

Version and subversion: Control versus reinscription and reappropriation in the postmodern landscape

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Abstract

This thesis questions and discusses some current trends that appear to place new restrictions on urban space both through overt and also less obvious means of surveillance and control. It is argued that these measures may compromise the social interactions possible within some urban sites as they impede certain members of society whilst facilitating access to others. Further, the more widespread effects on society of such processes and their resultant impacts are considered. These processes are taking place at a time when the design and management of spaces is increasingly concerned with the observation of individuals and when control mechanisms are an intrinsic feature of architectural plans. Gated communities and malls in particular provide working examples of such occurrences, expressing a trend towards monitored and commodified space which is not productive in supporting socially diverse communities. Consideration is given to how the ethos of commodification is spreading into more generalised areas of society impacting the way urban space is managed and controlled. These observations are balanced, however, by the work of social commentators and researchers who think of space and place as still holding a multiplicity of meanings and values. Further support for this view is provided by my own field research which suggests that individuals carry around, and sometimes act out, their own 'versions' of the spaces they use and inhabit. This balancing factor will validate multiple viewpoints and bring a fresh point of view to understandings of how space and place bear various meanings for the members of society interacting within them.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Urban space: purifying place

Although often portrayed as natural or rational developments, urban design, architecture and management are intertwined in the “ideological apparatus of place marketing” (Crilley 1993, 231). This has led to urban sites in the United Kingdom being presented as having quite singularly focused uses and consumer-oriented values. It would appear that such spaces may be restrictive in their availability to a diverse breadth of society; this is especially so with regard to the mall, the gated community and prime shopping districts where space is, to some extent, a malleable commodity in the hands of profit seeking corporations. Public, equal access spaces are, in certain areas, on the decline, replaced by quasi-public zones of consumption that are closely monitored by guards and closed circuit television (CCTV); “wherever there is surveillance, there is shopping, and vice-versa” (Crandall 2005 *no page ref*). Whilst some of this development is dependent upon establishing a visual narrative of attractive and seemingly egalitarian design, the sub-text may consider space,

“not as an arena for democratic interaction, but as the site for mass consumption [where] individuals are cast as consumers rather than citizens.” (Norris & Armstrong 1999, 8)

Space has also been impacted and re-valued by the now global reach of many companies and sophisticated technologies that work across vast distances and time zones, thus reducing or virtually erasing spatial and time constraints. This has created cities that, whilst grounded physically in place, are in other ways stretching, more rapidly than was possible in the past, beyond their footprint on the ground. Thus, in Foucault’s estimation, “our epoch is one in which space takes... the form of relations among sites” (2002, 230). Some individuals and societies are able to operate between social spaces in a highly mobile and

technologically enhanced manner and this is mirrored in the development of sites that may appear to be open to the general public but are, in effect, privately owned and financed enclaves.

This enclaving of various sites is taking place in a post-industrial, service-sector society, where consumption is foregrounded over production with an entailing focus both on commodities and the commodification of the built environment. Whilst there have always been forms of social segregation, in its present context, gaps are produced as “what is characteristic of our city building is to wall off the differences between people” (Sennett 1993, xii). As an outcome of this process there is a decreasing social sphere free from commercial interventions and monetary dependency such that many people “regularly spend time in publicly accessible spaces controlled by private interests” (Wakefield 2005, 529). The pivot in my thesis is then, that a planning and design philosophy that controls and neutralises spaces and people, reduces and compromises the social potentials facilitated by less prescribed spaces. There is less diversity amongst individuals visiting these multiply used and accessed spaces and, therefore, more problems “understanding the experience of difference as a positive human value” (Sennett 1993, 97).

Although postmodernity as a term is laden with meanings which are mutable and open to contestation, it does mark a series of ruptures with former values and styles and a rejection of modernisms' cohesive and elitist vision. Postmodernity could be described, in contrast, as a negation of these previous values that “possesses only a weakly articulated ideological alternative to the modernist vision of society” (Gottdiener 1995, 121). Above all, postmodernism can be defined as fragmentary at a time of social fragmentation, leading to the focus in this thesis being on the ways in which control and surveillance have developed into “a form of governance in privatised urban spaces” (Wakefield 2005, 531). The aspect of postmodernity under consideration is the

“growing gap between the renewed vitality of city life represented by the restructured, postmodern center and the contrasting surrounding area that is afflicted with... uneven capitalist development.” (Gottdiener 1995, 131)

The altering status of urban sites will be studied then, identifying the ways in which social relations are compromised due to site specific rules, values and versions of how the built environment should be.

Each chapter in this thesis will seek to detail the various complexities, conflicts and opportunities of postmodern urban life, beginning in **Chapter two** with a review of the literature used in my studies. **Chapter three** will discuss the methodologies employed and explicate some current means of understanding society, built space and the relationship of the one with the other. **Chapter four** will consider the bias towards outward design features and facades,

“in the practice and discourse of postmodern architecture, surface appearance and visual effect is paramount... the ‘public’ are positioned as consumers of visual imagery who passively receive meanings... prescribed for them by architects.” (Crilley 1993, 237)

This will be examined along with the increasing prevalence of the surveillance, control and monitoring of spaces and individuals. **Chapter five** will move on to discuss specific examples of spatial fragmentation and surveillance, focusing in particular on the gated community and shopping mall, the latter being supported also by the views of some of my respondents. These two sites offer much opportunity for discussions about the separation of social groupings due to financial status and choice. They can reveal the way in which the built environment impacts upon behaviour whilst also uncovering the values of particular, often dominant, social groups. Spatially fragmented dwelling and consumption practices are tied into broader processes:

“splintering networks accentuate the global trends towards increasing socio-spatial segregation in cities around the world whose extreme manifestation is the explosion of gated communities.” (Castells 2001, 240)

It is not productive to claim that all postmodern urban space is undergoing the same treatment stemming from identical sources. However it is useful to consider some current design trends, specifically those that rely on dominant and visually oriented over-production and people management, as these relate in to my general theme of how official versions can restrict unmediated interactions and reduce social diversity.

Chapter six will discuss behaviour and attitudes that can open space up to the dynamic actions of individuals and social groups who produce their own sub-versions of urban sites. Sometimes inadvertently doing so, at other times, knowingly “taking over space conceptually as well as physically” (Borden 1996, 85), thus releasing sites from single uses and offering up the possibility of re-imagining urban zones as having multiple, fluid meanings. The objective of this chapter is to suggest and contrast the ways in which space can be regarded;

“if the space that capitalism produces is rational, ordered, mappable, controlling, anonymous, banal and fragmented in its totality, then places are experiential, natural, transitory, confused, contested, unique, historical, holistic.” (McCreery 2001, 240)

The realisation that space becomes place through the values and meanings of a variety of people can make the allotting of specific, authorised versions appear calculating and dismissive. Re-appropriation through many means thus becomes a way of taking back public space and in so doing reaffirms the human capacity for a serious playfulness and vice-versa.

This will then lead into **Chapter seven** where a variety of personal viewpoints and experiences are uncovered during semi-structured interviews with various respondents, followed by an exploration and interpretation of the findings. As will be explained in the methodology chapter, discussions with the respondents uncovered some enlightening thoughts that provided depth and insight to chapter

seven. The findings will be supported by existing work and commentaries and supplemented by my own analysis of surveillance and agency. In concluding the project, **Chapter eight** will suggest and be a springboard to further work, thought and projections on society, built space, and the changing values and ideals they express. In closing, it will be evident that surveillance and controlling mechanisms are, through a variety of means, becoming embedded in postmodern society, having a potential impact both on present and future social and material processes.

2 Literature Review

Recent research within the social sciences has provided a breadth of literature documenting an awareness of the various ways in which social fragmentation has increased, due in part to the development of sophisticated technologies, new modes of work and the mass mobility of many people. With the ubiquity of such electronic mediums as the mobile phone, the internet and email, people with access can conduct their lives more readily through remote and disembodied forms “maintained not so much in human memory as in databanks and networked computer systems” (Lyon a 2001 16). This fact means, however, that the person is frequently removed from direct social contact and communication, and an ensuing “social and urban splintering” (Graham 2001 5) has to some extent occurred. Lifestyles devoid of the representative’s physical presence can mean that further assurances of intention and reliability are sought out. In addition, the increased rapidity of transportation and an expanding global network of relations has resulted in urban spaces and nodes that are peopled by those who are unfamiliar, thus, there is a dependence upon surveillance and monitoring to vouch for an individual’s identity.

The focus of the literature under scrutiny will be on various commentators’ interpretations of the changes introduced above, paying particular attention to how the withdrawal into private, monitored spaces and a lack of tolerance of difference means that the control and surveillance of communities and individuals is now an integral factor in many urban and sub-urban settings. It is primarily those with sufficient status and money that can achieve a lifestyle which avoids immersion in undesirable sites.

“The movers and shakers are being handed ever increasing power, mobility, choice and control... theirs is a fast-emerging world of ... fast highways, premium electronic-priced roadspace, broadband telecommunications... [and] seamless connectivity.” (Graham 2001 5)

Postmodern society, for the wealthy or well connected is partially managed through enhanced technologies facilitating transcendence, disembodiment and displacements within what could be regarded as a network of enablement, a “matrix... or hyperspace superimposed above the level of reality” (Boyer 1996 15). Increasingly then, where “access is predicated upon ability to pay” (Flusty 1997 51), some individuals are tapping into flows of power whether electronic, in built form or through other less tangible social constructs.

Despite this trend amongst some towards an elitist lifestyle, for the disempowered the experience may be that their use of space is diminished. For them, seamless access and mobility are less available, as “power is expressed through the monopolization of spaces by some groups and the exclusion of certain weaker groups to other spaces” (Knox & Pinch 2000 61). This can be observed in the delivery of broadband which does not reach certain neighbourhoods and in the poor transport links to some areas which can act, however unintentionally, as social control filters; segregation “by criteria of affluence divides society ... impeding mobility and contact” (Flusty 1997 59). With these outcomes in mind, the question of what happens to those excluded, or impeded, in this ‘advanced’ society needs to be explored as does the issue of how urban space is transforming under new means of social engineering.

In today’s culture of speed, efficiency and fragmentation, “exclusionary segmentation imposes social costs on those left outside” (Sennett 1997 95), whilst also exacting a price both economically and socially on the more fortunate. Mobility, as a key element of the postmodern world, means that society is no longer fixed within such static boundaries as was once the case. This has given rise to an increased need for assurances of a person’s credentials and “surveillance is a central... feature of today’s advanced societies” (Lyon 2002 4). David Lyon’s research details the way in which people are now controlled through more sophisticated and less obvious ways than was formerly the case.

This theme is taken up by others studying a variety of social settings, the exclusions range over many areas;

“today’s upscale... malls... are full of invisible signs warning off the underclass... The privatization of the architectural public realm... is shadowed by parallel restructurings of electronic space, as heavily policed, pay-access... elite databases and subscription cable services appropriate parts of the invisible agora.” (Davis M 2000 195)

Built spaces from the mall, to urban sites and the gated community, show a trend towards exclusive and excluding designs that make mixing with a diverse breadth of society less probable and these are mirrored in other less visible sectors of social life. Whilst semi-privatised urban spaces can curtail the flow of people as in “the new order, control provides or inhibits access” (Boyer 1996 18), so also less transparent flows can also be guided and controlled.

“Companies use databases containing consumer information... to target advertising and the other allurements to consumption. North America and much of Europe are classified by zip codes... into social categories.” (Lyon 2001 a 65)

In the gated community, the means of categorising social groupings is determined through built form, “the privatisation of the democratic sphere... has found its concrete expression in the rise of walled and gated communities” (Norris & Armstrong 1999 8). This is not to say that every inhabitant follows the same beliefs and behaviour as do their neighbours, but the keeping or adoption of a group identity would seem to be magnified somewhat by such a community’s ability to exclude. The gated community may, and often does, actively seek “to symbolize distinction, to create a secure place on the social ladder, to protect an image... and housing values” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002 196). Detached from the wider community and in line with common trends towards consumption as a tool of segregation, such sites can adopt a “neo-liberal discourse of individualized rights of seclusion, privacy and distantiation” (ibid 218). Within these

communities, it is possible to buy out of the wider social setting and this segmenting is present also in the ability to access various necessary resources.

“Financial services have been gradually targeted more and more to upper income groups through the parallel withdrawal of physical branches in poor communities... [and] some British supermarkets have even considered a two-tier pricing structure, to allow cash rich/time poor customers to shop unencumbered by obstruction from the rest of society.” (Graham 2001 5)

Whilst those within a gated community may feel that they have paid for the right to certain privileges, their consumption choices may further the demise, for others, of already thinly spread community facilities. As a working and accessible example of a semi-gated community in the North West of England, Cypress Point in Lytham St. Annes adopts an aura of prestige and grandeur. It exemplifies some common aspects of gated communities using “stylized quasi-pastoral designs and imagery” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002 201) whilst any true sense of community appears to be ignored. Grassed areas bear ‘do not play’ signs and a sculpture of playing children acts more as a symbol of their absence than an attractive design feature. Not only is withdrawal from others apparently sought here but it is reinforced as the impressive housing “functions also as a powerful economic indicator of affluence” (ibid 199) effectively distancing itself from the surrounding housing.

Norris and Armstrong contend that with the reduction of mixed use spaces, such as the gated community and mall, people become less tolerant of difference. In tandem with this, surveillance has developed as a multi-strand technique monitoring, maintaining and enforcing suitable behaviour amongst the public with the prime directive being a maximizing of profit. The corollary being that the prevalence of monitoring and personal data tracking will see “citizens... acted on not as autonomous corporeal subjects... but through their electronic doppelgangers” (1999 222). Surveillance as a primary source of study forms the

subject matter of the on-line journal *Surveillance & Society*, the first edition states that,

“the same systems that may be feared for their power to keep track of personal lives are established to protect and enhance life-chances... surveillance always displays these two faces”. (Lyon 2002 4)

It is then, a deeply ambiguous subject raising a multitude of view points that are at the forefront of debates of now and future spaces. As an ‘electronic doppelganger’, the person is not just an embodied subject but also a two-dimensional image, flattened into a form of data. It is then easier to reduce the individuality of the person under review or surveillance, regarding them as “being categorised as part of a particular social group” (Norris & Armstrong 1999 150). Worryingly, the operator or observer wields a form of non-negotiable power over those watched as their gaze can never be returned, or at least not directly, although the guard’s job is itself a liminal one in which they “are mere mediators of power – simultaneously exercising and undergoing power” (Koskela 2003 303). It would appear that the exercise of power is becoming less humanly visible; “power is present but difficult to grasp” (ibid 303) and “visibility of the ruled has continued to increase, but that of the rulers has decreased” (Ellin 1997 34). This power is also elusive as, with regard to CCTV’s code of conduct, on its own it “does nothing, its images have to be decoded as they are filtered through the organizational lens” (Norris & Armstrong 1999 187).

In its built form, power and control of the urban crowd has for a long time been a factor in design, from the broad boulevards of Paris to the grid patterns of many American cities. Postmodern architecture can, however, be said to take this surveillance to a new level that may not be immediately obvious as the sites under question may be attractive and entertaining. They do not appear overtly “intimidating, but inviting... by appropriating, sanitizing... the very urban culture... they displace” (Ferrell 2001 225). Ferrell questions the perceived innocence of

some built sites, arguing that “open public space that’s been shut down, that’s been outlawed, constitutes occupied territory” (ibid 25). The apparently harmless motivations of some city designs that present themselves as neutral may, in fact be a means of social control, an “act of dominating and subduing others” (Sennett 1993 xii). Much as the gated community is often a mix of earlier styles with a dash of postmodern extras, the image may be unchallenging to the eye, bland even, but the intrinsic message is one of seclusion and “withdrawal from a complex world... a closed system” (ibid 67).

In a challenging article, Susan Torre represents the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, in Argentina who have protested for the ‘disappeared’, people who have been targeted by their regime often for no apparent reason. She asserts that regardless of a space’s rigidity and formal use, human agency can overcome built form, and reinscribe a place through intentions and actions. The women’s

“redefinition of space suggests that the public realm neither resides nor can be represented by buildings and spaces but rather is summoned into existence by social actions.” (Torre 2000 141)

The courageous and inventive actions of the Mothers imposed a silent witness to mass genocide on a formal square. In this action, women, frequently a minority group, used the recognized and respected role of motherhood to force a regime to acknowledge them, as they reproduced and reinterpreted public space. “Access and appearance in the production and representation of public space, regardless of how it is physically or virtually constituted” (Torre 145 2000) is as important, often more so, than the most forcefully written critique of the urban landscape. In a society where people have been brutally controlled, these women proved that official versions of space should not always be permitted to dictate behaviour and nullify actions into docility.

Other writers promote their belief that space and place should have a vibrancy that is often missing; notably, even in spaces that are marketed as festive and playful. In postmodern sites such as the mall, activity can be “inward turning [and] singularly focused” (Ellin 1997 34), stifling the sense of spontaneity that city streets can have. Likewise, this has been seen in cities where industrial and labour intensive production has been superseded by a service sector industry. Where the focus towards a “leisure agenda in which the cosmetic presentation of the city centre” (Mellor 2002 216) has taken precedence, there can be an “aesthetic mode of producing space” (Zukin 2000 82). For the developer, art may be a useful tool that authenticates space where, rather than inspiring a multiplicity of interpretations, it obliterates or simplifies a city’s history and origins “if the past is not demolished it is at least reinvented” (Smith 1996 26-7). In postmodern developments, the city’s individual character can be compromised or reformulated with “cultural spaces... managed through a policing of perception” (Ferrell 2001 227).

