals from its industrial past. For these reasons the media tagged the Sydney 2000 Olympics the 'Green Games'.

Counter-arguments abound for both portrayals. Representations of Australia as 'pristine' conflict with accumulating archaeological evidence that suggests areas of so-called frontiers and wilderness were the homes of Aboriginal Australians for many thousands of years (Allen 1989; Jones 1990; Griffiths 1991; Head and Fullagar 1997). Representations which reiterate notions of a virginal continent ignore that, at the time of European occupation, there was a visible Aboriginal geography of occupation involving, for example, named territory, curated and sacred places, trade networks and clan location boundaries (Clark 1990: 1). State and territorial heritage legislation (the earliest being the Northern Territory's Native and Historic Objects and Areas Preservation Ordinance 1955–60) has provided statutory recognition and protection to these Aboriginal heritage items and places. Most recently, the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 gives more weight to sites of cultural significance to contemporary Aboriginal people, because of their archaeological relics, than to those considered of heritage value by non-Aboriginal people. Yet, reiteration of the *terra nullius* myth reinforces in public memory a denial of indigenous peoples' land and custodian claims, despite the validating archaeological evidence and the Mabo decision of the High Court of Australia in June 1992 legitimizing claims to lands seized by Anglo-Australians. The High Court declared that Australian common law recognized native title and that Aboriginal people who could demonstrate an ongoing connection with their traditional lands could, potentially, claim them back under customary title, providing those lands had not been alienated as freehold or leasehold tenure in the course of the conquest (Mabo *et al.* v. State of Queensland 1992).

Environmental organizations and scientists provide counter-evidence to the SOBC's claims for Sydney's air, water and soil quality. Indeed, Burnley *et al.* (1997: 100) suggest that 'metropolitan Sydney exemplifies in their most pronounced forms the range of urban environmental problems in Australia'. For example, for the past three decades air quality in Sydney, particularly the photochemical smog produced from car emissions, has been recognized by environmental scientists as a critical issue (Total Environmental Centre 1992). In the future, given the increased use of private cars, higher rather than lower levels of photochemical smog have been predicted, particularly for Blacktown, Fairfield and Parramatta (Wright 1991–2).

Similarly, throughout the 1990s environmental activists were drawing attention to Sydney's water-quality problems, including viral and bacterial pollution, as well as toxic blue-green algae blooms resulting from elevated levels of plant

nutrients in the water. Sources of pollutants to reservoirs, rivers and oceans include urban stormwater, sewage, run-off from market gardens, power stations and industrial effluent. One example was the ocean and beach pollution resulting from sewage contamination. Moreover, in contrast to SOBC claims, Warner (1991) warned that Sydney's sewage system was already operating at capacity, breaking down during storm-flooding events and discharging raw sewage into Sydney Harbour. Long-term solutions to Sydney's air- and water-quality problems are still to be implemented.

Ironically, in terms of soil pollution, Greenpeace Australia argues that the Olympic site is one of Sydney's most contaminated locations, labelling it the 'dioxin capital of the world' (Ruchel 1997). The evidence for this argument followed Greenpeace's 1997 discovery at Homebush of abandoned drums containing contaminated soils from previous rehabilitation efforts. The dioxins found included TCDD, classified as carcinogenic to humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. The dioxins are a by-product of pesticide and herbicide manufacture by Union Carbide, formerly located at Homebush during the period 1957–78; the factory produced the chlorinated herbicide 2,3,5-T, a constituent of Agent Orange.

The 'green' marketing image effectively masked the health risks associated with remediating Homebush. Beder (1996) argued that since 1991 the New South Wales Property Services Group (a government department responsible for remediating Homebush Bay) had commissioned several environmental consultants, including Coffey Partners International, Dames and Moore Corporation (1991) and Inner City Fund Pty Ltd (1993). Each report confirmed the presence of heavy metals and organic chemicals in concentrations above 'normal' background levels. These reports also raised questions about possible health risks, both during and after construction, arising from contact with seepage of contaminants and gases. However, given that the reports were neither publicized nor published (and were made available only under Freedom of Information provisions), public debate was silenced. Dilution of the planning policies in 1991 – which gave the Minister for Planning the full authority to consent to Olympic developments and for the removal and reworking of toxic wastes to occur without an Environment Impact Statement – further prevented informed public participation. Environmentalists argue that such practices clearly demonstrate how private-sector interest was effectively given priority over public concerns.

The SOBC employed other strategies to sustain the bid's 'green' image. Undoubtedly public credibility for this discourse was achieved through appealing to international environmental authorities, such as Greenpeace and Ark. Greenpeace Australia's campaigner, Karla Bell, made representations to the IOC about the environmental merits of the bid. Ark Australia enlisted the help of film stars and Sydney residents Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise. Subsequently the SOBC (1993b) could claim that '[o]ur bid places great emphasis on the environment and this has been further highlighted by the support given to the bid by Greenpeace and other environmental organizations'. Legitimacy was brought to such claims through quoting the name of this

internationally reputable environmental authority, other conservation organizations and movie stars, and the public's environmental concerns were thus also effectively appeased.

In addition, any criticism of the bid was either stifled or presented as 'un-Australian'. For example, The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the Total Environment Centre, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Earth (Sydney) and the National Parks Association of NSW all attacked the bid documents as containing factual errors and seriously misrepresenting the position of conservationists. These groups were particularly concerned with the documents' claim that 'environmental groups … have enthusiastically endorsed Sydney's bid'; their concerns were repeatedly denied and stifled by the SOBC. Furthermore, Rod McGeoch deemed the media unpatriotic for highlighting Sydney's air-pollution problems in the headline: 'We'd win a gold medal for burying heads in the smog' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1992). Murray Hogarth (1997: 101), environmental reporter for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, confirmed the pressure to conform, stating that 'the games has had the status of a sacred cow … to publish ill of the Olympics was sacrilege, if not outright treason'. Indeed, vocal threats became an integral part of the bidding process. Following the June 1993 broadcasting of the *Four Corners* investigation into the bidding process, the NSW minister responsible for the Games' bid at the time, Bruce Baird, asserted: 'Anyone who threatens Sydney's Olympic bid better watch out' (Australian Broadcasting Commission Radio National PM Program, 16 July 1993, in Booth and Tatz 1996: 10). The process of promoting and lobbying for the Games therefore aspired to only the lowest ethical base. The SOBC attempted to position itself as the legitimate voice concerning the Games, rejecting all criticisms as unpatriotic and against 'public interests' (Dunn and McGuirk 1999)