When space is offered up as neutral or containing an imposed, singular narrative, it denies the impact and interplay of dynamic social interaction. “Space, severed from its social production ... appears to exert control” (Deutsche 2002 52). Deutsche, amongst others calls for more inclusive methods of design that support the democratic rights of a city’s users in an era when private business is increasingly dictating form. In order to challenge these assertions of urban control, people can actively reinscribe spaces much as the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo did both through spontaneous and pre-determined acts. The street as fundamentally a public right of way is “still the most visible face of public interaction... streets are means of communication” (Jukes 1990 xiv). Taking to the street can activate a “sort of subversive vulnerability, a critical epistemology of the street” (Ferrell 2001 246). However, the street itself would seem to be compromised by the growth of consumption and the commodification of urban space. Much as the mall displays an intensified scrutiny of its visitors, so also the street is becoming more tightly monitored. “Much commercial surveillance

has to do with shopping malls and consumer areas in cities... designed to attract and seduce" (Lyon a 2001 65). The social control processes of malls are spreading with "the same social and cultural processes which reinforce selective exclusion in the mall... being felt in... town centre streets" (Williams & Johnstone 2000 192). Zoning and the redesigning of streets can be attractive, enhancing the environment for all users but they may also extend the message that inappropriate behaviour, not directly linked to consumption is unacceptable.

Roman Cybriwsky is "struck by how crowds have returned to places that were once all but abandoned or taken over by undesirables" (1999 9), he believes that New York's redesigning of some sites has drawn the public back producing a "remarkable turnaround in fortunes... [where] increased policing and surveillance are some of the ingredients for success" (ibid 9). No mention, however, is made of where these 'undesirables' can go or the fact that the ethos of much urban management is now to deter "certain people and activities within the city centre... seen as non-conducive to their consumer-led vision of the desirable" (Norris & Armstrong 1999 142). Whilst Cybriwsky makes some favourable and constructive comments about new urban developments, the question of the displacement of the unproductive and non-consuming remains to be addressed.

If space is to be a valid site for democracy then acts of self propelled agency that do not necessarily 'consume' sites in the accepted way can be a means to reappropriate the urban landscape. As Ferrell earlier posited, taking to the streets can be a form of gaining and gathering information, knowledge and an experiential understanding of what it means to be a social being. Using urban space as an arena for activity can take this even further, uncovering the fact that it remains a social space bearing meaning and values. Alternative meanings may be uncovered through actions that conflict with official spatial uses, such acts can destabilize through their assertions of autonomy. "Graffiti writers, BASE jumpers and others... ultimately provide... a sense of self" (Ferrell 2001 64) in urban settings where individuality may only be encouraged through consumptive

practices. Although these actions create ripples of concern and conflict they remain a means to challenge the one-sided authorship of sites; "social space is produced and structured by conflicts" (Deutsche 2002 xxiv).

At a time when movement is so closely monitored and controlled, often through unseen forces, spontaneous movement may be misread as deeply subversive. Even the innocent wanderings of someone new to an area can be interpreted as deviance,

"if a person appears lost, disoriented, or in other ways at unease with the locale... [they place] themselves in the category of morally suspect and therefore worthy of surveillance." (Norris & Armstrong 1999 144-5)

People's actions are important in responding to unequal power relations, indicating "that they are not merely passive objects of a disciplinary gaze" (Norris & Armstrong 1999 147). The continued questioning of public rights is essential at a time when some "street spaces... abandon the principle of free, open and democratic access" (Graham 2001 2). If it is true that there needs to be an ongoing "questioning of location, movement and direction... challenging... constructions of place, of politics, of identity" (Keith & Pile 1993 220), then those who subvert, weaken and reinscribe urban sites are instrumental in its construction. Whilst surveillance and monitoring "represents total one-way-ness of the gaze" (Koskela 2003 298), subversive acts can destabilise the power inherent in such practices. However, as Norris and Armstrong suggest, those who regard cameras and, by extension, other forms of surveillance "as other than normal are treated as other than normal themselves" (1999 147). This fact highlights the way that surveillance and control mechanisms aim to normalise social spaces and the acceptable behaviour within them. Thus, even mildly anarchic behaviour can produce an over sensitized reaction so that ultimately the "segregation, purification and exclusion of particular groups... encourages conflict" (Koskela 2003 303). The sheer intensity of monitoring sets up a

heightened sense of the expectations of conformity, resulting in over reactions to perceived deviance, closing down a sense of the public realm as a space for difference and spontaneous interaction.

Anonymous, official observation may promote the view amongst citizens that they can “defer their interventions on the grounds that it is being monitored by those whose job it is to respond, and therefore personal intervention becomes unnecessary” (Norris & Armstrong 1999 188). Thus, a sort of passivity and handing over to official forces of all conflict control, however minor, again highlights a stepping back from interactions and social responsibility. Jeff Ferrell’s sometimes over emphatic and romanticised but nevertheless refreshing assertions create an antidote to what he sees as the shutting down of public space. His heartfelt desire for edgy living and strident support for graffiti artists in what he considers their “war for cultural space” (2001 181) provides a counter-attack. Challenging and destabilising the hold of “the occupied city [where] outsiders and their cultures are expurgated, disappeared, rendered invisible and inaudible” (ibid 227).

Proponents of diversity value the ways in which urban space can provide “a clash of viewpoints, a mess, a morass that can challenge our little orthodoxies” (Jukes 1990 233) encouraging a healthy social sphere through “a commitment... to challenging the hegemonic constructions of place” (Keith & Pile 1993 220). The postmodern era is facing a plethora of new forms of social control and repression centred on the privileging of the commodity and the consumer’s rights to buy into an elitist pool of resources facilitating a distanced and protected lifestyle. For places to hold a multiplicity of meanings they need to be flexible enough to allow for personal interpretations despite current trends placing sites and their users under the “parallel pressures of privatisation, commercialisation and the biased use of new information and surveillance technologies” (Graham 2001 6). How and why these pressures are occurring and what measures can

be taken to subvert the dictatorial formation of places will be explored and interpreted with the help of the literature reviewed.

Methodology, visuality and representation

In contemporary society, arguably more than in previous eras, “the visual is central to the cultural construction of social life” (Rose 2001, 6). This is particularly so in spaces where postmodern design factors have been used expressly to divert attention from the fact that consumption is the prime reason for the site existing. In the mall, for instance, the founding principal is to “sell consumer goods. The function of mall design, therefore, is to disguise the... relation between producer and consumer” (Gottdiener 1995, 86). In tandem with the spread of sites of consumption, surveillance has also increased, in part to protect consumable goods as well as the sites themselves within which consumption takes place. Thus, at a time of “perpetual commodity production and... a panoptic society of observation” (Charley 1996, 61), social spaces may be routinely monitored for disturbances that destabilise the surface appearance of order. These spaces contain within them a variety of visualities, each in their way designed to keep the processes of consumption running smoothly. In my thesis, with its emphasis on surveillance and the built environment, writings on visual and image based methodologies have been informative, providing a suitable explanatory framework for the experiences and outcomes of some aspects of postmodernity.

Much of the relevant work addresses an awareness and concern with surface appearances that avoid the submerged issues of social inclusiveness and the reality of invisible power structures. Foucault’s writings on the panopticon are useful; his belief that knowledge and power are expressed in the panopticon’s procedures and, further, are replicated in contemporary society are supported by the assertion that there is a “dominant form of visuality throughout modern capitalist societies” (Rose 2001, 166). Whilst these forces are not a cohesive totality, and their presence can be undermined, their prevalence should be problematised in order to avoid, “the possibilities of free and creative self-

determination... and non-administered space and time [becoming] concepts so unnecessary as to make them alien" (Charley 1996, 61).

In the same way that the "photograph can provide evidence of the real world in a way more akin to the evidence provided by painting or writing" (Winston 1996, 66-7), so too my thesis does not aim to hold up a mirror to the world. It will, instead, express an opinion gained through desk based study, interviews with respondents local to the north west of England and textual analysis, combining to produce an interpretation whereby through its "dialectic interaction... structures of meaning are created, and then developed into personal... narratives" (Robins 1996, 142). For Robins, it is just such a procedure that is lacking in much postmodern culture; he is concerned that new image technologies are "facilitating greater detachment and disengagement from the world. Vision is becoming separated from experience" (ibid, 13). Our social identity is tracked and gathered in through rapid and efficient means such as the video camera and the computer, thus, the power to "know each individual and to track his or her movements through the places and times of ordinary life" (Fiske 2002, 384) is achievable. This knowledge is imperfect, however, as the visible can only provide certain kinds of understanding, not necessarily engaging with the exploration of hidden meanings or intent. It could be said that these visualities are displacing older, and more bureaucratic ways both of looking and controlling; "new technologies of vision have been continuously developed and perfected to ensure... visual sovereignty" (Robins 1996, 20). This is attainable even as the postmodern may avoid the modernist trend for uniformity in design, indeed, postmodern forms can by contrast be playful, whimsical even. Under the surface, however, there is an impulse towards a technologically advanced method of knowing the individual and new ways of ensuring uniformity in the social order.

Current writings and methodological processes are seeking to move beyond binary right/wrong attitudes about surveillance and image proliferation, thereby creating a staging post from which to consider how people can still use space

and place in their own ways despite official practices of control. Research trends are having the effect of altering the researcher's singularity of purpose, introducing polysemic meanings based, "not on realist... syntax, but on quotation, metaphor and expressive nuance... [that] might decentre stereotype, institutional intransigence and audience expectation" (Edwards 2001, 193-4). Thus decentred, writings, image production and interactions with participants become one possible version of reality resulting in no singular, definitive truth and are thus better thought of as only one amongst many viewpoints which, nevertheless, provide insight and resonance.

The notion that research and data gathering can capture reality is evidently open to contestation, and, as suggested, it is more useful to regard the techniques used as part of a weaving together. Thus, the research becomes, to some extent, a narrative process as; "all such representations will be in some senses fictional" (Cloke 2004, 130). This is not to say that my work is fictional, but that inevitably, my own position guides the outcome. However, when this is the case, acknowledgement of this fact can be constructive,

"to some extent it is inevitable that the researcher is an active influence throughout the research process... the recognition of the active subject and the reflexive self in human geography has rendered entirely legitimate an approach which makes explicit the intersubjectivities inherent in interview practices." (Cloke et al 2004, 151)

It is valuable also to consider that the contributor is active in absorbing the visual, sensual and informational world and that their "interpreting... is just that, interpretation, not the discovery of... truth" (Rose 2001, 2). Therefore, in my research I am not attempting to reach a definitive position on surveillance and other acts of looking, acting and being seen. Instead, through observation and semi-structured interviews with individual respondents, there is an attempt to gain a critical understanding of the extent to which they respond to place and,

conversely, how place is shaped and given meaning by their uses and considerations of it.

As it is intrinsic to my working practice to unfold multiple meanings and intents I have employed an ethnographic approach, seeking,

“not so much explanations and predictions of social events as understanding what meaning and what significance the social world has for the people who live in it.” (O’Brien 1993, 7)

Social processes have been studied in order to understand “how members of society put their world together” (Cuff 1994, 4), resulting in a validation of the subjective experiences of differing people and how they respond to their life in its geographic setting. This understanding of another’s situation is informed and enriched by the findings of my interviews with respondents. This is necessary as people are;

“immersed in a setting natural to them, and are seldom concerned to express its essence in a symbolic fashion for outsiders. Yet without such symbolic interpretation one’s ethnographic description is hollow, a mere catalogue of events and constituents.” (Fielding 1993, 164)

Without the input from individuals, the research process lacks diversity and the challenge and insight of a variety of views. Thus, an understanding of the multiple realities people hold is necessary in producing a cohesive body of work combining data gathering, reflection and a representation of society as I surmise it.

“Good qualitative analysis is able to document its claim to reflect some of the truth of a phenomenon by reference to systematically gathered data. Poor qualitative analysis is anecdotal, unreflective, descriptive without being focused on a coherent line of inquiry.” (Fielding 1993, 168-9)

As already mentioned, a part of the data gathering is implemented through semi-structured interviews with nine individuals, utilising a guiding set of questions but allowing also for an interactive process where intentions “can be diverted or even subverted by both the researcher and the researched” (Cloke et al 2004, 129). Indeed, as I discovered during the interviewing process, my contributors had much to say and provided useful and sophisticated insights into their own social worlds. In retrospect, this is entirely to be expected and supports the validity of social enquiry, proving that people’s views can, should and do affect the outcomes of research. However, as I chose to leave my interviews until after the opening chapters had been written and my desk based study had been underway for some time the findings impact more on the latter part of the project and significantly less on the earlier sections.

The interviews, when conducted, followed a natural, conversational flow with exchanges being,

“as open-ended as possible, in order to gain spontaneous information about attitudes and actions... the questioning techniques [should] encourage respondents to communicate their underlying attitudes, beliefs and values... The objective is that the discussion be as frank as possible.” (Fielding 1993, 138)

To capture the interviews in detail, a tape-recorder was used as, “if you are conducting non-standardised interviews you will be joining in the conversation too, and without recording you will inevitably lose data” (Fielding 1993, 146). Permission for tape-recording was asked from each respondent with the assurance that if required, a recording and transcript would be made available to them. Those interviewed range in age from their early thirties to late sixties and after some deliberation I decided to interview those I felt comfortable with either because they live close to me or that I work with or who are acquaintances. As a single female pursuing an individually structured project, rather than a group based or collaborative enterprise, this felt safer and more manageable. Although

it would have been interesting, I steered away from approaching more subversive groups even though their contributions would have been useful and may possibly have resulted in the research having a different outcome.

The questions used were based around the following points:

1. There is an increased awareness of safety and the curbing of anti-social behaviour in town centres. For instance more CCTV cameras have been installed and bigger shops often employ security guards, do these factors encourage or put you off, would you prefer such measures to be less visible or do you not really notice or mind them?
2. The Trafford Centre has announced that it has improved its security measures in order to ensure customer safety, is this a plus factor for you, or would you visit for other reasons such as the warm, dry environment or choice of shops? How do you feel when visiting the Trafford Centre and how does it compare with more open shopping venues?
3. Do you prefer the experience of shopping in town centres or at more specific sites such as malls and what would you say are the main benefits of your preferred shopping choice, e.g. convenience, safety, parking, warmth, sociability, locality?
4. Are you conscious of being observed by CCTV when out in public places, how does this make you feel, do you think that you modify your behaviour or do you not mind the presence of surveillance and feel that you still act as you normally would?
5. In the Trafford Centre's own information pack, it has been described as a "shopping machine", what do you think of this statement, does it make you feel differently about visiting and are you happy to be a part of the experience?
6. What are your views in general about the uses of public space, do you think that people have a right to, within reason, use space as they want, for instance, do demonstrations and rallies have a right to the temporary

occupying of public areas? Feel free to discuss any thoughts you have on public space and its uses.

The above questions were used more as instigators towards discussion, and contributors were given the opportunity to express their own particular thoughts or to move the conversation on to related issues as the process unfolded. I feel this was a valid approach as my pre-conceived notions were altered more than would have been possible with a more rigid and tightly defined set of questions. As will be seen in chapter seven, my own views on the potentially restrictive nature of surveillance and control are not necessarily echoed by the respondents. Their versions of reality underscore a realisation that the social world is complex and informed by individualised accounts and experiences differing from my own and from other commentators' accounts. Upon reflection, this is inevitably the case in social research where there is often "conflict between versions if proponents of two versions of reality are equally convinced of the correctness of their way of seeing the world" (Cuff 1994, 17). Alternative and personal views are useful then, when acknowledged as an outcome of the creativity and agency of individuals in social settings, and their use in this thesis has provided surprising results proving the contingent and mutable nature of qualitative projects. Indeed, this interactive process "feels more directly 'from' or 'of' us than does reporting the results of data input and statistical analysis" (Meloy 2002, 126). Further, it also points to the fact that qualitative interviewing can provide unplanned detours that become a part of the project as they uncover insights into specific social issues.

Surveillance and Postmodernity

4.1 Surveillance as social control

As has been introduced so far, the privileging of consumption over and above the need for public areas of equal access has rendered some space a commodity used to project an appropriate image. This chapter will seek to define some of the inequalities present in such spaces due to the prioritising of surface appearances. Additionally, the spread of various surveillance techniques that compromise spaces and individuals will be documented, considering how these are becoming embedded and, therefore, uncritically viewed by their proponents.

Cities striving to extend their profits and status through promoting the consumption of goods, heritage and other potentialities for growth can, in official versions, seem to leave little room for personal interpretations:

“Architecture has... become a form of advertising as city governments, powerful corporations and innumerable redevelopment agencies show a renewed interest in manipulating the built environment... to attract inward investment by amassing the correct mix of cultural or ‘soft’ infrastructure.”
(Crilley 1993, 233)

Where this form of city promotion becomes a primary motive, people in urban spaces may, as a result, feel subordinated. This is not, however, a totalising reality as is uncovered in later chapters through examining sub-cultural and personalised versions of space. Overarching themes are never completely so and can always, to some extent be undermined. It is valuable though to consider some of the means and outcomes of surveillance and control in their urban setting. Such forces seek to control the unpredictability of mobile bodies, facilitating “exclusions enacted to homogenize public spaces by expelling specific difference” (Deutsche 2002, 58). In doing so, however, they may ultimately only exacerbate social problems. A sense of detachment and declining social

responsibility could be the ultimate cost, created as the “endless... representations of surveillance material blur the line between reality and fantasy, original and simulation” (Koskela 2003, 305). Withdrawal, containment and a simulation of the real have repercussions, namely, the loss of an embedded sense of self as part of a wider society anchored in physical situatedness and accountability.