Conclusion

Selling cities and hallmark events is not new. However, they have acquired a renewed significance in the context of globalization. In economic terms, the collapse of spatial boundaries has increased the sensitivity of capital to differences between places. Consequently, intensified competition between places in the global market occurs to attract potential investors, employers and tourists. The successful bidding for, and hosting of, a prestige hallmark event enables the host city to promote, market, differentiate and image itself as a winning location. For sixteen days Sydney became 'home' to a global television audience. Therefore, contemporary place-promotion is differentiated both quantitatively and qualitatively from the past by the employment of large budget and professional advertising agencies, given this opportunity to inform the world of the city's facilities and attractions. In cultural terms, winning an Olympic bid is argued to offer a forum for enhancing local esteem in an era of social uncertainty and rapid change giving rise to accusations of racism, alienation and nihilism. The euphoria surrounding the event is argued to neutralize resistance by creating a deceptive but seductive unreality of images and signs. The city's

residents are assumed to be passive and to unproblematically internalize the hallmark event's signs and symbols. Moreover, the ideology represented is argued to be that of the established power (Bonnemaison 1990: 25). The bidding for the Sydney 2000 Olympics was no exception. Images of Sydney and Australia employed to market the city for the Olympic spectacle involved the SOC's redefinition of social 'realities' through the prism of the Olympic ideology. Sydney was represented in Coubertin's vision of peoples living in international harmony. Any contesting of the SOBC's imagery was effectively silenced during the bid itself by weakening public participation in planning and by the SOBC positioning itself as the legitimate voice.

As MacAloon (1984: 275) observed, 'spectacle takes the "realities" of life and defuses them by converting them to be played with like toys'. In this case, the defused realities are post-colonial racism and environmental degradation. As the bid images faded and the Olympic countdown began, these realities came back to haunt Sydney's Games. Local activists at Bondi opposed construction of a beach-volley-ball stadium on environmental and social grounds; Sydney's Rent Watcher's organization opposed the 'eviction' of tenants by landlords to obtain higher rents; Greenpeace and The Green Games Watch 2000 questioned Homebush's land remediation processes; and the Aboriginal elders' continued call for a boycott.

Nevertheless, in September 2000, the spectacle surrounding the Olympics captured the imagination of even its most ardent critics. If only for two weeks, the majority of Australians apparently imagined they were a united nation. Voices of discontent were silent, and the spectacle of the 'best Olympics ever' became represented as a means of uniting the nation. However, does the spectacle of the opening ceremony's choreographed sequence, entitled 'Deep Sea Dreaming', demonstrate actual reconciliation? Or does the spectacle merely help mask the realities of Aboriginal Australian life from the global audience's imagination? Equally, does the sequence of 'The Man from Snowy River' simply reposition the importance of the heroic 'Aussie battler' in Australian national identity – silencing stories of pastoralists' land clearance and the environmental degradation and social disruption that followed? Whatever the case, the city will remain a site of tourist spectacle.

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11 Resort curtilages

The creation of physical and psychological tourism spaces

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The way we view tourist landscapes – whether as nineteenth-century shipboard travellers or as twenty-first-century deplaners desperate to be back on our mobile phones – is heavily conditioned by notions that we have of imagined, historically created and appropriate landscape settings. In heritage-conservation literature the landscape setting of a building has been referred to as curtilage (Heritage Office 1996), and this concept may be applied in diverse tourism environments. Venice, one of the world's most depicted tourist landscapes, retains its intimate fifteenth-century setting. We know and expect that the structures are surrounded by canals and the Adriatic – and that the series of views from the *vaporetto* or the gondola, or the grand vistas from the Piazza San Marco, are modulated landscapes with known, even anticipated, curtilages. These curtilages are created for us not just by the buildings and the efforts of municipal conservationists, but by Renaissance paintings, by novels, by photographs and by decades of appropriation in romantic advertisements and films.

The Venice example demonstrates the psychological component of the concept of curtilage, and how visitors may come to terms with known or anticipated landscapes. We would be shocked if any Venetian *piazzas* were to be halved in size or overshadowed by new townhouses, or if a couple of canals were filled in to create a shopping mall. Australian travellers to the Lido, or to the islands off Venice, have a real curtilage experience when they encounter private beaches in front of some of the grand hotels. American visitors, familiar with a more privatized coastline at home, may find the scene unexceptional. The chemical factories, desultory apartment blocks and modest international airport which form the immediate world beyond Venice and its outlying islands may not make much of an impression unless you arrive by air. By train you are transported across the causeway and delivered at Santa Lucia station, immediately abutting the Grand Canal. This is one of the world's great urban pedestrian environments, impenetrable by motor vehicle – after the automotive madness of many other Italian urban settings, the relief is immense.

In this chapter we suggest that the concept of curtilage may be applied not only to destinations with obvious heritage value, but may be extended to settings where the notion of heritage is less apparent. In particular we apply the concept to the island resort areas of the Mamanucas in Fiji and the Whitsundays in

Australia. These and many equivalent island resorts are more commonly noted for the physical beauty of their surroundings, diverse tourist activities and purpose-built facilities than for their cultural heritage values. Nevertheless, it is argued that, in due course, consumer and broader societal pressures will compel such resorts to attend to their cultural heritage values, especially in terms of interaction between the natural and built environment. In anticipation of heritage listings and a greater appreciation of the cultural attributes of islands, it is proposed that resort operators develop an understanding of the concept of curtilage and that researchers investigate the linkages between tourism and curtilage.