Some of the more negative aspects of gated communities, malls and urban zones highlight the hyperreal sense of place produced in an effort to imply normalcy whilst simultaneously re-writing the rules of just what is considered normal. Hence, “surveillance space does not so much rely upon its referents for effect as it relies upon the absence of its referents” (McGrath 2004, 156), producing a moral ambiguity that neither engenders a consensus of social conscience or a clear sense of authoritarian concern. As has been suggested, the individual can feel a sense of isolation under multiple but vague means of scrutiny. Freedom of choice and the right to buy into a chosen community are inherent in capitalist notions of democracy, but these choices can also produce exclusions. The flexibility enabled by the decentralised form of social networks can accentuate the “global trends towards increasing socio-spatial segregation” (Castells 2001, 240).

In city and urban spaces, the knowledge that an unknown watcher may be present, busily calibrating behaviours, can produce a feeling of uncertainty; though “the official aim of surveillance is to increase safety... eventually, the effect may be rather on the contrary” (Koskela 2003, 302-3). It can be unnerving to feel one is being watched and whilst the surveillance is for ‘the public good’, it may simultaneously disconcert, thus, public space can hold ambiguous connotations for some. In this context, physical embodiment can be a way of countering the effects of surveillance, creating a dynamic and unpredictable presence, achieved through autonomous acts of self or group determined agency. As will be discussed in chapter six, the official narrative of the city can

be re-scripted such that version becomes subversion, and the friction of engagement can remain relevant despite, “the fantasy of disavowing it through technological means” (Robins 1999, 52). Rightly, the city and its designated spaces become open to possibilities,

“the interproduction of time, space, and social being should be about use values and not exchange values in the city... the aim is appropriation, not ownership: production as creativity in the widest sense.” (Borden et al 2001, 17)

There is, then, something of a polarity between “those who look to order and those who feel for disorder” (Robins 1999, 57), it is not that I wish to compose a binary opposition between ‘order’ and ‘disorder’ but rather that these opposites need to be examined and negotiated in a dialectical process of engagement with the complexities of postmodern life. To ignore these issues, or to remedy them by removal or overly authoritarian measures, can only exacerbate the loss. Surveillant spaces are mirroring the less positive aspects of recently emerging cyberspaces, creating voids where, “there is an invocation of community, but not the production of a society... not an alternative society but an alternative to society” (Robins 1995, 150).

Global practices, stretched relations, and an increase in technological communications systems have reduced the face to face interactions of previous generations, leading to less tolerance of differences. This mistrust can be interpreted as one of the reasons for a proliferation of surveillance techniques in some urban centres, entailing policing that is “proactive rather than reactive” (Norris & Armstrong 1999, 24). In effect, the individual or group is profiled according to body language, appearance and the way they are using space, ambiguities and incongruity are seen as indicators of possible deviance. By extension, this method adopts an approach of pre-emption and risk assessment, attempting to foresee and avoid deviance, thus, surveillance attempts a temporal twist allowing it “to overtake itself... and to operate in advance” (Lyon 2001 a,

116). To support the burden of surveillance, the police are supplemented in city and urban spaces by a rise in private security guards and,

“private security and closed circuit (CCTV) operating companies are being given responsibility for maintaining public order and deciding who can, and who cannot, go in and out of such spaces.” (Graham 2001, 366)

Zones of increased value to a city’s management are guarded and run more intensely and with a bias towards keeping spaces consumer friendly, leading to areas where conduct is closely observed both by on the ground security and CCTV. Whilst this surveillance is patchy and not always coordinated, meaning that its power is limited and open to avoidance, it is nevertheless closing off public spaces into areas of heightened scrutiny which may impinge upon the public’s access. Whilst there may not be any physical barriers, people can be made to feel uncomfortable and “this will constantly remind them of their own visibility” (Koskela 2000, 253). As one resident of a guarded area stated, the guards “sit in their cars parked in side streets and watch you. It is making a living out of scaring people and making them feel less secure” (*The Independent* 2004, 37). This surveillance sends out conflicting messages, then, and this duality invokes in individuals not only a feeling of safety, but also of insecurity.

4.2 Panopticism in the postmodern realm

Foucault’s writings on the panopticon have been regularly referred to and used in recent accounts detailing the quasi-privatising of public spaces. The panopticon was Jeremy Bentham’s prison design for attaining maximum visible control of prison inmates whilst avoiding the physical enforcement of rules. Prisoners never knew when or by whom they were being watched from a central observation tower and, therefore, their behaviour became constantly modified to this apparently total supervision. “The panopticon prison was thought of as a spatial reformatory that could change and ‘correct’ ... by architectural means”

(Friedburg 2002, 398). This is a useful explanatory construct for understanding postmodern architectural features that aim to control and channel through spatial and scopic devices. These, as with other surveillance methods foresee the unpredictability of the public and build in appropriate boundaries. There arises then, an ambivalence, as some rules are not clearly written up or made obvious but still, a person may feel a certain way of behaving is expected of them.

Foucault believes that in contemporary society control is attained through a bottom up process; surveillance internalises and modifies behaviour through “non-corporeal power” (Friedburg 2002, 398). So, the shopper in a mall, or other monitored space may modify their behaviour more so than in a street or less confined area. This may well be an unconscious reaction induced at a subliminal level by both the surroundings and management ethos which encourages “a state of conscious and permanent visibility” (Foucault 1999, 65). In its postmodern expression, it can be evidenced in the double meanings CCTV signage conveys, suggesting that ‘someone is watching’. The duality of this statement could be read as providing a reassuring, paternalistic gaze, or, as placing individuals under a threatening, dictatorial scrutiny; “matters become more complex when messages of inclusion and exclusion are seamlessly combined in one sign” (Cole 2004, 440).

The gated community exemplifies a modified panoptic control as, paradoxically, the residents of such a site which is “fortified against the outsider” (Ellin 1997, 38) have to make themselves accountable in order to achieve seclusion, hence, the “society of strangers seeks privacy that actually gives rise to surveillance... a new form of social ordering” (Lyon 2001 a, 27). In other urban sites, monitoring is also present, ‘citizens in urban space will see surveillance cameras... in visible places, and this will constantly remind them of their own visibility’ (Koskela 2000, 252-3). The effect then, of surveillance can be to induce modified behavioural patterns often at a subliminal level thus, ‘the panoptic condition of video-surveillance imposes self-vigilance’ (ibid 253).

However, these emerging methods of surveillance do not present a unified phenomenon as, unlike the panopticon, or Orwell's Big Brother, there is no singular orchestration, city and urban areas are diverse and under a multiplicity of managerial and official partnerships. Thus, they cannot be directly linked with the panopticon; "the power relations concerning surveillance are very complex" (Koskela 2000, 252) and are dependent upon management priorities and needs. The means of control are exerted variously through built forms that may exclude some whilst admitting others, and incorporating values and methods that change over time. One thing they do hold in common, however, is that they utilise visibility as a means to control, contain and discourage certain conduct, instilling a sense of responsibility in the individual regarding their conduct and its possible repercussions.

4.3 Data surveillance

One of the aspects of surveillance that moves it on from previous generations is the fact that it now lies in the hands not only of the government but also with private, commercial companies. They handle sensitive information that was previously less easily accessed, "flows of personal and group data percolate through systems that once were much less porous: much more discrete and watertight" (Lyon 2001 b, 4). People now leave electronic traces through credit card use, CCTV footage and numerous other electronic records. With technological advances, the means of recording and holding information about people has proliferated leading to "a fresh form of social ordering by computerised codes" (Lyon 2001 a, 147). With this reduction of a person into primary data it could be said that they are abstracted into lesser beings; socially positioned according to their monetary activities, and enabled or denied due to how their personal details register with commercial organisations; and thus, "access [is] predicated upon ability to pay" (Flusty, 1997 51).

Social divisions are in some instances deepening, with wider gaps appearing

between the wealthy and those less financially stable. Personal finances affect how the subject may use space; “fiscal exclusivity supports the growth of inequalities between... spaces, and the people that are able to access them, and those that are excluded” (Graham 2001, 366). This factor has always impacted upon people’s access to goods and space but with the current dependence upon data gathering, the individual has become more numerically defined and potentially less able to sidestep official sanctions as their details become embedded in a network of data banks.

4.4 Data as a tool of consumer control

People are under a variety of forms of surveillance and “this knowledge is combined to produce a ‘consumer profile’ that serves... as a social identity” (Fiske, 2002 384). Thus, the individual is in some cases denied the possibility of voicing concerns; information is gathered and stored electronically with little apparent recourse to appeal; technology avoids persistent interrogation even though it infiltrates and impacts lives.

Closed off from easy scrutiny, the compiling of data exhibits an “avaricious and indiscriminate amassing of information” (Robins & Webster 1999, 127). Members of society may feel less able to obtain an overview of the data held on them and that, in some hard to explain but experientially felt way, they are now “the object of surveillance, no longer the subject of communication” (ibid, 121). Although software now infiltrates many areas of life, “just like the automobile – it brings no... questioning in its wake” (Thrift & French 2002, 313). The duality of the situation is, however, that without being a data citizen, functioning in the postmodern world is difficult.

“In a database driven culture of accounting, one needs to appear on the matrices of registration in order to ‘count’. To be accounted for is to exist.” (Crandall 2005 *no page ref.*)

All of this is occurring in a society of consumption oriented growth where privilege and seclusion can be bought by those “possessing the resources required to assert spatial claims” (Flusty 1997, 57). The security of those privileged to enjoy seclusion is facilitated in part through “computational systems which are distributed through the environment in a whole range of devices” (Thrift & French 2002, 315). For such a lifestyle to be maintained, the surveillance deemed necessary is also becoming an integral part of urban environments, and it may, and perhaps is, becoming so without enough attention to the implications of a taken for granted technology of mediated access and enablement. As Charley notes:

“we have arrived on the verge of the carceral city, and a world of perpetual commodity production and consumption, a panoptic society of observation and discipline where the technologies of order and normalisation are physically and electronically integrated into social life.” (Charley 1996, 61)

4.5 Surveillance, the body and simulation

Surveillance is likely to impact ever more closely upon the body as biometric devices become increasingly reliable, widespread and integrated with other systems of automated knowledge; “in a world of identity politics... surveillance is turning decisively to the body as a ‘document’ for identity” (Lyon 2001 a, 72). The iris, voice recognition and other physical recognition devices may further impede the individual’s progress through urban space as “when systems are linked in ways that provide new opportunities for surveillance... software... will be able to adjust rules to circumstances” (Thrift & French 2002, 326). Regardless of the impartiality of biometric recordings, their use is adopted into a framework of power relations with a motive and purpose that may be unclear or mutable. The person becomes to a greater or lesser degree a data package in a commodified landscape, directed by non-human devices of controlled access and unable to directly interact with the forces behind the implementation.

The individual as data subject can be a negating experience that is undermined by valuing “the significance of embodiment... to reinsert our understanding of persons firmly in material life” (Lyon 2001 a, 151). Control and data knowledges are impacting severally upon the body and although the presence of such methods is not seamless, the “intimacy between observer and observed is loosened by the virtual technological capabilities... that can simultaneously compile, sort and edit the information they extract” (Nichols 2004, *no page ref.*). The individual therefore becomes an abstraction of sorts, a simulation, or ‘data double’ to borrow Nichols’ terminology; information about them is used to form a simulation of their real selves and flattened into a representation. They then, unknowingly, may become part of a target audience that has been designed and constructed from data gathered by partial and biased organisations for specific purposes. The individual who is observed becomes

“re-presented as a simulation... the intimacy of the situated/territorialized human body can be completely deterritorialized. It is this deterritorialization of the assemblage of the situated human body that allows for the hyper-realization of the governance of the subject.” (Nichols 2004)

The discontinuities that data, spatial, built and monetary restrictions create can result in “intensively realised zones” (Boyer 1996, 175), interconnected and facilitated by sophisticated communications technologies. In contrast, the in-between spaces are neglected or avoided as having no discernible part to play; “networks of transport and communications are creating an urban region that resembles a centreless web” (Wilson 1991, 139). In practice, the person who does not have the right profile may find themselves stuck in the between spaces, physically and psychically, if their data does not fit then they may fall through the web. This can result in a very real, physical experience of the impacts felt in a surveillance oriented society; “embodied persons and distinct social groups are still privileged or disadvantaged... enabled or constrained [due to] classification”

(Lyon 2001 a, 124).

The spatial fragmentation of society can be connected, as already outlined, to the rise of a technology and commerce dependent infrastructure;

“the privatisation of the architectural public realm... is shadowed by parallel restructurings of electronic space, as heavily policed, pay-access... elite databases and subscription cable services appropriate parts of the invisible agora.” (Davis 2000, 195)

Data management as a means towards surveillance and control of consumers entails a distancing of human contact but simultaneously, this de-personalised control impacts more closely on the body and person through such means as biometrics so that, “the body becomes the password” (Lyon 2001 a, 76). An interface between human and technological forms of verification, it could be surmised, means that “everyday spaces become saturated with computational capacities” (Thrift & French 2002, 315).

The spaces of postmodernity are reflecting a trend towards technologically dependent social mobilities, enablement and containment. Inevitably, due to the nature of computerised knowledge, the subject of such data gathering may experience a sense of displacement. The processes at work are indistinct and often regarded as nothing other than a natural progression in scientific and technologic discovery, “the more daily life is mediated by electronic technology the less the working of these technologies is perceptible” (Lyon 2001 a, 117). In this case then, an exploration of the politics, implementation and effects of surveillance techniques may provide relatively few, stable answers but it will nevertheless bring into focus some pertinent issues. Surveillance of urban sites is reflected in the monitoring of data on individuals, and the use and potential abuse of data due to unequal “access to, and control over, information resources” (Robins & Webster 1999, 91) is similarly having an impact in spatial terms.

4.6 Risk profiling and partiality in information gathering

Surveillance is not of itself negative or positive; it depends on how the information is used. With regard to Norris and Armstrong's research into CCTV usage in the United Kingdom, the monitoring of footage was biased and subjective, "who was watched... was influenced by the idiosyncrasies of individual operators" (1999, 102). In this sense, the practice of surveillance although now a big business in its own right, is very much open to the demands and dictates of the purchaser and operator of its services. Risk assessment, as mentioned earlier, is built into surveillant practices; with shop operated CCTV, the individual who appears not to be behaving like a 'normal' consumer may be targeted for intense scrutiny. Likewise, in other commercial operations people are risk-profiled,

"which in the commercial sphere rates their social contributions... and in policing and intelligence systems rates their relative social dangerousness... the use of searchable databases makes it possible to use commercial records previously unavailable to police and intelligence services." (Lyon 2001 b, 4)

Lyon states that one of the prime motives of surveillance is social sorting, and it certainly seems apparent that some social stratification results because of surveillant practices. When people become compacted into data packages, they are in a way reduced to their informational data as "coercive supervision is increasingly replaced by surveillance and the accumulation of coded information" (Robins & Webster 1999, 178). Arguments put forward by proponents of, for instance, identity cards, assert that people should have nothing to fear if they are innocent. The problem, however, as mentioned earlier is that data handling can be anything but innocent, as with CCTV, "images from the screen are filtered through an organisational lens which accords meaning, status and priority to events" (Norris & Armstrong 1999, 129). With other data too, people find

themselves penalised in biased ways, electronic road pricing facilitates smooth travel on congestion free roads but it could be regarded as “clearing ‘cash-poor/time-rich’ users of congested highways... out of the way of ‘time-poor/cash-rich’, and thus further polarising access to ‘auto’ mobility within and between cities” (Graham 2001, 367).

It is then, a possibility for these various forms of gate-keeping to increase social divisions, creating spatial and electronic boundaries amongst and between citizens. The growth of technology has hastened the means for vast data storage and handling, and the knowledge gathered covers ever widening spaces. To reiterate earlier assertions, data is open to the users’ interpretations that,

“while flexible, [are] likely to be strongly biased by the political, economic and social conditions that shape the principles embedded in their design and implementation... these conditions are marked by the widespread... privatization of public services and spaces... based on consumerism.” (Graham & Wood 2003, 228-9)

4.7 Rules of entry

As with gated communities that may require a code for entry, society in general has grown in reliance upon rules of entry that are often non-negotiable, this can impact both physically whilst also having a symbolic truth. In differing circumstances these factors work together to produce a sense of helplessness and exclusion; physically for example in not being able to visit shopping or leisure facilities due to a lack of finances, transport or the right address. Financially instigated demographic profiling may result in the withdrawal of small banks and building society branches from unproductive or run down areas, leading to other services withdrawing in a downward spiral whereby “patterns of discrimination are reinforced” (Lyon 2001 a, 122). Symbolically, the experience of lack in postmodernity may be construed as “neither violence nor ideology, coercion nor consent; that bears physically upon the body – like the camera’s gaze – yet is

also a knowledge” (Tagg 1999, 250). Thus, the individual without a credit card, broadband access or prestigious job may not experience full-on segregation or abuse but, nevertheless, find themselves restricted in frustratingly obscure ways.