Heritage conservation and the concept of curtilage

The concept of curtilage is derived from a substantial literature in the fields of heritage conservation and landscape gardening. Heritage analysts, including architects and planners, investigate the application of appropriate curtilages to individual buildings or groups of buildings in both urban and rural settings. The extensive coverage reflects a growing acknowledgement of the concern expressed by heritage advocates that it is pointless to save a grand historic house, a convent school with associated outbuildings, an abandoned power station, or even a modest church, if insufficient of the original landscape setting is retained. Where such losses occur, the viewers and/or users lose their sense of the history, landscape setting and cultural resonance of the site.

This chapter examines curtilage from different perspectives. First, what is the physical configuration of the relevant facility or development? This may take account of the size and design of adjoining gardens and the arrangement of the associated buildings. Secondly, what psychological responses are induced? These may include the expectations held prior to arrival, the perceptions while *in situ* and the uses made of the place. Do visitors remain within the perimeter of the complex, stay within walking distance, or explore further afield?

The 'International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites' was the world's first major charter on heritage conservation and resulted from a conference held at Venice in 1966. The charter has been revised on a number of occasions by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) – notably in 1978, when the Australian branch met at the town of Burra Burra in South Australia to produce a charter appropriate for Australian conditions. Among its various concerns the Burra Charter acknowledged that European building styles had evolved rapidly in Australia. This has meant that the use and landscape setting of many historic structures has typically changed several times in the course of their first hundred years. The Charter places special stress on 'cultural significance' and on the 'aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for the past, present or future generations' (Marquis-Kyle and Walker 1992). The concept of cultural significance which pervades the charter is wider-ranging than the typical approach to environmental and economic impacts taken by town planners, councils and tourism

developers. In this chapter we argue that resort destinations which fail to acknowledge issues of cultural significance may lose some of their visitor appeal as well as risking the loss of valuable cultural resources.

Many heritage buildings retain aspects of their original curtilage. Conservation principles require the maintenance of an appropriate visual setting and eschew any new construction, demolition or modification that would adversely affect the setting, especially in rural areas where land value pressures are rarely paramount. Despite urban development, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco dominate their respective landscapes, as was the case when they were built. In other cases heritage structures have seen their lands so curtailed and their curtilage so reduced that much of their original majesty, and sometimes even their reason for existing, has been lost. This is arguably the case with Elizabeth Bay House in Sydney and Villa Alba in Melbourne, whose grounds have been so vastly curtailed that much of their original importance has been lost for ever. Once housing development is allowed to intrude into the grounds of such mansions, their gardens are irreversibly compromised, and the established relationship between houses and gardens is irretrievable. Clever landscape and architectural tricks may provide some sense of the original in certain settings, but cannot work in other contexts – consider the Palace of Versailles without its gardens. A new apartment building built on Circular Quay East overlooking the Sydney Opera House has been denounced as having blighted one of Sydney's great vistas. The Gold Coast in Queensland retains so few pre-1960 structures that the remaining curtilages are the recently created pseudo-environments, such as the one surrounding Jupiters Casino. Built on a mineral- and sand-mining site, Jupiters is itself a highly landscaped setting, characterized by cultural and vista-led curtilages such as the overblown atrium so beloved by Australian hotel designers in the 1980s (Davidson and Spearritt 2000).

Landscape settings are an important consideration for resort architects and developers. The former set out to make a statement in the landscape, though some are refined in their approach and others brazen. The latter seek to minimize land-acquisition costs and maximize their return per square metre of a site and its structures. In this chapter we apply the concept of curtilage to island resort development, including an exploration of the spheres of geographical activity embraced by tourists, including their perceptions of location on alighting at the destination and subsequent activity while visiting the resort.

Island resorts are often relatively isolated resort communities, but they do interact with nearby islands and with the mainland, not least because the usual means of access is via a mainland port or associated airport. Magnetic Island, for example, is a thirty-minute trip from the city of Townsville by ferry. In this case the resort operators have provided reasonably priced transfers, making it possible for visitors to attend the local agricultural show or take a day trip into the hinterland, coming 'home' on the last ferry. The perception of proximity is reinforced since Magnetic Island is visible from Townsville and vice versa.

As is the case with many island resorts, a series of curtilages operate on Magnetic Island. Some visitors choose to remain in a particular spot, such as Picnic Bay, Arcadia or the more remote Horseshoe Bay. Many more choose to hire the dominant mode of motor transport (a Mini-Moke) and thereby see and experience the island very differently; instead of walking to and from the beach, or going for a stroll in the bush, they rush around this small island. Very soon the visitor has 'done' or consumed the island, and frustration may ensue when there are no more tracks that lend themselves to motorized transport. In curtilage terms, the different visitor groups perceive the site differently and interact with it in physically distinct ways. It is the view of the authors that developers and operators could benefit from an improved understanding of such interactions. In due course, when island resorts are being considered for listing as sites of heritage significance, such visitor perceptions will be critical.

Visitors to island resorts experience and consume both the resort and the hinterland. Their patterns of behaviour and their desire to ignore the external environment or explore the island are critical to the design, financing, impact and future of island resorts. Resort buildings and activities are designed with both physical and psychological factors in mind, blending private and public spaces ranging from footpaths, swimming pools, bars and entertainment areas to the beach. The creation of purpose-built swimming pools in islands surrounded by water is one of the most extraordinary developments of recent decades. Some visitors may opt for the more domesticated and 'cooked' environment of the swimming pool in preference to the relative rawness of the beach.

The populations of formerly colonized islands around the world have watched while their islands are exploited by overseas entrepreneurs. The latter have then turned their backs on the ocean and in preference developed land-locked pools. As Sack has argued, many resorts become 'territorial communities of convenience', which, he claims, 'lack true purpose and cohesion' (1992). In attempting to evaluate the truth of this assertion in the context of the south-west Pacific, we use examples from Magnetic Island and other Australian coastal resorts (Spearritt 2000) as well as from the Whitsunday Island resorts in Australia and the Mamanuca Island resorts in Fiji (King 1997).