“It is... a matter of differential... access to, and control over, information resources... what should concern us is the management and control of information within and between groups.” (Robins & Webster 1999, 91)

As I will later explore this does not necessarily produce non-citizens, people can build their lives around many different values and priorities but, the impact of surveillance in postmodernity is discernible in people’s access to life choices and daily experience.

4.8 Techno-logic

Robins and Webster describe a “technology fetish” (1999, 51-2) whereby all things technological are seen as unstoppable and that any attempts to slow down such changes are retrograde and Luddite. The process of fetishism can also be linked into spatial critiques as “space, severed from its social production, is fetishized... it appears to exert control” (Deutshce 2002, 52) so that people may inhabit and consume sites but are simultaneously abstracted from them. The spaces are there to be utilised but, as it were, are not for meaningful social interactions or interventions. In the postmodern setting, people may be regarded as economic units who, even if not directly spending are still consumers of space rather than active participants. Scepticism over advances that present “the development of information technologies as somehow having its own inevitable... logic... insulated from the rest of society” (Robins & Webster 1999, 39-40) implicates spaces too.

When space is proffered as an experience and a packaged commodity it becomes more malleable but also removed from a first hand relationship with the

individual. This tendency runs through such advertising copy as;

“Microsoft’s omnipresent slogan ‘Where do you want to go today?’... [where] a sort of technologically enabled transnationality is evoked... but one that directly addresses the first-world user.” (Nakamura 2002, 256)

Here, transcendence of space is achieved through an internet search for the exotic without needing to physically travel. Boundaries and borders are crossed without problem but, it is only the network-enabled who enjoy this seamless travel whilst other non-users are stuck very firmly in place. In essence then, computer aided journeying, like holding the right password or a good data profile, redefines the daily lived experience of the holder of such credentials. This supports and activates, for some, a “possessive individualism” (Hui Kyong Chun 2002, 244) that regards other cultures and people groups from a distanced perspective. In a society “disoriented by technological and political change, disoriented by increasing surveillance and mediation” (ibid, 246) individualism may take the form of a subordinating of difference. This is encouraged by a commercialised and commodified attitude towards space, experienced both on-line and in physical terms. So, whilst the proponents of electronic and computer aided advances claim that “the new, deterritorialised technological knowledge space is a ‘better’ space” (Robins & Webster 1999, 224) than embodied space; this technologically biased view can be aligned with surveillance techniques and postmodern concerns with the effective ordering of the built environment. These concerns encourage either a withdrawal into internet sites that offer “an anaesthetic solution, through the technological neutralisation of social relations and the pacification of social space” (Robins & Webster 1999, 259), or a subduing of space through design and management that renders it less diverse.

It can be extrapolated from the issues chapter four has discussed that surveillance in postmodern society is reinforcing divisions in an already divided social order, influencing the design of postmodern urban space. Surveillance has proliferated within an atmosphere of risk assessment and profiling such that

projections of future possibilities determine present decisions.

“The virtualization of criminal knowledge allows urban engineers to construct physical environments that reduce the incidence of crime by altering the built environment... the simulation now establishes reality and is projected into the future to shape the events that will become reality.”
(Nichols, 2004 *no page ref.*)

The impact of this pattern of philosophy and design can be felt bodily in the presence of surveillance in city centre streets by CCTV and guards, and by the need for verifications of identity when approaching places with coded entry. Less tangibly, in the passing of information between differently focused groups and companies, a person may feel constrained without any direct evidence as they “are in a sense made up by their digital classification” (Lyon 2001 a, 147). Thus, the individual is to some extent a commodified entity within a postmodern realm of commodification, their lives fragmented and controlled by surveillance, risk management and electronic data storage. Inevitably, such methods of control can lead to increased divisions between and within social groups; safety and security may be the seeming bonus of a scrutinised society, but surveillance can be a “threat as well as security... to be under surveillance is an ambivalent emotional event” (Koskela 2000, 258-9). As shall be considered in the next chapter, the mall, gated community and tightly regulated urban centre can each create a sense of ambivalence towards the supposedly utilitarian monitoring of space where “the ideology of function obscures the conflictual manner in which cities are actually defined and used” (Deutsche 2002, 52).

Surveillance in its Setting

5.1 Building in surveillance

In the opening chapters some of the issues of postmodernity have been discussed, in particular, surveillance in its various modes and the emerging critiques of technologically dependent attitudes and systems. In this chapter I wish to develop these themes by examining the outcomes of such processes in their built form and by questioning the ways in which the practice of controlled access or usage of a site can impact upon different members of society. Using the work of various commentators and incorporating the views of some of my respondents, I will produce my own interpretation of how social fragmentation can be deepened due to strategic, geographic surveillance and monitoring.

As already discussed, the postmodern built environment partly comprises places of self-conscious design, such as the gated community, where there is a tendency towards an insulated, self-referential “inward turning” (Ellin 1997, 34). These places are not necessarily involved in a dialogue with the wider urban infrastructure resembling instead “a network that... intersects with its own skein” (Foucault 2002, 229). With careful orchestration, residents can avoid coming into contact with those outside of their circle of choice, as such; some places have the potential to be introverted in their concerns and existence. In the gated community, for instance, the occupant is protected from unsolicited intrusions and the residential space operates, in many ways, as a self-contained unit. Ostensibly, such communities can appear attractive and inviting, providing behaviour falls within certain parameters, but unlike a regular street space, the operational structure may be one of “restrictive covenants and architectural design constraints that [have] explicit behavioral control objectives” (Nunn 2001 *no page ref.*). It should be clarified at this point that when I refer to gated communities they may not physically have gates but nevertheless aim to

establish a visual presence and image that sets them apart and suggests a collective exclusivity.

It is nothing new for planning and design to attempt to define a particular set of spatial rules and ideals;

“the history of planning is rooted in systematic efforts to control... the quest for control... is imprinted upon the major tentacles of urban planning, from garden cities... to the postmodernist new urbanism.” (Nunn 2001)

In this respect, gated communities reflect a desire to formulate a perfected community, contained within a planned and carefully managed environment that, in its present incarnation, is consumer oriented and revolves in many instances around the commodification of spaces. In such redevelopments, previous forms and nostalgic references are “recreated and redefined... into the latest visions of property development interests” (Nunn 2001). With investment as the motivating factor, the spontaneous and unregulated use of space may be considered a lost opportunity to accrue profit. Site designers may seek to determine the form the buildings and their lay-out will take, but also will impose a sense of scene-setting as “postmodern architectural ‘imagineering’ defines a commodity laden with mythical content” (Mills 1993, 152). Historical elements and nostalgic references to the past may be used in a decontextualised form, “substituting signs of the real for the real itself... which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes” (Baudrillard 1998, 146). Myth is useful as a design component in the commodification of space and site, a part of the lexicon that immediately establishes an image and, in the absence of real history, presents a reproduction or reworking in a “constant ‘pastizing’ process” (Eco 1987, 9).

The building in of myth, nostalgia and the pastoral can be clearly observed in the styling of some gated communities, these mythic qualities help to obscure the philosophy behind their establishment which regards space both as a form of

social control and a saleable product. The developer responds to the twin concerns and needs of the purchaser; security and escapism, and the gated community accentuates those forces, allowing for the “generation of myths and... stereotypes about people who are not familiar” (Ellin 1997, 34). Below, I shall explore in closer detail the gated community as a site which exemplifies some facets of the turn towards a cordoning off of differences within “a closed system” (Sennett 1997, 67). They are marketed, in a dichotomous representation, as communities for a society of individuals during an era,

“that often seems intent on dispensing with civil society, that is perhaps even dispensing with democracy, as commercial imperatives and closed communities reproduce themselves in paranoid logic-strangely reminiscent of ancient hill fortresses.” (Chambers 2001, 415)

It is a characteristic of gated communities that their planning and design closes out the wider community, insulating residents from both the positives and negatives of less monitored areas. As such, they represent in built form the surveillance measures felt necessary in order to avoid unregulated social contact.

5.2 Gated communities as insulation

Some residential areas are threatening places in which to live, leading some to opt for the protection of gated life. In their ethos and design code, gated communities express the wider processes that are occurring in postmodernity, whereby “physical segregation... by criteria of affluence divides society into rigid groups... impeding mobility and contact” (Flusty 1997, 59). Insulation behind gates from the dangers of diverse and unknown social groups could be instrumental in the denial not only of difference but also of the world and its inhabitants such that “class is solidifying into caste” (ibid, 59). Gated communities in South Africa where rapid social and political changes have occurred, exemplify some of the extremes of social segregation, motivated by the

“fear of crime and outsiders” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 196). In addition to the surveillance aspects of such communities, and perhaps in order to mitigate them, leisure facilities such as golf courses are incorporated. These features have the effect of reducing the need to travel outside for pleasure and recreation; hence, “they serve as socially homogeneous environments for upper-class citizens” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 196). The fear of crime acts as a persuasive motivation for surveillance enhanced sites although this is a discourse that is also encouraged by security agencies operating in a currently favourable climate for their business purposes; “the social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilisation itself, not crime rates” (Davis 1998, 224). The favoured prognosis, that crime happens to those without a contingency plan, can induce a sense of imminent danger, and a desire to take measures that will limit vulnerability. Security management promotes the installing of,

“a central authority **aware** of everything that is going on, able to control who comes and who goes and who is identified as the perpetrator of social disorder [it] is the **raison-de-etre** of systematic surveillance schemes, and one that developers and the media frequently exploit with the use of routine crime statistics.” (Nunn 2001 *emphasis in original*)

In the prevailing atmosphere of fear and privatisation; a dislocated population feel responsible for their own destiny in a non-supportive society and, therefore “many current building projects are exercises in withdrawal from a complex world” (Sennett 1997, 67).

5.3 Heterotopic tendencies

Within the gated community, there is often a need to create a demarcation from wider society and the term ‘heterotopia’, which expresses “a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live” (Foucault 2002, 232) can explain some of the intent behind designing and living in such a place. Various forms of heterotopia include institutions or communities

where behaviour is expected to fall within certain parameters, “their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (ibid 235). From this perspective, although the gated community has many negative aspects to do with containment, control and withdrawal, it also shows signs of the human impulse towards establishing order and rules of use. The designing in of order, however, reaches further than merely its visible built form; there is also a suspension of conflict and mutability, met by freezing time in an ever present idyll and buffering the political, social and cultural changes of the wider world. “The heterotopia... is a *differential space*, importantly related to, but always fundamentally different from, the places which surround it” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 208).

As an example of a semi-gated community, Cypress Point, in Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire exhibits many of the telling signs of a controlled and commodified residential landscape. Whilst it does not have gates at the entrance to the development, it clearly signals itself as set apart from other housing in the vicinity. Advertising copy, in part, helps establish and perpetuate this difference, through such statements as; “It’s what we don’t build that makes Cypress Point unique” (*Lytham St. Annes Express* 2003, 53). The duality of the gated community’s aspirations is evident from the marketing used;

“everyone’s moving to Cypress Point... close to Lytham St. Annes town centre... a place where nature and luxury living come together... Cypress Point offers more than forty acres of open space... why not come and join them.” <www.kensington-developments.co.uk> accessed 4/02/04



Plate 1 Cypress Point advertising image

Source: <www.kensington-developments.co.uk> accessed 4/06/05

Prospective home owners are offered proximity to the town centre but also the idyll of nature tamed and recreated. Individualised housing and a Japanese garden, which is only for residents use, are juxtaposed with signifiers of earlier, more community oriented living such as some of the housing being set around a village green. In promoting itself as a place of otherness while simultaneously using familiar terms and forms, Cypress Point fulfils the heterotopic construct through being able,

“to unsettle spatial and social relations directly, through material forms of ‘alternative ordering’ ... heterotopia do not signify through resemblance – as in the way a metaphor works, where one thing is used to resemble another – but rather through similitude, which is closer to metonym.”
(Hook & Vrdojak 2002, 209)

Cypress Point does not completely isolate itself from the rest of society, it absorbs into its design any features considered desirable and omits the less attractive in a fragmentary way. Thus, it asserts itself through claims not only about what it is but also what it is not, unsurprisingly, the promoted image can on closer inspection seem paradoxical.

Inhabitants of a heterotopic space are not necessarily looking to deny all that lies beyond the boundaries, there are valid reasons for making this lifestyle choice, however, in its more negative form, the South African version epitomises,

“the ‘crowning’ achievement of an anxious ‘culture of security’ which, feeding a booming security industry, has been translated into a hierarchy of security status-symbols.” (Hook and Vrdoljak 2002, 199)

In the setting apart of a community, their heterotopic tendency appears as an improved version of other spaces that are less regulated, and in this sense, there can be no heterotopia without its opposite or contrasting alternative. In a similar way to Cypress Point, this contrast is used as a selling point for the South African gated community. Sales leaflets merge security issues with elitist as well as aesthetic notes that in their sub-text suggest the opposite of ‘security’ is mayhem and the contrast to ‘oasis’ is the maelstrom of urban life:

“You’ll become part of a community of people who, like you, prefer country style living in a secure, natural environment... In maintaining a secure oasis... one of the key ingredients... is the security consciousness and peace of mind.” (quoted in Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 211)

As with heterotopias that have some form of controlled entry; “to get in one must have a certain permission” (Foucault 2002, 235), so with various gated communities access may appear neutral and a mere formality whilst in fact it hinges on “individualized rights of seclusion, privacy and protection” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 213). In a privatised society, the right of the individual to purchase and appropriate space extends to a highly stylised mode of living, justified through financial and legal ownership; “security is... a necessary component... as is... the prerogative of personal possession” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 214). From these assertions it could be surmised that the gated

community is more than just a secure, attractive space in which to live, it also marks a drawing away from the major concerns and difficulties of social life, such that stasis and controlled stability are preferred over the dynamics of interaction. As a means towards inclusion and negotiation, the street can be “a social space mediating between the public and the private” (Jukes 1990, 51), for some, this conduit and the network of greater issues is avoided, their heterotopia is one that comes hermetically sealed, where spatial and financial claims secure a life of privileged withdrawal. The gated community defines a form of built segregation and also typifies the desire for an enduring version of social order, a heterotopia that deals with disorder through exclusion and surveillant control.

5.4 Social polarisation, defence and the rights of choice

As was earlier suggested, the gated community can be an understandable choice, and whilst it does provide a useful example of surveillance, privatisation and control, its presence and spread suggests that for some people it really is a positive option. *The Times* newspaper runs an article titled “Safe Haven” (2004, 6) in which Monica Porter writes of her personal experience of living in a gated community in London. For her the gates provide a baffle to the persistence of cold canvassing, parking problems and crime, and these are very real problems for many people. It is not, in her estimation, a retrograde step to want peace and seclusion.

“Once we had moved into our gated community... our house and cars were safe from thieves and vandals... in addition, we were protected... from everyday callers that infest the urban jungle: salesmen, con artists and religious weirdos.” (ibid)

The gated community, then, provides for many of the predictable needs and aspirations of people; a reasonable proximity to work, schools, shops and entertainment, but also, as with suburbia, echoes of rural life such as a garden, an absence of troublesome callers and a degree of seclusion. Porter writes that

she belongs to a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, citing this as evidence of her interest in the wider community. As with other suburbanites throughout Britain, she lobbies the council “to preserve the quality of our local environment... everyone is entitled to make life as comfortable and safe for themselves and their families as they can” (ibid), she asserts that she is not an elitist snob and the article puts forward a well thought out argument in clear terms. A desire for peace is understandable; the concern is, however, how far along this continuum can one travel before the stance becomes more clouded and intolerant. Some have called into doubt the Neighbourhood Watch scheme seeing it as inflammatory, “the paranoia behind Neighbourhood Watch... echoed the postwar panic that public places were the dangerous places” (Campbell 1997, 95), the criminalising of the stranger who is out of place is a generating factor in suspicion and withdrawal. Whilst not all such schemes can be considered negatively, the possibility exists for them to produce streets and areas that are overly sensitized to the stranger and to harmless, but nevertheless non-conformist behaviours.

To move from a moderate to a more extremist stance with regard to monitored and gated communities, a resident of a South African gated community reveals a radical view,

“we are very by ourselves here... we’ve never in the history that I’ve lived here... done anything with people outside... it is a sort of Aryan race look on things... we’re saying that this is our place, we are here, leave us alone.” (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, 215)

This resident’s belief exemplifies the extremes of gated life, claiming an inviolable right to privacy and non-contact with those who are different. Where political change, both in South Africa and in other countries has destabilised the privileged few, they may now choose to buy into their assumed ‘rights’ inhabiting “luxury laagers... territory of a social group possessing the resources required to assert spatial claims” (Flusty 1997, 57). Pertinently, the root of the word ‘laager’ lies in the obsolete Afrikaans word ‘lager’, it describes a camp of encircled

wagons for defence, with this in mind, one is reminded both of the pioneer or colonialist settler claiming space as their right and, by extension of heterotopias that are “not of illusion, but of compensation” (Foucault 2002, 235), a sanctuary in a world of disorder.

Although people with sufficient resources have always had the means to seclusion and protection, in the current climate of privatism;

“the movers and shakers are being handed ever increasing power, mobility, choice and control, at the same time as their social obligations and risks are reduced... material infrastructure systems... are increasingly being designed to be socially biased to... favour one constellation of interests, whilst directly undermining the life chances of others.” (Graham 2001, 369-70)

As discussed above, Monica Porter declares her participation in her local Neighbourhood Watch scheme which can be a positive contribution. However, sensitivity to the presence of strangers can lead to zones which, whilst not necessarily gated have adopted a defensive attitude, “street gangs use spray paint... homeowners [use] neighbourhood watch signs” (Flusty 1997, 57).