A number of theoretical perspectives can help us in examining the applicability of the curtilage concept to island resorts. These include Sack's (1992) interpretation of 'consumer places', Urry's (1990) view of resorts as a manifestation of postmodernism and Ayala's (1991b) theory of 'resort landscape systems'. The physical dimension of resorts may be evaluated from the point of view of public versus private space, architecture, aesthetics and style, appropriation and exclusivity, functional specialization and the notion of curtilage.

The approach that resorts adopt towards their landscapes is becoming a significant issue for resort managers because of changing consumer attitudes and the rise of competition from non-traditional sources. It has frequently been asserted that travellers do not visit a destination in order to stay in a hotel. Arguably this perception is less applicable in the case of resorts where visitors are attracted by a blend of the resort facilities and the relationship between the

resort and its adjoining landscape. Resorts have an ongoing relationship with the physical environment: pollution, designation of protected areas, penetration by tour groups and the application of themes to particular landscapes are all forces in the evolution of resort landscapes. Visitors are increasingly interested in knowing more about the environment, but this curiosity may be satisfied elsewhere and in other ways (Rickard and Spearritt 1991). New technology has allowed tropical resort landscapes to be recreated in unlikely locations and resort-related imagery is being created, recycled and then recreated elsewhere.

The application of curtilage to island resorts is not straightforward. The majority of self-contained resorts do not conform to the traditional concept of heritage conservation normally associated with curtilage. Resorts are distinct from other heritage structures in having been developed and constructed with a view to satisfying the expectations and desires of tourists. Additionally, the typology used in the heritage literature appears more readily applicable in urban settings and built-up areas, where there is greater potential for competition over land-use and hence a need to resolve such disputes. Categories used include 'lot boundary heritage curtilage', 'reduced heritage curtilage', 'expanded heritage curtilage' and 'composite heritage curtilage' (Heritage Office 1996). Where island resorts do claim a close association with a particular natural heritage it is typically with a view to enhancing their status and significance as destinations, with tourists as the primary audience.

Curtilage involves the recognition that a significant site can best be understood as the focus of a series of concentric rings. Different values are attached to the various areas accounted for by such rings. In the case of island resorts, the immediate area may consist of a nucleus of resort buildings, followed by the extended site incorporating golf courses and swimming pools, the island outside the immediate resort perimeter including beaches, and finally the wider region including nearby islands and mainland. Resorts depend upon landscape appeal to achieve saleability and market value, and hence place a value on such linkages, largely through promotional activities. To provide funds or assistance for the protection of adjoining areas is a different matter, since such investments may not guarantee exclusivity of use for clients. Private developers may be reluctant to invest in a 'common pool' to the benefit of competitors. Most resort operators acknowledge the importance of pristine environment to resorts (King and Weaver 1993), but few are likely to take responsibility unless they see competitors making equivalent 'sacrifices'.

Defining and consuming landscape

Daniels and Cosgrove (1988: 1) have argued that 'a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings' that should extend far beyond a narrow concept of form and style. For Davidson (1994: 6) 'the term landscape as opposed to "land", implies an interrelationship with people – a way of seeing or shaping the land, a framing of it in some social or aesthetic context'. This approach contrasts with the view that landscape can be entirely

natural, untouched, objective and defined in purely scientific terms. Geographers have often placed heavier emphasis on the more 'objective', 'scientific' dimensions of landscape. Calder (1981) for example describes landscape as a synthesis of seven concepts: regional, land-form, ecological, land use, heritage, scenery and parks and gardens. Naveh (1978: 57–63) defined landscape as 'the spatial and visual integration of the geosphere with the biosphere and man-made artefacts'.

Imagery is integral to resort-based tourism, which depends on the projection of highly selective images of landscape (beaches and the ubiquitous palm trees, for example) to make the particular destination desirable. The subjectivity of landscape interpretation is emphasized in iconographic studies which seek 'to probe meaning in a work of art by setting it in its historical context and in particular to analyse the ideas implicated in its imagery' (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 2).

Mitchell (1986: 2) regards images as signs that appear natural and transparent, but conceal 'an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification'. In his study of postmodern 'places of consumption', Sack (1992) has challenged traditional interpretations of landscape. The closeness of the relationship between the promotional images projected by resorts and the behaviour of guests at these resorts does indeed seem to point to some of the contradictions and fragmentation of modern existence. In his essay 'The Beholding Eye', Meinig (1979: 33–4) has argued that there are ten possible perspectives which provide 'versions of the same scene' or ways of emphasizing a view of landscape. Meinig's view implies that any ten individuals may see quite different things and place quite different emphases as they view a particular landscape: the 'eye sees what it wants to see'. The ten perspectives include nature, habitat, artefact, system, problem, wealth, ideology, history, place and aesthetic. Since most island resorts attract visitors from diverse countries, the likely fragmentation of perceptions is compounded.

The Fiji and Queensland islands examined in this chapter are located in areas of outstanding natural beauty which have been the subject of extensive environmental analysis. The Great Barrier Reef islands are the subject of a plethora of environmental studies. Despite the volume of work on environmental and landscape values, the existing research has been criticized by Craik (1991) as lacking a sense of social context. The present chapter extends the examination of resorts as 'consumption places', where physical aspects are often driven by a commercial and marketing rationale. We also examine tourist behaviour in and around the resort. Curtilage is examined in terms of the tourists' real and anticipated movement in and beyond the resort. Do such movements equate to a desire by tourists to immerse themselves in the unique curtilage of the locale? Why go to an island resort if fax, e-mail and mobile connections follow you about? Are patrons seeking escape, isolation and seclusion, or merely another setting in which to act out established or novel aspects of their lives?

Historic and spatial dimensions

The art historian Bernard Smith has asserted that the emerging imagery of the

Pacific in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and subsequent political and economic relations has been an essential dimension of imperialism (1989, 1992). Tourism imagery perpetuates such attitudes by 'taming' the landscape for the exclusive enjoyment of international visitors, though in some cases the appropriation may be perceptual rather than real. (In Fiji the ownership of 87 per cent of the land by indigenous Fijians has prevented the type of land appropriation that took place in Australia under the 'principle' of *terra nullius* – challenged only recently in the High Court's Mabo and Wik judgements.)

Hosts and guests may hold very different perceptions of the land. According to Qalo 'the Fijians regard land as part of their being. It is the centre of their lives and is a real source of security and purpose for living' (1984: 10). This view of the Fiji landscape is not (one might say cannot be) shared by visitors who will hold transitory views, influenced by the images to which they have been exposed. There is some commonality between the attitudes of guests and staff insofar as, in 'service-oriented' business operations, staff will develop some empathy towards guest attitudes with a view to anticipating their needs and providing responsive service. Though not 'culture-brokers' in the way that Cohen applied the term to tour guides (1972), they may come to share some guest attitudes.

There is a pressing market rationale for resort managers to improve their understanding of resort landscapes because emerging competition is eroding the monopoly that they previously enjoyed over the 'exotic'. Why visit an island resort at great expense to experience palm trees, beaches and Muzak when the same can be experienced more cheaply closer to home? Urry claims that 'spectacle' and 'display' (often highlighted as island resort attractions) have become ubiquitous. Santa Monica Pier in Los Angeles has managed to reinvent itself against a backdrop of nearby street closures which have helped to regenerate its retailing and entertainment precinct. Meanwhile long-established resort towns such as nearby Pismo beach (celebrated in the Bugs Bunny cartoons of the 1930s), let alone the nineteenth-century installations of Nice and Blackpool, are struggling to offer the range of activities and conquerable curtilages that modern tourists can experience in their home cities.

Since most Australians live near the sea, seaside holiday resorts have rarely offered such stark contrasts with the home environment as in other parts of the world. Australia's mainland beaches enjoy warm climates and are often easily accessible from the major metropolitan areas, which themselves offer an increasing range of leisure facilities and options in the 'post-industrial' age (Davidson and Spearritt 2000). Wharves, bondstores and factories have given way to entertainment centres, food courts, aquariums and Sega World. Settings such as Southbank in Brisbane (with its artificial but atmospheric beach directly opposite the city centre), the Southgate development in Melbourne and Darling Harbour in Sydney exemplify outdoor leisure activities readily available in the inner city area. While island resorts could previously appeal to an urge to 'get away from it all', the range of options available to satisfy escapist urges is ever increasing. Urry points to the attractions of the Centre Parcs development in Sherwood Forest, England, with its double plastic dome, artificial seaside and permanent

temperature of 84 degrees. In this complex, swimming is entertainment, fun and pleasure with tropical heat, warm-water lagoons, palm trees and waterside cafes (Urry 1990: 37). Even Melbourne's recently completed Sports and Aquatic Centre, which is close to the inner city, has some of these features. A potent reminder of how the 'exclusivity' of attractions to particular places is being eroded is provided by the West Edmonton Shopping Mall in Canada. According to Urry, the Mall has turned the concept of geography on its head, with the periphery (Edmonton is situated in a fairly remote part of Canada) becoming the centre. Ominously for the resorts of the south-west Pacific, one can stay in a 'Polynesian' room at Edmonton Mall and enjoy a reconstruction of the Great Barrier Reef.

Displaced reconstructions can sometimes offer advantages over the original. Referring to the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland, adjoining the central business district in Townsville, King and Hyde (1989: 153) described the project as bringing 'the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef within reach of all visitors to North Queensland without weather, time or cost restrictions'. The threat to island resorts is that the essential physical elements of sun (solar devices), sea (water manipulated by techniques producing artificial waves) and sand (literally transported) can be reproduced in more easily accessible locations. It may become increasingly necessary to offer more than the basic physical elements and to provide insights into the natural and socio-cultural context of the destination to justify the high prices that accompany most island resort holidays. Not all holiday-makers are searching for 'authenticity', but resorts may need to consider a pre-emptive strategy. Tourists may also expect the opportunity for more extensive exploration, pushing their primary resort curtilage beyond the resort to other islands, the mainland and the surrounding ocean. One resort-island restaurant can be very like another, whereas scuba diving and deep-sea fishing trips allow visitors the opportunity to encounter a challenging environment. Exploring particular coral formations may offer the prospect of both fun and a learning experience.

Island resorts epitomize what Joseph Emberton called the 'architecture of pleasure' (quoted in Parry 1983: 152–4). With this style 'everything was light, sun, fresh air and fun'. In a world where outdoor living is fashionable such places 'enable consumers to express personal feelings and fantasies in a public language' (Sack 1992: 139). The creation of a setting for 'happiness' is similar to the theme park ethos, described by M. King as 'atmospheric parks – the happiest places on earth' (1981: 117). In the Mamanucas, the vernacular *bure*-style accommodation appeals to what Wright has called the 'abstract and artificial aestheticization of the ordinary and the old' (1985: 230). The constructions are 'old' to the extent that most of the thatch and palm-based materials used are no longer typical of the residences used by Fijians, which are nowadays constructed of cement, iron, fibreglass and other modern materials. The atmosphere is stereotypical, embracing nostalgia, fantasy and the exotic The *bures* that accommodate the visitors in an island landscape, appeal simultaneously to the private and the communal, appearing environmentally friendly and unobtrusive.

The 'exclusivity' label used so prominently in resort promotions has a number of spatial and locational dimensions. Islands are characterized by isolation. Due

to the higher cost of transport and related activities, access to islands is restricted, particularly for lower-income earners. This may be welcomed by those seeking exclusivity, since the satisfaction that people gain from consumption depends on the consumption (or non-consumption) of others (Hirsch 1978). Secondly, islands are in short supply and are relatively small, leading guests to come into contact primarily with others from equivalent socio-economic groupings who lead similar 'lifestyles'. While segregation cannot be guaranteed, the cost and marketing approach used can determine the overall social mix. Thirdly, islands are separated from the backpacker clientele who congregate around the nearby mainland towns of Airlie Beach and Nadi. In practice, exclusivity has its limits, since most resorts must attract a wide enough clientele to fill the rooms, and few can afford to turn away day-trippers who may stay next time around.