It is not surprising then that the gated community has found a niche market as a logical next step up from the monitored neighbourhood. This move is facilitated in an individualised economy that enables the practice and buying in to of “alternative representations of social reality [where]... an adjunct of the thing stands in for the thing itself” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 216). Marking out territory is not just about security but is concerned also with maintaining a comfortable “degree of personal insulation” (Davis 1998, 224). Defence is undoubtedly concerned with issues of safety but also has a symbolic value such that it ensures separation is maintained not only for the rich but also for middle income groups. As a reaction to perceived threats to lifestyle standards, withdrawal behind real or symbolic gates can buy protection, but can also nurture mistrust

and an escalation of misunderstanding. Residents with security needs must submit themselves to scrutiny in order to maintain privacy, thereby relinquishing some of the control and rights of choice they are attempting to attain:

“much surveillance occurs because... people prefer a ‘private’ existence, which prompts the development of systems to authenticate their activities in the ‘public’ world... the more privacy is sought, the more it is challenged” (Lyon 2002, 2-3).

A quest for safety also requires a capitulation of the dynamics more socially diverse living can bring, adopting stasis and uniformity over diversity. The selling point but also the weakness of gated communities lies in their seclusion, they are sold as an alternative lifestyle and yet they can be “a site and means of reactionary politics” (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, 209). In withdrawing from the supposed threats of society they set themselves apart, exemplifying parallel, reflexive moves in other sectors that “homogenize... spaces by expelling specific differences” (Deutsche 2002, 58). This could be said also of the mall, where design and managerial strategies produce and replicate a site in which unfettered consumption can and does take place.

5.5 The mall

“Modern forms of knowledge depend on a scopic regime that equates seeing with knowledge” (Rose 2001, 7).

Although the mall does not practice such overtly controlled access as the gated community it still provides a relevant example of a space that carries obscured power relations; it does not openly profess itself a private site, yet the behaviour expected of its users is an unspoken rule of entry. Earlier mention of risk assessment, as a means towards a more perfect control mechanism in surveillance and data sorting, has an application in the mall also. “A glance at ... high tech surveillance devices confirms that prevention of any future occurrences is the supposedly clinching deal” (Lyon b 2001, 6). In the mall there is evidence

of a management and design philosophy that aims “to anticipate... behaviours... and contain or pre-empt them” (Lyon a 2001, 148), through predicting patterns of behaviour, the public can be channelled into a regulated routine of consumption oriented activity.

Spatial and scopic devices work together in the mall, subtly guiding the user's behaviour to fit in with the corporate ethos, the “consumer can feel what is desirable and undesirable behaviour” (Helten & Fischer 2003, 14). This is not to say that the mall is a totally coercive space, like other areas of the urban realm it can contain a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations, however, it tends toward offering “the public no role other than that of consumer” (Robins & Webster 1999, 68). Malls are revealing in their intensification of certain processes that utilise monitoring and control within a quasi-public setting; “much commercial surveillance has to do with shopping malls and consumer areas in cities, which are designed to attract and seduce consumers” (Lyon 2001 a, 65). It is useful, then, to examine the factors which some claim contribute to malls being the “building blocks of an emerging ecology of surveillance” (Helten & Fischer 2003, 12).

The Trafford Centre, nine kilometres west of Manchester city centre, provides many of the classic features of a mall. Here, the recurrent signs, symbols and processes of postmodern versions of space are evidenced. None of these elements appear overtly coercive, the aim is for the development to provide “a leisure activity on a grand scale so as to attract shoppers and entertain them from the moment they entered” (Trafford Centre Information Pack 2001, 3). However, whilst the “strategic use of fountains... and sculptures... [that] restrict access and channel the public” (Cybriwsky 1999, 6) are non-threatening, they also guide the public into predictable flows, routes and behaviours. For this, amongst other reasons, the mall is regarded by some as hastening the death of a diverse public sphere and reducing spontaneous, unmediated behaviour. The Trafford Centre's information pack, designed as an educational resource, cites

the findings of a market research survey designed to pinpoint the socio-economic/cultural groupings of its visitors. These reveal that there was an above average quota of people from categories defined as; “suburban semis, stylish singles, mortgaged families, town houses and flats, [and] high income families (T. C. Information Pack 2001, 45). There is nothing intrinsically wrong with catering to a target audience, but, “standardized consumption and entertainment... predicated on middle-class lifestyles” (Valentine 2001, 230) overlooks specific sectors of society. The practices of the mall have the potential to alienate some social groups whilst giving priority to others. Thus, whilst the Trafford Centre sees itself as analogous to “a walled town” (T.C. Information Pack 2001, 4), it could simultaneously be considered a contributor to a new style of democracy; expressed in the ability to buy into lifestyle choices and their spatial attributes.



Plate 2 The Trafford Centre

Source: <<http://www.thetraffordcentre.co.uk>> accessed 6/06/05

5.6 Smooth operators

A theme that runs through various studies of postmodernity is the effacement of friction, a reduction of the gap between things and their interpretation, and a predilection for “ultra-signification” (Barthes 2000, 133). This is apparent in the mall where there can be a hyper-real sense of the now as time is sidestepped or

obscured and the visitor's awareness of the passing hours is muted by the constantly lit surroundings. As several of my respondents commented during discussions, a sense of disorientation whilst at the Trafford Centre was a distinct disadvantage, unlike a town or city shopping street, the uniformity of the décor could be confusing. A culture of wrap-around shopping in an insulated environment can suitably disorient the shopper into spending more than they originally intended, aided and abetted by design techniques such as pathways which lead the shopper past more shops and goods than if they were able to take a more direct route. As an enclosed space, the mall removes outside noise and movement and carries a profusion of signs yet a lack of solid locational references.

“All the familiar tricks of mall design - limited entrances, escalators placed only at the end of corridors, fountains and benches carefully positioned to entice shoppers into stores – control the flow of consumers through the numbingly repetitive corridors of shops.” (Crawford 1992, 13-14)

In a similar way to the gated community there may be mythical and nostalgic references, these design techniques can for some be stifling, implemented by “artists of claustrophobia” (Sennett 1997, 67). Critics of this style see it as imprisoning change, diversity and,

“social possibilities within reactionary nostalgic forms, we need radical architecture which promotes hybrids and differences... that celebrates all manner of human activities and beliefs.” (Borden 2003, 119)

The mall can then, be regarded as a space where spontaneity is repressed; “public activity is sorted into strictly functional compartments, and circulation is internalized in corridors under the gaze of private police” (Davis 2000, 195). For some people this is one of the mall's selling points; “what attracts people to malls is that they are perceived as public spaces where rules of personal conduct are enforced” (Rybczynski 2000, 176). Indeed, as one respondent, Pippa, an adult

education coordinator observed, "I might feel scared walking my dog late at night... but I probably would not feel scared going to the Trafford Centre". This view that a certain level of safety is associated with malls was also shared by Audrey, a retired mill worker who, with regard to the presence of guards at the Trafford Centre felt that if threatened "you can shout for assistance". These are valid points; malls are protected from the elements, potentially serving as safe places; financial pressures and the expense of prime urban space do, however, limit malls in both their provision of non-profit services and in the general ambience they offer. The opportunity for unmediated interactions "where strangers mingle freely... [and] continually negotiate the boundaries and markers of human society" (Zukin 1995, 259-60), may be limited. Within the walls of the mall, the experience may be one of a smoothed out act of consumption, free from the fear of crimes and cold canvassers, in an environment that is safe. Alternatively, the mall may be considered as a restricting world of privatised zones that "dominate through their control of space and their colonization of time" (ibid, 262). Perhaps the mall lies somewhere between these two poles as,

"no architectural form is entirely effective, and all spaces must open up some possibilities as they shut others down... the built environment is always complexly and multiply coded, and the assignation of specific meaning depends upon the predisposition of the reader." (Goss 1993, 279-80)

As will be uncovered further in chapter seven, respondents' views on malls and surveillance reveal that individuals are not necessarily as passive and easily duped by such forms of design as some commentators believe and are quite able to sidestep or ignore factors that critics find alarming. That said, malls do offer, due to their enclosed nature, an efficient model for surveillance and other methods of optical coercion, which I shall now consider.

5.7 Just Looking

In the mall, there are multiple visualities, the shopper is surrounded by a landscape “explicitly produced for visual consumption” (Zukin 1991, 285) in which they are themselves visible; watched by security guards, store detectives and CCTV in a form of panopticism considered a part of customer service, vigilantly protecting the shopper. The ambiguity of this status is exemplified in a statement that security training is “based around customer care which is believed to be the most effective approach to crime prevention within the retail sector” (T.C Information Pack 2001, 22). Whether this is suggesting that caring for the customer induces good behaviour is uncertain, it could be interpreted as an ever watchful presence, the caring parent, guiding the child away from misdemeanour. If so, each shopper is a potential miscreant threatening the Centre’s integrity, surveillance in this setting is then, not unbiased, but designed primarily to protect property. Indeed, the Trafford Centre names its key areas of security as focusing on,

“shoplifting, theft from motor vehicles, theft of motor vehicles, burglary and burglary with intent, robbery and theft from the person, [and] criminal damage” (T. C. Information Pack 2001, 22).

When public space is commodified to such an extent, the mall visitor is both the main asset and main liability, possible purchaser of goods or, perhaps, thief. It is this dichotomy that problematises CCTV and surveillance in general, with surveillance potentially assigning negative values to those not visibly conforming and contributing to the economic process. “In this ‘black-box’ conception of human nature... an abstract level of pattern is emphasized over a uniquely embodied particularity” (Crandall 2005 *no page ref*).

Malls tend to utilise water sculptures and greenery as softening décor, but these cannot negate the pressures on prime retail space. The fact that the

“visibility of products and people is a must” (Helten & Fischer 2003, 13) undermines more people centred motives. As Jon Goss comments,

“the mall appears to be everything that it is not. It contrives to be a public, civic place even though it is private and run for profit; it offers a place to commune and recreate, while it seeks retail dollars, and it borrows signs of other places and times to obscure its rootedness in contemporary capitalism.” (Goss 1993, 278)

So, whilst a visitor to a less managed urban centre may feel comfortable sitting on the grass of a public park or creating an ad hoc seat from a step, at the Trafford Centre, as with other malls, sitting in non-designated areas is not encouraged and may be actively discouraged by vigilant guards. General seating provision is also quite poor as visitors are led to use on-site cafes and bars where their rest time is suitably profitable to the owners. The Trafford Centre’s communal area for eating and drinking allows little diversion from the shopping experience. A large screen shows promotional videos detailing all the Centre has to offer, creating a panoply of optical stimuli and, as a consequence, quiet talk and reflection are disabled due to the constant stream, not only of noise, but of commercially dominant visualities. Although the Trafford Centre is proffered as suitable for a family day out, the overheated environment, the crowds and the sense of disorientation can produce a less than positive atmosphere. Responding to my questions about using the Trafford Centre, Hazel, a female barber made the observation that if she had children she would find it a particularly stressful venue, “I’d be concerned that if your child went missing someone could pinch [them]... there are that many people”. She also added, “Say I had a family... you’ve got to be rich to... use the Trafford Centre... it’s not a pleasurable browse it’s a rat race”. As will be seen in chapter seven, the sense of being enclosed and the lack of free space are not just unpopular when considering children, adults too can find the surroundings tiresome if not enervating.

In postmodernity, a surfeit of images creates a deluge of optical information, much of it consumer oriented, it has been described as “an era of endless representations” (Koskela 2003, 307) and the Trafford Centre demonstrates this trend. In one of its zones, references to New Orleans are made using models of jazz players, mock balconies over the shops and cafes, and the communal dining area, mentioned above, being loosely based on a steamboat. Themes used within malls are, however, only “vicariously acknowledged, at a nostalgic distance” (Crawford 1992, 27), any real sense of the liminality of carnival, jazz music or festival is not presented; instead it is an ersatz and inanimate offering that seems doubly dead in its static form. In their lack of historical roots, malls can be considered as, “artificial environments, which, unlike the main street, have no prior reason for existence” (Goss quoted in Valentine 2001, 232) the choice of motifs may be arbitrary, seeming to have little to do with the area in which the mall is situated. Perhaps in order to anchor itself more securely, the Trafford Centre positions itself within the history of Manchester’s industrial roots, wall murals of the nearby Ship Canal and promotional copy suggest that the mall is another step in the commercial progression of the area.

“The Manchester region has enjoyed the benefits of pioneering developments on a world scale for many years... The Trafford Centre, built for the twenty first century and beyond is the latest statement of belief in the area’s future.” (T.C. Information Pack 2001, 3)

Commodified environments can be stifling in their drive to create an overarching theme, despite references to local histories there is also a tendency for reality and the outside world to be “subordinated to the conceptual representation” (Miles 2002, 132). A common usage of, for instance, exotic goods and décor may provide the shopper with a sense of the other without having to actually engage with it. Such vicarious consumption avoids “the messy vitality of the metropolitan condition, with its unpredictable intermingling of classes, races and social and cultural forms” (Boddy 1992, 125). It reinforces a

sense of the mall as a fortress, distanced from the world beyond its walls, as the Trafford Centre's own literature proclaims, their building is "predominantly inward looking" (T.C. Information Pack 2001, 4). Its outward appearance is not encouraging, surrounded by a complex of over-burdened roads, presently not served by rail-links and all but impenetrable to the pedestrian, it is indeed like a walled town, but this is not necessarily something to be proud of.

Protected both from the vicissitudes of the weather and from disruptive occurrences, control operates externally at the mall, through guards and CCTV but also through the individual's readings of the surroundings. Whilst the environment is attractive, there is an unspoken suggestion that visitors can use the space but may not make it their own, even temporarily. Sites built for such a specific purpose as the mall can create an air of ambivalence and vague unease as "what ensures discipline simultaneously erodes confidence" (Koskela 2003, 300). This, I feel, is where the least positive features of surveillance and control are revealed. There is a nullity at the centre of surveillance practices that creates an intangible, slippery experience and an unequal relationship of looking, furthered by house rules that frequently ban photography and video recording for personal use without authorisation. It could be argued that this rule regulates, frames and copyrights the image of the centre, indicating how powerful visual imagery has become as a marketing tool.

Malls and other sites of intense observation may bring about a sense of oppression and isolation as the communal self is subordinated to the individualised rites of consumption. The multiple methods of looking, visual stimuli and of being under observation can intensify feelings of isolation, the experience "surveillance creates is unstable, nebulous and unpredictable" (Koskela 2003, 300). Removed from the possibility of a group identity or shared dynamic and rendered sole generator of potentially transgressive acts, the individual may feel themselves removed from the social body. This may be liberating especially if the role of consumer holds appeal, "for a brief time the

encounter with the mall brings about a special and partial self-integration, which is the realization of the consumer self" (Gottdiener 1995, 97), however, beyond this role, sites of consumption offer scant potential for broader fulfilment.

5.8 The privatised city

In the next chapter I shall explore how sites can be reinterpreted by the activities of sub-cultural groups who validate the assertion that the "predominant ideologies of surveillance need to be ... challenged and deconstructed" (McGrath 2004, 198). In concluding this chapter, the power of the image and commercially condoned narratives will be further uncovered, revealing the underlying motives of surveillant control that lead to urban spaces becoming semi-privatised. Surveillance takes many forms and its use is not, as in the Orwellian mode, performed by one omniscient watcher. It is multiple and therefore not always easy to recognise, regulate or define; it can be slippery but one aspect that does appear regularly, and as already described, is the prevalence of the visual.

"Many writers... have argued that the visual is central to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies. It is now often suggested that much meaning is conveyed by visual images." (Rose 2001, 6)

In the built environment, designs that utilise styles in a piecemeal fashion are a part of many architects and town planners working practices.

"History, technology and art... have now become commodified. The principle of adjacent attraction is now operating... imposing an exchange of attributes between the museum and the shopping mall, between commerce and culture." (Crawford 1992, 30)

Where this is the case, there is a dependence on appearance and façade and a preference for "the sign to the thing, the image to the fact" (Koskela 2003, 307),

the onlooker's perceptions are commandeered by an array of visual reference points. In postmodern urban space a loosening and reappropriation of meanings persists, their utility recognised as powerful indicators of the social status of a city or zone. Image and aspiration are as important in contemporary retailing as are the goods themselves, often involving "ever more elaborate fabrics of simulation... [with] successive displacements of 'authentic' signifiers" (Sorkin 1992, 229). The built environment is used to express corporate and dominant ideals and intents, albeit in attractively offered up forms, thus, the

"privileging of a single concept of the city over a multiple actuality... parallels the privileging of the visual over other senses and is enabled by it. It is through the visual media employed in architectural design and urban planning that city form is brought into conformity with its dominant conceptualisation." (Miles 2002, 135)

This prioritising of visual landscapes can isolate and discount less desirable local histories and shared memories of an area and to avoid this, regeneration projects need "to be rooted in an understanding of local needs and values" (Evans & Foord 2003, 179). Wide scale re-designing of urban space is regarded by some observers as elitist, eradicating those considered unproductive from the landscape.