In effect, the resorts within the two groups engage in the creation of both social and physical curtilages. While the word 'resort' has become associated with enclavism and segregation, holiday-makers appear increasingly reluctant to cut themselves off from the immediate surrounding landscape (Poon 1989). Resort managers perpetuate the practice of 'appropriating' the landscape by offering it for the enjoyment of their guests through the use of expressions such as 'your own private island' and by offering 'exclusive' tours featuring the 'best' insights into the 'best' sites of interest. Social costs can arise where locals are excluded from, or are offered only restricted access to, such 'exclusive' places. Despite the general absence of privately owned beaches in the island groups, boat and air access is usually expensive and often time-consuming, so they become resort landscapes by default.

There is a tendency to merge public and private space in island resorts through the commercialization of public space (Spearritt 2000). Sack has stated that 'the front stages of malls and other places of consumption … combine elements from public objective space with elements from private, personal space'. They are apparently public places, which are privately owned (Sack 1992: 146; Spearritt 1995). Such places attempt to re-create the types of function common to older city centres – public streets and paths, town squares and village fairs. The blend of public and private is also evident in resorts. Guests 'occupy' a particular unit or *bure* and make this their own territory. Many of the resort activities, however, take place in areas which are markedly public in orientation. Nostalgia for the 'village of the mind' is often catered for by the resort layout.

Within the resort boundaries (curtilage) human behaviour is public but the rules and their enforcement are determined by private persons or entities (the owners and managers). Immediately outside the resort boundaries (beyond the lot boundary or expanded curtilage) is publicly or communally owned space, including roads, beaches and parks. Resorts sell or promote the natural attractions of adjoining areas and the resulting 'way of seeing' leads to a further blurring of the distinction between the public and private domains. The privatization of public space is most blatant where local residents feel constrained from using beaches and other public areas because of perceived barriers, such as concentrations of sunbathers – though such characteristics are certainly less extreme than the practice of private beach ownership in certain countries.

Resort landscapes as consumption places

Landscape is a tangible representation of our concept of space. Consumption places such as resorts 'commodify landscapes' and engender 'placelessness'. Tourists are attracted to resorts through advertising and associated promotional activity, thus imbuing the destination-based consumption with a range of connotations based on mediated preconceptions. Sack (1992: 2) states that 'a resort is not only a place in which things are consumed, but whose landscape is arranged to encourage consumption; and indeed, the appearance of that place – its landscape – is often the element that is consumed'. Some island resorts have transformed the landscape for purely commercial purposes such as the construction of golf courses. It is, however, more common to find such courses at 'mainland' resorts because suitable land is typically in short supply in the islands; in these cases the curtilage of their landscape consumption extends to the mainland.

Consumption places, Sack suggests, 'attempt to sever their connections to other process and places by presenting themselves as a world apart – a consumer's world, a showcase of goods and services, tours and vistas' (1992: 3). Hayman Island Resort relies on high transport costs to dissuade people travelling to the mainland (T. Klein, General Manager, Hayman Island Resort). On the island, consumption is encouraged by creating the impression of a world of total exclusivity. Hayman claims exclusivity by association, being 'closest to one of the leading attractions in the world [the Great Barrier Reef]'. Even the natural environment is being labelled as exclusive – an adjunct to the luxury of the resort itself. The perception of exclusivity created by such imagery is unquestionable.

Unlike consumption places such as shopping malls, department stores and theme parks, many island resorts do foster the opportunity for consumers to make connections with the adjoining and (relatively) non-commodified landscape. The application of the 'world apart' idea is not absolute, and curtilage involves a complex and fluctuating relationship between resorts and their surroundings, influenced by consumer perceptions and preferences.

Sack argues that modernity exhibits two distinct characteristics in 'consumption places'. The first is 'optimistic and global' – a 'world virtually free of necessity', perhaps a 'consumer paradise' – and at the same time 'nostalgic and local', longing for 'the virtues of local community'. In attempting to reconcile these conflicting pressures, consumption places display the symptoms of modernity, being 'territorial communities of convenience, which lack true purpose and cohesion' (1992: 7). In the Whitsundays and the Mamanucas the widespread use of labels such as 'paradise', 'abundance', 'pampered' and 'luxurious' is clear evidence of 'modernity as optimistic and global' in action. In the Whitsundays, the nostalgic and local is present at Club Med Lindeman Island 'Village'. The name village implies an intent to create a 'village-like' atmosphere. In the other Whitsunday resorts, the village setting is less pronounced, and the fact that all are operated by large corporations introduces a 'corporate' dimension to the pervading atmosphere, albeit generally a subtle one. All resorts have public communal facilities, though their layout, scale and design influence the extent to which a 'village' feel is engendered.

In both Fiji and the Whitsundays the response to the urge for the 'nostalgic and local' is catered for by the promotion of swaying palms and tropical tranquillity. By contrast, the most brazenly 'modern' of the resorts is Hamilton, with its urban form and vehicular transport. Generally the mixture of cosmopolitan and local/nostalgic is evident in all resorts, though with greater emphasis on the latter in Fiji, with its free-standing units.

In contrast to shopping malls and theme parks, which invariably sit within vast parking lots, resorts are typically integrated into the immediate environment. While practice often falls short of the ideal, the resort commonly seeks to attract visitors on the basis of the pristine environment offered nearby, plus the quality of facilities and activities *in situ*. The resort is selling the destination first, and the facilities second. Landscapes and resorts constitute a composite product. The physical and psychological curtilage of these sites merits further investigation. What proportion of guests wander more than a kilometre or two from the site? It has been noted that the Mini-Moke fleet on Magnetic Island is a major selling feature; how many visitors hire vehicles to explore further afield? Magnetic is one island you can really conquer, albeit less intrusively than in the four-wheel drive vehicles so popular on the beaches of Fraser Island to the south.

Some of the larger island resorts have more in common with cities or towns than villages, because of their focus on consumption in the form of activity centres, boutiques, restaurants, golf courses and bars. At Hamilton Island the intense competition between the various restaurant and other lessees results in a 'harder-sell' approach conveying a strong sense of urbanization, not unlike the competition between and within Sydney's Darling Harbour and the Rocks. Though islands go to great lengths to portray a 'village-style' atmosphere, they provide an urban 'shop window' into their otherwise rural and coastal settings.

Identifying resort landscapes

The theoretical propositions of Sack and Urry help us to explain the meaning of the relationship between resorts and their curtilages, but they do not provide guidance on the optimum integration of landscape to enhance both market appeal and sustainability. Ayala argues that market trends (or 'megatrends') indicate consumer demand for resorts which emphasize environment, 'with tourists searching for new experiences' (1991b: 281). In suggesting creative possibilities for incorporating environment, Ayala acknowledges a fine line between adventurous landscaping and engendering placelessness by creating 'exotic' environments transportable to anywhere in the world. The dangers of aping stereotypical images of the exotic are particularly tempting for South Pacific destinations, because so little adaptation from actuality to image seems to be required. In practice, the Whitsunday resorts of Hayman and Daydream are probably closest to the standardized international approach, with their substantial and ultimately intrusive architectural designs – a far cry from the fibro-cement cabins of the interwar years, which sat very lightly on the landscape.

Ayala's hotel landscape themes offer useful perspectives for island curtilages. She refers to processing the ecological legacy of the site, and several examples of this are evident in the two island groups. Her concept of fusing interior and exterior can be readily applied in island resorts, because 'geographical or ecological boundaries rather than the property lines, define the landscape system for the guest' (Ayala 1991a: 577). Ayala's observations serve as a caution not to apply the heritage curtilage concept too literally. The heritage literature refers to 'lot boundary heritage curtilage', but tourists are clearly rather uninterested in where the 'lot' ends. The graded paths and tracks winding directly from South Molle and Club Med to the national parks lure house guests and provide a fusion of site and setting. In this context, the island resort label is an asset and a potential curse. The archetype of the deserted tropical paradise is an appealing promotional message that tempts resort operators to use metonyms in their promotions, implying that the resort is the island. Where metonyms lapse into tropical island stereotypes, they lose their distinctiveness and appeal.

Place-identity through contrasting landscape experiences (as described by Ayala) is evident in the programme offered by Select Hotels and Resorts International in its 'Select the Natural Pacific'. This programme enables the resort guest to 'experience the essence of local ecosystems through intimate contact with nature' (Select Hotels and Resorts International 1993: 1). It demonstrates the range of alternatives open to Pacific resorts which wish to integrate fully the resort experience with intimate environmental encounters. Select Hotels attempt to blend 'conventional' resort accommodation with activities typically regarded as specialist ecotourism. In the Whitsundays, contrasting landscape experiences constitute significant resort activities. Examples include island walks, reef trips and visits to natural settings such as Nara Inlet (with its Aboriginal cave paintings) and Whitehaven Beach. Historically the Whitsundays have been guilty of 'appropriating' Pacific (and particularly Polynesian) imagery, which may actually detract from the genuinely local Whitsunday flavour. Queensland colonial-style architecture has helped provide a number of mainland Queensland resorts with a local flavour, but this challenge has not yet been taken up in the Whitsundays. It is notable that the Draft Whitsunday Tourism Strategy flagged its intention to pursue a regional architecture style in future resort developments (Office of the Co-ordinator General 1994). The development of such concepts may have the effect of encouraging mobility, as visitors become more curious about exploring regional linkages.

Another expression used by Ayala (1991a) is 'designing greenhouses, islands and oases'. At Brampton Island the salt-water pool perched on rocks above the ocean can be seen as enhancement of the resort's seashore relationship. Its elevated setting, and use of salt water, gives an extra link with the larger environment. As frequently occurs in the assessment of curtilage for places of heritage significance, resorts have an ambiguous relationship with the environment outside the physical boundaries (the land title boundaries) of the property. Since the natural environment is integral to the resort experience,

and because of the interdependence of the two elements, the visual appearance of the resort should be congruent with the adjacent environment. South Molle, Brampton and Club Med Lindeman Island are all surrounded by national parks, thereby blurring the distinction between the man-made and the natural. It is significant that the Tourism Development Program for Fiji (United Nations Development Programme 1973) and the more recent Fiji Tourism Masterplan (Deloitte and Touche 1997) have stressed the need for resorts which are low-rise and in thatched form with a view to complementing Fiji's physical and social environment. In the Mamanucas, Plantation Island is the only resort offering 'motel units' as a (cheaper) alternative to *bure* accommodation. Despite this and other minor exceptions, the unity of form among the island group is striking, with developments well concealed behind vegetation.

In the Whitsundays the major exception to the practice of blending physical resort development with the adjacent environment is Hamilton Island. The high-rise Hamilton Towers can be seen for many miles around, making it a prominent feature of the Whitsunday landscape. At the other extreme is Palm Bay Hideaway, which consists of fourteen cabins and *bures* adjacent to the beach. The small scale of the development, the abundance of natural camouflage (palm trees) and the use of individual, free-standing units gives the 'resort' a low-key appearance. The destruction of the *bure*-style Eco-Beach resort near Broome by a cyclone in April 2000 is a reminder of just how fragile some of these new built environments can be. The 'Floatel' previously located by the John Brewer Reef off Townsville, while a predictable failure, could at least be sold on and sailed off to Ho Chi Minh City.

Whether the style of construction employed in the larger Whitsunday resorts is effective is an aesthetic and environmental judgement. At Daydream Island Resort the natural environment is recreated throughout the resort with lush, well-watered vegetation. This extends into the cavernous foyer area of the resort and helps distinguish it from equivalent foyer areas in city hotels. Nevertheless, there are disconcerting parallels with the foyer of the Capitol Parkroyal in Canberra, where, to paraphrase Barry Humphries, persons of talent have disappeared without trace. The styles of Hayman and Daydream Resorts are grandiose and monumental. Both incorporate enormous swimming pools that act as centrepieces for the resorts and have huge cathedral-like foyers. In the case of Daydream, the resort wings run into the central foyer area, whereas at Hayman each wing has its own foyer. Presumably the backers of Hayman hoped that its huge development budget would allow it to rise above the stereotypically modest resort landscapes of its competitors.