"The poor cannot and should not be exiled from their city's public spaces at the dictate of speculative developers or the reluctance of the majority to countenance their existence... [as] institutions react to the threat of the poor's visibility and their use of public, that is, common space." (Mellor 2002, 234)

Where powerful corporations dominate city spaces, their seemingly benign and attractive productions could also be considered as "selective versions of history, or myths of harmony, offering another layer in the composition of elite images of the regenerated city" (Hall 2003, 52). With art and sanitised histories used to

disseminate an officially acceptable text, one may sense that designers wish space to remain untouched and free from the taint of some who move through it.

The primacy of the commodity and of designing urban space that provides a suitable backdrop to consumption means that the right kind of person and the correct mode of behaviour are encouraged. Urban zones that are dependent upon an “intertwining of cultural symbols and entrepreneurial capital” (Zukin 1995, 3) can be seen as extensions of the gated community and the mall. Previously open public sites are closely managed rendering them less likely to attract the ‘wrong’ type of visitor whilst encouraging profitable economic transactions. Cultural details are included or excised according to business potentialities focusing on “clean design, visible security, historic architectural features... [where] their vision of public space derives from commercial culture” (ibid, 36-7). Justifications for the semi-privatisation of public spaces are often meted out in order to counter accusations of elitism and exclusions. These justifications may, for instance, name improvements to the infrastructure as their primary concern, possibly belying the “unspoken agendas – to make the city less public in the name of public amenity” (Boddy 1992, 127). Here, surveillance enters the picture, not just through demonstrations of overt force but through the privileging of sites partially run through the strategy of “identifying theme and style with social order” (Zukin 1995, 66).

When cities undergo extensive redevelopment “an economy which has few benefits for local people” (Miles 2002, 140) may be the sacrifice, or oversight, made to encourage wider investments. Commerce and various transactions have always played a central role in city life, and it would be wrong to suggest that the only good city is one that gives sole primacy to the public. What seems evident in postmodern sites, however, is that the public are increasingly situated as consumers, gaining their identity through acts of consumption. Simultaneously, the city’s image is marketed as a package of saleable goods in a climate where “architecture is a brand and the ethos is consumption” (Hills 2002,

34). In the restyling of city spaces, “the new urban pioneers seek to scrub the city clean... if the past is not entirely demolished it is at least reinvented” (Smith 1996, 26-7). Developers could be accused of erasing a city’s “social histories, struggles and geographies that made it” (ibid, 17), whilst also relying upon fragments of those histories to sell a re-written future.

Public space can have a clear and unambiguous meaning, yet still be open to personal interpretation and uses, but when space is semi-privatised, although safe and attractive, it can be constrictive and restricting. Gated communities, malls and urban redevelopments can become sanitised, advertising their right to exclude through creating an image of visual and social unity. They may not overtly exclude those considered threatening but these practices reveal that “the perception of a coherent space cannot be separated from a sense of what threatens that space” (Deutsche 2002, 278). As a result, acts of free speech and autonomy become marginalised and less common, due to the lack of a public area for them.

“Constitutional guarantees of free speech and of freedom of association and assembly mean much less if there is literally no peopled public place to serve as a forum in which to act out these rights.” (Boddy 1992, 125)

The public are being incorporated into a less accessible urban arena in what could be considered an act of anti-urbanism, a “suburbanization of downtown” (Boddy 1992, 150). The effects of exclusions and zoning are a valid cause for concern,

“we should not sacrifice the life of the polis, that most ancient benefit of the culture of Western cities, with meek excuses about private property rights and the desires of people to associate with their own kind.” (ibid, 152-3)

What many commentators appear to share is not a mistrust of innovation and development, but a sense of the claustrophobia of urban sites that do all the work of interpretation for the people who use them. Overly produced and ordered spaces tending towards a theme park attitude of wall to wall “primal reference points and their screaming semiotics... [where] the original simulacra are being simulated again, to ever higher powers” (Soja 1992, 101), can induce a sense of inertia. There is, seemingly, no opportunity for interaction with the space and although it may be hard to express in tangible terms, there is a feeling of weariness and an overwhelming of the senses. At worst, sites which are increasingly built or managed with surveillance and control as their defining, if unspoken, ethos are impacting upon a more inclusive sociability. Their democratic processes curtailed due to internally motivated decisions at odds with a broader overview of social responsibility. The different areas considered in this chapter characterise a self interested form of governance; however, these sites are not an absolute expression of postmodernity. The next chapter will provide a countering sense of the ways in which the experiential, engaged and personal can re-write urban space as something other than a singular, authorised version.

Subverting the Version

6.1 Sub-text

“There is no moment of completion” (Rendell 1998, 245)

The previous chapter detailed some postmodern spaces in their official versions, in this chapter the focus will be on practices that bring individual meanings to space such that the subject, in effect, becomes an architect or author themselves, imbuing their personal values on to space in an interactive process. Whilst surveillance is inherent in many public spaces, its reach is subverted through a personally determined agency, providing a sub-text to the city, creating multiple versions of it. This fact gives meaning and value to lives and spaces, animating both and projecting them beyond the narrow confines of a commodified lifestyle.

If surveillance operators are trained “to monitor locations and behaviour, not persons” (Helten & Fischer 2003, 33), then unexpected actions may be interpreted as being out of place as, “to be in the wrong place can... also be defined as ‘wrong’ behaviour” (Helten & Fischer 2004, 339), people can very rapidly move from acceptable to unacceptable according to their geographic positioning in space. This has implications, particularly in some of the postmodern spaces I have been examining where designers present stage managed sites as pre-ordained territories for quite singular purposes. Historically, public space has rarely been open to unrestricted access, and it would be wrong to imply that recent trends are unique in demarcating the private and the public. Nevertheless, the processes behind much redevelopment and planning are worthy of questioning due to their,

“increasingly punitive and unaccountable modes of coercion and control These various developments in the securing and recasting of public spaces and the creation of semi-private areas represent wider changes in how we move around urban spaces.” (Atkinson 2003, 1834)

Physical acts of individual agency can of course be powerful, highlighting the differing versions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour groups have according to their own agendas. Transgressive acts can be insightful in highlighting surveillant practices that restrict the human capacity for a more creative use of space. This is not to say, however, that the public are either slaves or rebels within particular environments, human agency creates meaning within spaces. As Susan Torre notes, a site

“regardless of how it is physically or virtually constituted... is not the exclusive territory of architecture, but is the product of the inextricable relationship between social action and physical space.” (Torre 2000, 145)

This fact means that people can, should and do interact with the urban realm and, in the process, shape and give meaning to their surroundings. Ideally, architecture and design are not an end but part of a process of interchange between the many users of space and the space itself.

A belief that good design can erase social ills is not a stable fact; “the architect is no more a miracle worker than the sociologist. Neither can create social relations” (Lefebvre 1996, 150-1). Different members of the public will have different interpretations of a site’s use and, whilst they may not agree with transgressive acts, likewise they may not be entirely happy about semi-privatised spaces that were once public. An attitude, then, that sees space as opening up possibilities, and the built environment as containing elements that can both constrain and enable, and which also sees people as inhabiting those spaces in a variety of ways, extends the discussion out of purely accepting sites as either value neutral or impossibly loaded with meanings. The urban environment may more usefully be defined through advocating,

“a ‘weak architecture’: an architecture able to accommodate, or at least register, the interval between plan and place.... This attempt seeks to weaken architectural sovereignty by turning attention away from the disposition of a homogeneous rationality through insisting on the heterogeneous histories that the construction is destined to house.” (Chambers 2001, 420)

As will be explored below, people's attitudes, activities and needs can transform space from a static to a dynamic entity, inhabited as a shared space holding various meanings, the built environment should be pliable enough to accommodate the 'heterogeneous histories' of a diverse population.

6.2 Public streets - social space

For something that can very often be taken for granted, the public street is still of cultural significance as a bearer of meaning and relevance. Obviously, it acts as a conduit for movement between sites, used by a variety of people with many reasons for being there, as well as providing an arena for less routine events, some of which will be looked at a little later. In North America, the street has been impacted by,

“the filtering away of the middle classes from downtown streets [it] removes the last zone of physical contact for the increasing diversity of ... backgrounds, life-styles and values in our city. The rapidly evolving cultural space of television, computers, and the new communication technologies will never replace the information and economic system which is the vital public street.” (Boddy 1992, 151)

The street can offer unexpected meetings and informal gatherings, acting as a shared space for communication and social interactions; “more than anywhere else, the idea of the street is permeated by a sense of the public” (Atkinson 2003, 1831). This is not to say that the street always sees such positive or life affirming occurrences of course, but it has a social validity that is worth protecting from the spread of privatism, proscription and exclusion. Urban centres facing the pressures of competition may play safe in their design and planning borrowing “Disney's abstractions of the Main Street vernacular” (Zukin 1997, 292). This idealising of a harmonious small town life that inscribes “utopia on the terrain of the familiar and vice versa” (Sorkin 1992, 226) can create a “dislocated authenticity” (ibid, 227) resulting in a sense of ambivalence. In their apparent neutrality and lack of overt authority, such design strategies can be an effective form of “dominating and subduing

others" (Sennett 1993, 60). The apparently easy going style that suggests community without necessarily providing it may seem innocuous but whilst,

"good design may include elements of so-called informality... informality cannot be designed, and design does not admit the acts of appropriation which construct a sense of emotional ownership." (Miles 2002, 135)

An overworking of themes that obfuscate the motives and strategies of business corporations seemingly forgets that "ordinary lives are messy; only the city as vista and plaza conveys the perfection of Descartes" (Miles 2002, 137). Where design and image become prioritised over use value, and urban spaces and streets replicate each other for fear of being outdone, the result can be a watered down sense of how and why the street as social space should still exist. The repetition and

"simulation of urban life extends to instant suburban "town centres", refashioned metropolitan civic centres, and the ersatz visuals and activities of far too many historic districts." (Boddy 1992, 126)

Proponents who value unregulated street space as social space consider that, a "zone of coexistence, of dialogue, of friction, even, is necessary to a vital urban order" (Boddy 1992, 152). One advocate of the urban street as a positive shared space for social interaction and exchange is Jane Jacobs.

Jacobs regards neighbourhood streets as places for children to play and for people to interact informally whilst also providing a natural level of surveillance through locally situated and involved inhabitants. She makes the point that if "people fear the streets... they use them less, which makes the streets still more unsafe" (2000, 107). This is quite an obvious statement, and one which has been cited by some as a reason for the gated community and mall's existence and also for the increased prevalence of surveillant techniques. Jacob's answer lies in her belief in social inter-dependence, networks "of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves" (2000, 108). Not so much a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, which gives the

impression of the vigilant individual as some sort of uninvolved judiciary, but of an actively concerned member in a valued and meaningful community.

Organised forms of surveillance can create a vacuum through driving “responsibility away from individuals” (Koskela 2003, 294), as people are portrayed less as social bodies and more as consumers with individuated rights, inhabiting a commodified landscape. CCTV and other forms of surveillance may permit “citizens to defer their interventions” (Norris & Armstrong 1999, 188), shifting responsibility onto the shoulders of the unseen seer. Surveillance that supersedes other forms of social control and sociability distances people as it can “strip down the complex actions of self-conscious embodied persons to their basic behavioural components” (Lyon 2001 a, 150). This is what Jacobs wants to avoid, she regards the street and its safety as complexly overseen by a multitude of citizens made up of a

“number of components... specialized in one way or another [that] unite in their joint effect upon the sidewalk, which is not specialized in the least. That is its strength.” (2000, 111)

This strength lies in the fact that whilst surveillance is remote, interactions at street level require proximity and accountability rather than distance, engagement over dislocation. This acts as an antidote to the proliferation of surveillances where,

“the intimacy of the situated/territorialized human body can be completely deterritorialized. It is this deterritorialization of the assemblage of the situated human body that allows for the hyper-realization of the governance of the subject.” (Nichols 2001 *no page ref.*)

Viewing cities and public spaces as sites for diverse and unmediated interactions may not always lead to happy exchanges but, the lack or effacement of any such meetings, however transient, can increase intolerance of difference, and the tolerance of others can be one of urban space’s strengths.

6.3 'Finding the gaps'

Various tactics of influencing people's use of space by design and management is prevalent and repeatedly reinforced through agencies controlling the urban order who, "dictate the look, layout, and distribution of buildings, and use it to shape human activities" (Nunn 2001). Equally though, there is an impulse to redefine space as something other than static and singularly focused, physical acts are an intrinsic element of humanity subordinated by the Cartesian belief in cerebral forms of knowledge. Through reinscribing space as non-Cartesian, the importance of the body and its multiple performances can be reinstated as having relevance and meaning. The factors surrounding surveillance and control involve a tendency to standardise the body, regarding it as predictable. It is useful, then, to consider how acts of physical agency can replace and re-situate people on the map of urban life. Although some techno-enthusiasts hail cyberspace "as a place where the self will be freed from the limitations of physical embodiment" (Wertheim 1997, 296), the physical is a valid and tangible affirmation of the individual's strengths, abilities and autonomy. Indeed, some commentators feel that; "what is fundamental to urbanity... is embodied presence and encounter... exposure and its discomforts" (Robins 1999, 52).

Where actors are able to interact with space, there is an opportunity for redefining,

"micro-sites of the city to make their own architecture composed of new mappings and ephemeral occupation... A long tradition of the city involves those with counter-cultural aspirations to find the gaps in which they can operate." (Borden et al 1996, 12)

Through acting out the human capacity for something other than the acquisition of goods, submersion in technology and getting from A to B, acts of physicality can reinscribe postmodern spaces. Transient and unpredictable movement creates a sense of motion, reanimating what may ordinarily be known only as a space for shopping and commerce. "Performance, through its embodiment of absence, in its enactment of disappearance, can only leave

traces for us” (Gilpin 1996, 106). Here, Gilpin implies how movement and performance is by its very nature over almost before it has begun; she depicts the ways in which movement can be such a powerful and emotive event, stating, “it is the unstable and unfixable nature of bodies in performance which demands attention” (1996, 106). As an antidote to the stasis of some urban design which makes use of surface appearances, performance can turn the tables. A skateboarder, for instance, typically young and often male may be considered worthy of surveillant attention and yet, or because of this, their movements are powerful. Their actions can exert “a surveillant control over the observer that threatens the observer’s security of position, interpretive power, and perceptive ability” (Gilpin 1996, 108); the movements of a skateboarder may appear erratic and thus, the spectator is decentred by the uncertainty engendered. Enacted moves have the potential for being seen as deeply deviant, as movement is of the moment, leaving little or no trace in its wake, “moving bodies fascinate... they... have vanished the moment we acknowledge them” (ibid, 108).

Movement and other acts of reappropriation can alter the text of a city, repositioning sanctioned discourses, the “narrative written by monuments, public art, most postcards and tourist posters... is one the subject citizen is required to accept” (Miles 2002, 143). By contrast, actions that are not prescribed may arouse attention from guards whose “attention is caught explicitly by behavioural and locational deviations” (Helten & Fischer 2003, 35). Spontaneity and the carnivalesque may only be acceptable when deemed appropriate by the city authorities, subversions can, however, be positive acts of engagement with the city on different terms; if data accumulation and surveillance deconstruct the individual then active participation can reconstruct and reassert selfhood whilst simultaneously creating “new cultural spaces in the shell of the old” (Ferrell 2001, 98).

6.4 Embodying resistance

Sub-cultural acts are useful to consider as an alternative to the commercialism, privatisation and insulation of many urban spaces and the lives that take place within them. They reaffirm the fact that, unlike “Orwell’s totalitarian eye, the many big brothers of our society can be submitted to partially and conditionally, can be played with and perverted” (McGrath 2004, ix). This means that, despite financially motivated spatial claims, imaginative physicality can re-route lines of power bringing a fulfilment “unfettered by economic imperatives” (Gottdiener 1995, 97). In North America, the Surveillance Camera Players (SCP) appropriate CCTV cameras for impromptu performances as they playfully target these electronic eyes on the street that invade a person’s privacy:

“A group of individuals create a scenario and act it out using surveillance cameras as if they were their own, as if they were producing their own program... if the enemy is going to clutter our landscape with watchful eyes, we should look into those eyes and let them know how silly we think they are.” <<http://www.notbored.org/>> accessed 12/02/04

Concerns about the right to privacy are not always the most pressing issue in questioning surveillance, as John McGrath points out; to a black man perpetually finding himself the subject of CCTV’s gaze,

“protection of privacy is not relevant to the ways in which the camera targets him. The terms in which surveillance is routinely critiqued obscure his experiences, and those of many others, in the name of a ‘privacy’ fantasized as a universal right.” (2004, 23)

There is not sufficient room here to discuss privacy claims at length; however, reducing arguments about surveillance to a right/wrong and public/private theme could miss the point that surveillance is slippery and insidious. The SCP’s actions are, nevertheless, a valuable tool in questioning the ubiquity of cameras on city streets which cannot protect people from immediate harm, as “the information that could cue prevention is available only after the event – as

a result of the event” (McGrath 2004, 36). As has been pointed out by several commentators, James Bulger’s death could only be anticipated afterwards, through the CCTV footage of his abduction. CCTV’s main aim and ability at the moment is to catch the perpetrators of vandalism or theft of property. Perhaps this retroactive retribution fits with society’s current emphasis on apportioning blame and ensuring that compensation is sought. If anything, the footage shows the redundancy and moral dubiousness of a monitoring device that works primarily to protect property, which can be replaced, rather than people who obviously cannot.

In a complex society, it is useful to act out publicly, as with the SCP, one’s questionings of the morality of surveillance. At their worst, CCTV systems practice “arbitrary power displays by the state” (McGrath 2004, 32), denying the subject of surveillance a voice and rendering them a mute, two dimensional figure. Actions that openly question and critique are valuable in creating alternative ways of considering surveillant practices.