The Whitsunday resorts do not conform to an obvious resort environment 'formula' and defy simplistic type-casting. South Molle Island gives the arriving guest the impression of the traditional English nineteenth-century resort with its extended pier, promenade and construction parallel to the waterfront. Club Med Lindeman Island is built on a steep hill and is reminiscent of Italy's Amalfi Coast resorts, with their panoramic Mediterranean outlook. Hook Island Wilderness

Lodge is on a smaller scale still and is concealed in a small cove. The atmosphere is informal, with a predominance of campers over those occupying the formal accommodation.

The view from the manager's office

Managers are custodians of their resorts and comptrollers of their own resort curtilages. Their staff have particular designations – designations suggestive of their placement within the primary resort curtilage: front of house, kitchen hand, porter, housekeeper, activities co-ordinator. These employees may appear throughout the property, but they also occupy a particular place within the locational and activities structure of the site.

Resort managers' perceptions of the relationship between the resort and its setting are instructive. Managers espouse the adoption of cost-reduction techniques, such as the installation of water-efficient showers. The Mamanucas' appeal as 'sun, sea and sand' destinations leads to the response that 'it's in our own interests to look after our environment, since that is what attracts the tourists in the first place'. A less predictable and consistent response concerned the relative responsibilities of resorts and government towards environmental protection and introducing guests to the sites of cultural heritage significance.

One resort which is approaching the 'natural and cultural heritage immersion' issue seriously is Naitasi (M. MacDonald, General Manager, Naitasi Resort). It is unique in the Mamanucas in being a small resort (38 units) on a (relatively) large island with two separate villages. This pre-existing Fijian 'infrastructure' provides the resort with a greater opportunity for cultural and environmental differentiation. The manager has plans to pursue 'the ecotourism side of Malolo … to enable diversification beyond sun, sand and sea, though you can never entirely escape from these key elements'. Guests will explore 'grave sites, shell middens and pottery shards, rock structures with burns on the roof that were old fireplaces'. Six village guides were being trained at the time of writing, and a Walk Malolo leaflet was being prepared in conjunction with the Fiji Department of Tourism. This leaflet will also include details of 'garden walks' that will enable tourists to identify the island flora and fauna and help to provide traditional beach-goers with a 'total package'. The Naitasi initiative is an attempt to blend classic sun, sea and sand markets with cultural and environmental diversification. Naitasi, like other resorts, takes guests to Yanuya Island, one of only four villages in Fiji where traditional pottery is made.

As in the Whitsundays, the Mamanuca managers expressed surprise at questions about environmental standards, stating that resort owners and managers would obviously protect the environment, since that is what attracts visitors to the islands. The following response was typical (G. Shaw, General Manager, Castaway Island Resort): 'Why kill the golden goose? Basically we are here to make a profit, and our visitors expect sandy beaches, clean water and no litter or rubbish.'

The General Managers at both Vomo and Daydream Island (N. Palmer and W. Vincent) stressed the requirement that recently completed developments (redevelopment in the case of Daydream) must pay particular attention to environmental requirements and make maximum use of the available technology. Vomo uses 'the most modern sewerage treatment available. We have our own desalinater and our own sewage-treatment plant with run-off through a reticulated irrigation scheme. Our garbage is sent to the mainland for compaction, and where possible our cans are recycled.' The resort's PR machine was into full swing when the golf course layout was discussed: 'Only three trees were moved to build our nine-hole golf course. It was designed around the trees' (N. Palmer, General Manager, Sheraton Vomo Resort). Such resorts have solved the waste problem by exporting it beyond their own natural and commercial curtilage to the mainland! The authors are not aware of any resort managers who offer curious tourists a tour of the waste-disposal arrangements.

All twenty-one Mamanucas and Whitsunday resort managers claim an intimate and intricate relationship with the surrounding environment, acknowledging the role played by natural surroundings to attract visitors. Both areas offer settings which adhere to the traditional romantic European 'tourist gaze' – clear water, mountainous or at least undulating islands, coral reefs, sandy beaches and sunny weather. Both are endowed with 'competitive advantage' when assessed in terms of their natural settings. The level of intimacy with the natural environment offered to visitors is, however, quite diverse. And the way in which particular classes and groups of tourists consume, view or ignore that landscape is also diverse. We need to learn more about what tourists actually do in resort settings, not just in terms of consumption of food and facilities, but in terms of the curtilage of their psychological and geographical horizons.

In the twenty-first century island resorts will have to compete with the increasingly sophisticated infrastructure of urban resorts – from the Gold Coast to Las Vegas – as well as with designated theme parks (these require huge metropolitan markets to survive, whether they are Disneyland Paris or Sydney's Fox Studios). Since there will never be a large enough clientele to warrant the investment in such facilities – unless they are entirely virtual – they will never be built in remote island resorts.

As emerging technologies permit the creation of increasingly accurate simulations, island resorts are vulnerable and may be confronted by competition from unexpected quarters. Against this, the mystique of islands engenders curiosity and desire among potential travellers. Though the mystique of natural beauty and solitude may be insufficient, island resorts may be better placed than their mainland equivalents to withstand the competition. In the face of globalizing forces, the microcosm that islands appear to offer has appeal as a potential experience. Such experiences could be fabricated, but many island resort destinations have the makings of a unique combination of community (and its physical manifestations) and nature. New or renewed romance will always be used for marketing islands and cruise travel. In a century dominated by the computer screen, which fills more and more hours of both the working and the

entertainment day, genuine escape may become even more desirable. While not all island destinations lend themselves to the identification of significant cultural heritage, most offer the prospect of developing the relationship between the property, its surroundings and the human influence, whether this last is in the form of residents, employees or tourists. Resorts in Australia and Oceania are still at an early stage in the destination life cycle. A greater awareness of the significance of resort development on the part of the local community and of adjoining areas on the part of developers, owners, managers and tourist authorities offers the prospect of building more suitable tourist communities and more sustainable tourism. A better appreciation of the immediate curtilage of the resorts and how their patrons use and view the surrounding environment will help to realize this goal.

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