“Embodiment, making visible within the security matrix, is exactly what needs to happen – and the perversions, inversions and prostheticizations that will occur in such making visible are anarchic potentials for resistance... agency does not equate with control. We cannot define in advance what the security matrix will do with our images, our data. But we can insist on having an effect.” (ibid, 183)

Thus, as a form of counter-surveillance, the SCP’s acknowledgement and subversion of CCTV provides a means of raising some awareness of the monitored public realm, playfully testing the surveillant gaze that usually denies two way communication.

Less organised than the SCP, and often less intentionally political in their aims, skateboarding and the more recent emergence of *parkour*, both of which use built forms as springboards and platforms, can have an effect on city space, as they redefine it through play. Their dynamic presence suggests or proves that “the human being has the need to accumulate energies and to spend them, even waste them, in play... [and] creative activity” (Lefebvre

1996, 147). Not only to expend energies but also to use urban spaces as surface, contact point and slope, thus creating in the process a dialogue or reinterpretation of built space which transcends and obfuscates singular meaning, creating flows between sites perhaps previously unimagined. As a riposte, however unintended, to the stasis of didactic design, those who redefine urban space through physical and philosophical actions reduce the hold of surveillance, which always seeks to defer some future event. In this sense, they act out the observation that physicality by its transience and unpredictability has power; *parkour* and skateboarding are very much of the present. Their hold over the observer lies in the explosive dispersal of energies and an instantaneous redesignation of a site's purposes, "directly confronting not only architecture but also the economic logic of capitalist abstract space" (Borden 2001, 180).

Parkour, a physical interaction with built space that originated in France, regards the urban realm in a similar way to skateboarding, as a site to be used in a playfully serious or seriously playful way. Neither *parkour* nor skateboarding takes a stridently political stance, but their actions have an impact as they address the urban form and temporarily remake its apparent meaning and function. In *parkour* the participant aims for "fluid movement over every type of obstacle... like water flowing downstream" <http://www.urbanfreeflow.com> accessed 19/11/04. The originator of *parkour*, David Belle, puts his philosophy quite simply,

"we do it because we feel the need to move, we feel a need to exist – to show that we are there... our aim is to... make people understand what it is to move."
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/tvandradio> accessed 3/02/05

Another founding member, Sebastien Foucan, defines the originating ethos of *parkour* as having elements of skateboarding and martial arts, seeing it as,

"an art of living, an art of moving, what is shameful is to believe that, once grown up, we shall stop playing... we have a deep respect towards the urban furniture and the environment... some people don't

understand and call the police.” <<http://www.urbanfreeflow.com>>
accessed 3/02/05

Similarly, in another article the activity is likened to a form of dance due to its fluid play with gravity which, “embraces the philosophy that urban obstacles no longer act as barriers... tempting us to find an alternative route from A to B” <<http://www.spikyjumper.com/fattuesday/about>> accessed 3/02/05.

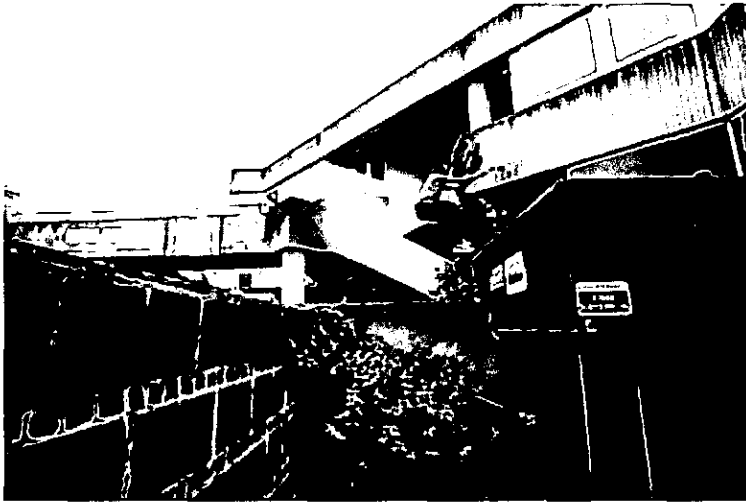


Plate 3 Cat jump

Source: <<http://www.urbanfreeflow.com/fundamentals/catleap/index.htm>>
accessed 2/06/05

Skateboarding too has an attitude of sensually creative transcendence of space where singularly defined objects, such as a bench or handrail become facilitators of acceleration; their use value thus subverted and redeployed in “a flow of encounters between board, body and terrain” (Borden 2001, 215). There is an evident relish in finding and using urban spaces despite the obvious conflicts this can raise between differing age groups, property owners and those engaging in the activities. Sometimes, where safety matters are of concern, subversive use of space can be a potential hazard, and consideration for pedestrians is important; in a society, however, where space is being enclosed, impromptu acts can be a critique of “capitalism’s absorption of the entirety of space for its own purposes” (Lefebvre 1991, 95). In their often spectacular use of space, such actors may be encouraged to take their

activities to a prescribed area, such as a sports hall or skate park, which may be resisted as,

“this persistent and highly visible play becomes a stark refusal to disappear beneath the imperatives of spatial regulation... in this refusal to disappear is an insistence on a right to claim, and remake portions of the city.” (Flusty 2000, 11-12)

Parkour sees itself as the creator of “a new way to deal with a static environment” <<http://www.UrbanFreeFlow/artinmotion.htm>> accessed 3/02/05, and in its celebration of physicality it does so in a strongly visual sense. Skateboarding likewise takes barriers as a challenge to be overcome, situating participants as “part of a long process in the history of cities: a fight by the unempowered and disenfranchised for a distinctive social space of their own” (Borden 1996, 86). The need to be seen and in that process to be validated, combined with the interplay of body and hard surface situates these two forms of physicality as a dialogue with urban space “that refutes architecture as domination of the self” (Borden 2001, 197).

As a means of reworking space, skateboarding and *parkour* leave little trace in their absence, more intentionally visible acts, however, can leave a permanent marker of their presence whilst being enacted by similar motives.

“Skateboarders implicitly realize the importance of the streets as a place to act... just as graffiti artists tend to write on out-of-the-way... sites... not to change meaning but to insert a meaning where previously there was none.” (ibid, 182)

The need to inscribe personal meaning onto impersonal spaces finds a link, then, between the practices of *parkour*, boarding and the more indelible act of graffiti writing, which will be considered in the next section. The perpetrators of these activities bear out the fact that quite simple actions and intentions can rapidly subvert meanings within the city. What can and has been described as the conforming body, channelled by surveillance, built form and socially narrowing processes can also be the body that recognizes “architecture has no innate or fixed meaning” (Borden 2001, 182). Human ingenuity, given half

a chance, can illuminate and animate urban sites through various actions, suggesting that curiosity, creativity and a resistance to spatial restrictions will continue to provide pockets of altered meanings in the city.

6.5 Rewriting space

Graffiti contests and, as a tool in the hands of sub-cultural groups, undermines the sanctioned, cohesive narratives of powerful citywide groups; personal inscriptions can rewrite the “static, monumental politics of the dominant with the mobile, personal tags of the dominated” (Cresswell 1996, 47). As a street level art form, graffiti has become something of an icon, appropriated by advertising and occasionally even incorporated into city texts, presented as one facet of the urban character. However, in New York, it has been targeted as a problem to be dealt with and eradicated, it “became one of several symbols promoted as a stand-in for the sense that something fundamental had gone wrong” (Austin 2001, 5). Excluded or disillusioned by advertising, media and corporate identities, graffiti writers have sought out an alternative method of asserting their identity. Not only have they achieved this, but they have done so despite the authorities’ best efforts to control space and property. As well as using static writing space, writers began to use New York’s trains as a form of rolling commentary, a mobile declaration of selfhood, appropriating “the mass-mediated public sphere to extend their alternative economy of prestige, their own brand of fame” (Austin 2001, 50). In doing this they were also able to circulate their styles and techniques more widely, in a sub-cultural conversation between differing writing crews.

Public art works have often,

“presented selective versions of history, or myths of harmony, offering another layer in the composition of elite images... this is significant, not just because the image (how cities are represented by the minority) is out of step with reality (how cities are experienced by the majority) but because there is a tangible relationship between the former and the latter... the critique of public art sees it squarely as one of the elite images of the city.” (Hall 2003, 52)

In contrast, graffiti could be regarded as a forum for the invisible, creating a visual reference to people the city has not included in its official representations. Obviously, graffiti can be considered a defacement of property and its use raises many issues regarding the rights and wrongs of the activity, but what I wish to highlight here is how graffiti unearths the contrast between official and unofficial texts in the city. City art often suggests a shared and harmonious attitude, replicating “an idealised city that bears little relation to the everyday experiences of its dwellers” (Miles 2002, 129). There can be a presumption of unity put forward by creators and backers who regard themselves as representing the “collectivity – while members of displaced social groups are mere individuals” (Deutsche 2002, 70). In the absence of other ways to be heard or seen, graffiti writers inscribe an alternative history of the city, garnering appreciation and respect from other writers. They have constructed a “writer’s city... which emerged from the cracks found in the existing institutional and social structures” (Austin 2001, 74).

Graffiti can be contentious, not just because of the defacement of property but also because it can seem to exclude the onlooker from its internal references. As with other modes of interaction with the city that are considered problematic, graffiti can be a challenge to the viewer where,

“the task of interpretation is one that requires the courage to address ambivalence, contradiction, and the distorted and fragmented proliferation (without the subject’s control) of possibilities.” (Gilpin 1996, 108)

As a riposte to the ubiquity of corporate advertising and city promotions, graffiti grabs the spaces it can, interfering with the image and discourse of a consumer oriented lifestyle defined by commodities and framed by beautified spaces. Graffiti has enabled its creators’ direct access to recognition; this has not been done in isolation from urban space but as a response to it and, at times, an interaction with it.

“The shared public spaces that writer’s ‘borrowed’ formed a kind of network that remapped the city for writers... comprised of places where writers ‘hid in the light’ of adult surveillance.” (Austin 2001, 74)

Whilst others have the choice to move out of the city, or live and circulate in only the more select parts, graffiti writers have stayed and, it could be argued, continued a dialogue with urban space. Their work appears, however transiently, as a testimony to the fact that “the city of lived space never disappears. It re-emerges in urban graffiti... and in street parties and political demonstrations” (Miles 2002, 137).

6.6 Alternative forum

As a conscious means towards creating ‘lived space’ and as a critique of the commodified urban landscape, some groups have responded to the domination of advertising imagery and the fact that much “physical space... is now... carrying the messages and culture of the corporations that dominate economic and political life” (Schiller 1989, 106). Through addressing postmodern concerns with the “emphatic attention to the surface appearance of social order” (Austin 2001, 146) and the visual imagery of place, actors can question the diminishment of public spaces that do not have some role in the cycle of consumption. Perhaps this is why, beneath the surface of popular and acceptable culture, there is another layer of direct critique; more self-consciously activated than the subcultures already looked at, but which aims to muddy the waters of an image conscious urban realm, questioning and exposing the root philosophies of financial competition and market domination. One relevant action that simultaneously protests and reinvents is ‘culture jamming’, whereby an advert is adjusted and altered so that its message becomes quite different to its original intentions. Advertisements can be “easy to subvert... once one has seen a wittily defaced ad, its original will never again have the same persuasive power” (Shurmer-Smith 2002, 133). When urban sites are designed and presented with corporate messages and consumerism as primary motives, creativity can become bankrolled. Spaces can lack any truly vibrant sense of dynamic energy,

effacing the spontaneous, subjective self with “the virtual self... created and reproduced by the media and advertising” (Gottdiener 1995, 97). Subverting and questioning advertisers’ messages and images can, therefore, be a powerful means to undermine current tendencies to “aestheticise experiences instead of responding morally or emotionally “(Wilson 1991, 150).

The street level critique culture jamming effects, supports the view that urban sites “aren’t machines; they aren’t works of art; and they aren’t telecommunications stations. They are spaces for face-to-face contact” (Wilson 1991, 158). As direct acts of reappropriation, some subcultural actions can appear deeply conflictual as they clash with official city images and plans, they do, however, show an engagement with the urban. They seek not a discourse but a conversation, or at least an accessible opinion that reroutes the distancing mechanisms of city strategies where “conceived space becomes dominant over lived space” (Miles 2002, 137). As with the Surveillance Camera Players, culture jamming takes on the corporate message at the site of impact, in a creatively anarchic fashion which believes that, “as theory and practice must occur simultaneously, so must critique and subversion” <<http://www.notbored.org/>> accessed 20/05/04. The power of the image and message is now in the hands of huge businesses and their decisions “have the power to reengineer the cultural landscape” (Klein 2000, 165); these images are jealously protected by copyright laws and the threat of legal action. However, jamming undermines these regulations and ‘negativland’, a group of artists working to subvert big brand messages see their actions as involving,

“displacing and displaying bites of publicly available, publicly influential material because it peppers our personal environment and affects our consciousness... The urge to make one thing out of other things is an entirely traditional, socially healthy and artistically valid impulse.”
<<http://negativland.com/>> accessed 20/05/04

In answer to the prolific output of advertising and branding, culture jamming interacts with the artefacts of postmodern mass marketing, in the process posting its own alternative message. As a subversive art form it works to

reclaim space and symbolism, jolting them back into the public domain and away from the smooth, seamless network of multiple marketing. The link between corporate promotions and copyright protection of their images finds a parallel in the privatisation of space,

“there is an unavoidable parallel between the privatization of... cultural discourse occurring through copyright and trademark bullying, and the privatization of public space... just as privately owned words and images are being adopted... so too are private branded enclaves becoming de facto town squares.” (Klein 2000, 182-3)

Like graffiti, jamming can be achieved with little more than a marker pen and a critical imagination to rework advertising copy that can exploit “our common mental environment with the promotion of... desire-mongering”

<<http://negativland.com>> accessed 20/05/04, or, it can also be technically executed to look like the real thing, only with a twist.



Plate 4 Restyled advert

Source: <<http://www.adbusters.org/spoofads/tobacco/mb1/>> accessed 2/06/05

Again, as with graffiti, there is the question of criminal defacement, the main impetus, however, is a visual and informed public attack on the wall to wall promotion of brands. Jamming has relevance as it stands, that is, purely as a comment on advertisements' apparent right to public space, but for many who practice jamming, "it is not an end in itself. It is simply a tool – one among many... in a much broader political movement against the branded life" (Klein 2000, 309). As Klein makes clear, culture jamming can itself become overly heavy handed at times as there is "a fine line between information-age civil disobedience and puritanical finger waving" (2000, 293). Culture jamming would seem to be at its best when employing a cutting wit that deflects some of the radiating power of advertising, whilst finding allies with other activists and actors whose reappropriating aims to confound the singular zoning of space.

In Baudrillard's estimation, anti-globalisation movements can lack impact; "positive alternatives cannot defeat the dominant system" (2003, *no page ref.*), instead the activation of "singularities that are neither positive nor negative can. Singularities are not alternatives... they create their own game and impose their own rules" (*ibid*). Large organisations can wield great power unmatched by minority groups or indeed by a more generalised public such that, in our present culture there can be an inability to interact.

"We are thus in the irremediable situation of having to receive, always to receive... by means of a technological mechanism of generalized exchange and common gratification. Everything is virtually given to us." (*ibid*)

It is possible, despite this suggestion, to break the continuity of public spaces, sub-cultural groups can be potent 'singularities', provoking conflict through their resistance to the neutralising effects of the dominant order as "any mode of difference and singularity is heresy" (Baudrillard 2003). In their own way these people 'give back' through their commitment to, rather than abstraction from, space. They challenge the imposed commodification of the public realm through adapting and re-contextualising commercial discourse. As such, version becomes subversion and the smoothness of advertisements' seductions

is confronted and challenged. Just as acts of physical embodiment can réassert selfhood, so too the power of advertising which seeks “to achieve distance and detachment” (Robins 1996, 18) can be destabilised. Through subverting the message, these actions recognise “that difference, asymmetry and conflict are constitutive features” (ibid, 101) of the public arena. Further, such actions loosen the monopolising effect of advertising, diverting the endless stream of information and questioning the basis of branded knowledge.

6.7 Monopolised space

The domination of public space, of course, goes beyond messages and branding; planning and design, whilst ostensibly enabling public life can also physically compromise sociability. Thus,

“professions such as urban... design... [that] assume the job of imposing... coherence, order, and rationality on space... can be regarded as disciplinary technologies in the Foucauldian sense insofar as they attempt to pattern space so that docile and useful bodies are created by and deployed within it.” (Deutsche 2002, 78)

These disciplinary strategies, as we have so far seen, are not the last word, and the potential for contesting the demarcation of public spaces can be multiply enacted. One such issue that is strongly contested is the privileging of the car and the rapacity with which space is monopolised due to the growth of traffic and roads. Despite daily accidents, the primacy of the car continues, in the process creating diminishing returns for the driver. “The average speed for a moving car in Manhattan is now 11 kilometres per hour” (Eriksen 2001, 143). Some die-hard activists would like to see the complete demise of private transport, for others the matter is less clear cut and the ubiquity of the car makes its disappearance unlikely. There is not room here to discuss the spectrum of concerns surrounding the car; its near universal presence does though involve relevant questions regarding the domination of space.

As an object of concern that relates into the broader issues of public space, the car is the primary target for Reclaim the Street (RTS). Originally formed in London in 1991, they criticise the way in which cars have “isolated people from one another... Cars have created social voids... dispersing and fragmenting daily activities” <<http://www.eco-action.org>> accessed 4/03/04. RTS, amongst others, see the car as a space hungry pollutant, adaptable only to car-friendly conduits and repositories that render much space out of bounds for other purposes. The group has highlighted the tendency of the car to insulate and privilege the driver whilst creating non-places as well as endangering the pedestrian.

Movements such as RTS that resist car culture also tend to encompass other action groups as the “construction or reclamation of space, with its attendant problems, is a central area of action and concern... space is a prerequisite for community” (McKay 1998, 28). The car, through its facilitating of smooth transitions creates in its wake a trail of by-passes, trunk roads and motorways that achieve the opposite of smooth passage for pedestrians and nearby dwellers. The continuation of dependency on the car is, in part, due to the,

“complex system of values, personal and collective, that puts a premium on ‘centrality’, ‘exclusion’, and ‘proximity’....Desirable place is often a paradoxical blend of closeness and distance.” (Curtis 2001, 60)

The desire for proximity and centrality imposes the need for flexible mobility, whilst the wish for exclusion also relies upon the car. Thus, space must be compacted and in the process, effaced, this is in contrast to activists who wish to maintain spaces that are open to multiple possibilities. Postmodern society is, to an extent, concerned with displacements of time, place and space, whereby the moment is often deferred in favour of some future goal and the road is entwined in this process. As an antidote to this, road activists can be regarded as re-imposing the importance of place and people within society, however temporary or ideologically flawed some of their methods may be. Indeed, motives within and between the activist groups can veer from overtly

political resistance to more ecological concerns over the loss of woodland and trees. Their relevance within this project comes from the foregrounding of place as holding more meaning than just the official version, and the importance of streets as being sites of “public inclusive space” (Paul Morrozo of RTS in Jordan 1998, 140). Their actions merge with other observations on urban space which note that although the city is often presented as,

“a space of social, economic, and cultural fluidity, increasingly this space, like our contemporary political system, is more about segregation and lack of access.” (Menking 2001, 101)

It is the juxtaposition of fluidity for some, versus segregation for others that prompted activists between 1993 and 94, to resist the demolishing of Claremont Road in northeast London to make way for the M11 motorway. Their occupation of the road is well documented and, by all accounts, Claremont Road was not a particularly attractive site but nevertheless became a forum where opposing views on car culture were enacted. In general those involved in resistance,

“believed that the superficial appeal of motorcars had seduced society into making catastrophic and irreversible decisions... Motorcars were all about selfish insularity; they provided individual benefits, but at enormous social cost... Motorcars insulated their inhabitants from both the irritations and joys of collective existence.” (McCreery 2001, 235)

The car is, for many people, a necessity and does not easily reduce to a simplistic argument, but for the Claremont Road protesters, their desire to create a temporary, alternative society in the decaying and soon to be demolished houses did provide a parentheses. They wished, through occupying and contesting territory, to act out alternative priorities; the need for people to have a space free from pollution, noise and constant danger. Moreover their struggle was immediate and autonomous; “by adopting direct action as a form of politics, those of us involved... looked to ourselves as a source of change” (Aufheben 1998, 106). This action was a singularity which applied directly, and through physicality as well as ideology, to the pertinent

issues, “this alternative, subversive form of existence was born not of idealism but of immediate practical requirements” (Aufheben 1998, 107).

Within the various groups who came together to protest there were different visions, but for a while they were able to re-equate space, its value and uses.

“Placing things and bodies in unusual combinations, positions us in new uncharted territory... Such potentiality opposes the autocratic architect’s pompous regimes of mono-functionality... the accidental and continually shifting juxtaposition of apparently unconnected things produces a density of interpretation. The layering of different daily patterns of understanding and using invoke architectural time as transient. There is no moment of completion.” (Rendell 1998, 245)

This comment suggests a freedom where there is no finality and no definitive coding, it reasserts the role of the user and the right to view sites as pluralistic and inclusive. The physicality of the protest movement has, some claim, taken “the alienated, lonely body of technocratic culture and transform[ed] it into a connected, communicative body embedded in society” (Jordan 1998, 134). More than purely on a political and structural level, protesters have recognised the way that “progress” has isolated the individual from their surroundings and, further, how car travel, “a dead duct between *a* and *b*” (ibid, 135) has insulated the driver. In its attempted annihilation of space and time, the road and car has, as with other developments practiced a withdrawal which protesters have sought to counter through physical presence and actions. Thus, the actions themselves as well as the aims involved become important, reasserting as they do the body and personhood not necessarily as “metatheory or political program, but through bodily action performed on and in everyday streets, spaces, and times” (Borden 2001, 196). The architect, not just of buildings but also of policy, development, roads and infrastructure, is usurped or undermined as users render a watertight scheme leaky. RTS and other anti-road protesters, along with skateboarders, graffiti writers and practitioners of *parkour*, test and find the weaknesses and opportunities urban planning leaves in its wake. As the pressures on urban spaces alter, so too do the means of protest, as they foreground changes considered heavy

handed and excluding. Whilst official sources may find these various forms of protest and actions an irritant at the very least, these acts are a reminder that built space is a social and cultural form, given meaning and value through the individuals using it.

6.8 Conclusion

In plans and schemes involving public space, official versions can for some provoke “a desire to subvert the system of consumption and... the logics of economics” (Rendell 1998, 246). As has been discussed in chapter six, the “tensions between public and private, social responsibility and anonymous freedom” (McCreery 1996, 39) are in flux at a time when “the public sphere has evaporated in the multi-centred region” (Gottdiener 1995, 97). The prioritising of sites for acts of consumption has not occurred without resistance or less consciously enacted reappropriations by varying individuals. These actions validate the role of the individual who, whilst not necessarily overtly barred from the freedom to act in public space may, nevertheless, find themselves impinged upon by the knowledge that surveillance and control mechanisms exist, despite their sometimes hidden and ambiguous nature.

“It is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces.”
(Foucault quoted in Nichols 2004)

Chapter six has sought to document some of the ways the body and individual can be reinstated and prioritised in recognition of the “perverse tendency, inherent in modern culture, towards detachment from reality and the loss of experiential engagement with the world” (Sass quoted in Robins & Webster 1999, 239). Although a diversity of groups and actions have been considered, all worthy of much more exemplification than is possible here, their similarities lie in their interactions with space and place. Each in their own way sets up a dialogue with the urban environment, sometimes transitory, sometimes more permanent, claiming and creating their own social

space. None of these acts can claim to be the definitive way to approach and utilise space, indeed, diversity is their strength, delineating the built environment as holding more than one designated meaning.

The next chapter aims to support the theoretical work so far covered, field research has been undertaken using open-ended discussions with individuals, focusing on some of the issues surrounding urban spaces, surveillance and the personal meanings these hold according to needs, values and interests. Participants, all from the North West of England and mostly living in low to middle income areas have been invited to discuss their personal views on the changes in public space and the increased presence of surveillance. None of the participants would describe themselves as being members of a subculture and yet, their personal thoughts raise the point that despite surveillance and control people still make sense of their world in a highly individual way. This is in contrast to some current discourses that portray society as being helpless in the face of technological changes. These views should be a liberating fact, and have altered my own readings of spatial control; it would be a mistake to imply that virtually all urban space is under continuous monitoring or that all people are powerless in the face of this. Further, my fieldwork suggests that subversions do not have to be radical or overt to hold validity, as will be seen, participants are active in making sense of their own worlds despite outside influences that may be detrimental to personal freedom.

Field research and analysis

7.1 A brief overview

The previous chapters have sought to address current changes and developing practices in the postmodern urban realm, the issues debated have exemplified the conflicts and pressures that a close monitoring and production of sites can entail. It is necessary for urban sites to be inclusive if a community's differing needs are to effectively be validated, respected and provided for and this factor can be compromised by the commodification and semi-privatisation of space. In the development and surveillance of sites there has been, from some quarters, a belief that the individual can be incorporated as if they were a controllable component. Within such a structure, management and design choices are based upon an,

“idealist orientation where humans have no access to unmediated reality and the world is actively constructed in terms of relational information systems. Here the world is scripted as inherently controllable, filtered through a scrim of information that modifies both system and materiality.” (Crandall 2005 *no page ref.*)

Although this may seem an over-emphasis, the philosophy is recognisable in some design and planning schemes where an idealised society is catered for and expected to submit to such delineations.

“Privatised and residential images drive a visualisation of the kinds of ‘public’ that should be allowed to use public spaces. Like an architect’s sketch, the public is often white, male and wearing a suit. Security is therefore also based on distinctly white, middle-class and suburban values.” (Atkinson 2003, 1841)

To design out diversity or in some sense to suggest, by omission, just what is acceptable is to deny the abrasions of social interaction, resulting in a weakened and biased social form. However, despite this, society, made up as it is of individuals does not behave as one cohesive organism; evidently,

and in light of my own empirical research, people carry around their own interpretations and versions of reality specific to themselves. As has been suggested, the built environment has increased in sites of surveillance and yet this does not generate a unified viewpoint amongst the respondents I have engaged with. Indeed, individual views gathered in the process of this project suggest that it is not only sub-cultural groups that hold diverse opinions about public space, the 'general public' appear not to hold a single definition either. They express instead more subjective views that may not be stable over a period of time or may alter due to circumstance or after further consideration and debate, as is revealed in the next section. It was with great interest that I found respondents extremely willing and cooperative in sharing their own thoughts on public space and that their vehemence on the subject held its own authority. In articulating specific viewpoints each person was, in effect, acting out their citizenship, pointing to the fact that despite critiques of domineering forms of spatial and intellectual governance, individuals still hold their own active and adaptable stance on the topography of their daily life.

7.2 CCTV and the individual

One of the projected selling points for CCTV and other surveillance measures is their safety value and protection of the public, although the issues raised have suggested that the camera does not directly protect people in immediate danger. Additionally, it has been suggested that CCTV may be intrusive, and resented as an un-returnable gaze, upon asking respondents for their thoughts, however, it would appear that some of the concerns I have documented regarding the prevalence and one-sidedness of CCTV are not necessarily held as a generalised view. Common amongst respondents was the point that surveillance cameras tend to be positioned out of immediate sight and are, therefore, not immediately obvious. Audrey, who worked for many years in a textile mill, did not mind the presence of surveillance,

“CCTV doesn't put me off... I don't look for them [cameras]. I like seeing guards around... it's a bad world that we have to have them but they're necessary... You get so used to them you ignore them.”

Another respondent, Abbey, who has impaired mobility, felt that when out shopping she, like others, was concentrating on more immediate concerns;

“Most people don’t look up... you’re looking at your feet... trying to negotiate everyone else.”

To gain a good surveillance position, cameras are invariably placed above eye level, thus, their somewhat ambiguous status is furthered by this semi-obscured positioning. Technical and managerial factors contribute to surveillance and control remaining distanced from direct scrutiny; “the ‘invisible hand’ – understood as a more or less anonymous actor – proceeds in an unplanned and incremental way” (Helten & Fischer 2004, 324). Upon discussing the advantages and disadvantages of surveillance, Ron, a mental health nurse felt, after further discussion that,

“Anything they do like putting cameras up, people have got to have the right to ask why... you’ve got that right... the trouble is as generations come up they get used to things.”

Due to the pressures and preoccupations of daily life, there appears to be little sense of surveillance as oppressive or an invasion of privacy, although, as Ron stated above, acceptance is tempered by an awareness of the right to know the reasoning behind surveillance. A common belief amongst respondents was that surveillance was not a problem for law abiding citizens and that in general it was an acceptable form of social control,

“You get a lot of people saying it’s like Big Brother watching you but if you’re not doing anything wrong why should it matter really... They’re not there to watch the ordinary person are they? They’re there to watch the people that are doing crime.” (Tina)

As Ron’s wife Tina pointed out in conversation, surveillance may be beneficial to the public, helping to keep costs down through apprehending shoplifters and, therefore, reducing the costs of lost profits usually built into prices.

7.3 CCTV and safety

Regarding individual views on safety, again, CCTV did not generally raise negative comments. Kate, a young, single woman, recounted a situation where she was lost in an isolated area and entered a garage to ask for directions. She knew there was a surveillance camera and felt some measure of reassurance that “if I went missing... or I was attacked, people would have me logged on CCTV”. This does highlight the point that cameras tend to work in retrospect and are not purely there for the protection of the public; “The only cameras that are any use like that are ones that are being monitored all the time... and... can direct the police” (Ron). Kate did, however, feel that the cameras provided some protection for her in a vulnerable situation and overall the consensus would appear to be that cameras are one more necessary component to keeping the public safe. Another respondent, Phil, a software consultant, believed that urban surveillance “makes me feel more secure because I’m aware of the increasing rates of crime in town centres”. Upon further reflection he considered,

“They’re really there to stop theft or shoplifting... It gives you a sense of safety and it could keep you physically safe if used correctly... It could act as a deterrent... Overall I think they’re a good thing.”

Perhaps the lack of clarity surrounding surveillance lies in the fact that people are not sure of the ultimate motives for such measures, but, nevertheless, accept the better aspects along with the more negative connotations. Shelley, a mature student and mother of a young child was not sure if surveillance,

“protects so much as enables law enforcement to make people more culpable for their behaviour and gives them actual proof that crimes have been committed, I don’t know if it really does make places safer.”
(Shelley)

Similarly Pippa, who facilitates education in the adult community, when asked if she felt reassured by the presence of cameras observed the duality of

surveillance, “town centre car parks are secure but some say once you get away from the town centre, the streets are not safe”. We considered how this could marginalise and displace crime leading to no go areas that become increasingly difficult to police and to live in.

“The selectivity of the gaze is creating a very unequal geography within the public spaces of Britain’s towns and cities... This of course has manifold consequences for those areas that are both under, and beyond, the camera’s gaze.” (Williams & Johnstone 2000,192)

Hazel, who for six months has been running her own barber shop has become very aware of her vulnerability and is in the process of considering implementing safety measures to protect herself.

“In this day and age you need as much evidence to get a conviction... the more there are [CCTV] the better... I feel vulnerable at work, a woman on her own and the majority of customers being men... and more of that [CCTV] makes me feel better.”

Hazel contemplates that if CCTV was installed in her shop it would not directly protect her were an incident to occur; “If I had a nutter in here... if it was on camera, the only good thing would be if they caught it on camera... it doesn’t keep me that safe”. Hazel is more reliant on her shop being sited on a busy, mostly residential street and is seriously considering wearing a panic button on her belt that, when pressed will set off an alarm on the building’s exterior wall.

“Because there are people around me and I told them... if they heard my alarm go off I’d feel a lot more protected... they would come and help me and the people around here are very aware because I’ve told them... that would keep me safer than a camera... I think both together (CCTV and alarm) would be something that would work.”

Surveillance does not, from the small sample of opinions gathered, completely reassure people but neither does it overtly disconcert, people seem, however unconsciously, to realise that its presence does not act as instantaneous

protection in an assault. It protects property and provides a place-specific image of safety that further promotes the consumption of zones and goods; “CCTV is a tool of... perceived safety, rather than crime prevention... designed to ensure the continued economic vitality of urban areas” (Williams & Johnstone 2000, 194). Regardless of this, individuals are prepared to accept the indirect or retroactive value it does have in terms of crime prevention.

At a time when towns have to compete for business and when society is more mobile, surveillance serves to create neutralised spaces that encourage consumption, an appearance of safety, and a measure of protection for people and property. They also, as a sort of leakage from their main role, may act as a deterrent to some crimes which are then, as earlier stated, displaced to other more vulnerable areas. In this sense, they defend a geographically patchy democracy often related to postmodern sites of consumption and commodification. In a generalised context, our lives revolve more closely around such sites, and our friendships, family and community life may be extended over large distances. Bearing this in mind and in the absence of human eyes on the street, perhaps surveillance and control provide the postmodern equivalent of social accountability.

Potentially neutral in their gaze and yet operated with specific values and motives, surveillance models have access to a force which is and will shape and impact upon social processes. This fact does not, however, undermine the proposition that people have their own versions of reality and this factor transcends “any simple duality of subject and object” (Miller et al 1998, 185). This is central to the view that people shape place and vice versa in a synthesis, rather than a more deterministic model that considers people as being primarily controlled by their surroundings. As shall be considered next, designers and management teams may project a sense of consumption sites that hinges on fantasy, image and luxury backed up by a sense of safety and security for the consumer; this is not necessarily how the individual may perceive the sites’ official version.

7.4 The Trafford Centre

Although the United Kingdom has not seen the same proliferation of malls and quasi-public places as has been the case in North America, there has been something of a 'mallification' of public space. "The same social and cultural processes which reinforce selective exclusion in the mall are now beginning to be felt in the public spaces of town centre streets" (Williams & Johnstone 2000, 192). Shopping centres are undergoing a process of becoming malls or mall-like in their management and design choices and are marketed as safe and fun places to shop and relax. However, as a site that typifies these processes, and has had them built in from the start, respondents' views on the Trafford Centre were sought, they were asked for their reasons for visiting.

"I would go because the shops are open late and it's free parking... I don't particularly like the idea of being undercover and being contained in one place. I much prefer somewhere... where there are individual shops and you can amble around at your leisure... I like the fresh air as well." (Kate)

Tina also felt that the Trafford Centre could be a little stifling "I don't always want to be with the bright lights and sparkly floors... I don't think it's anything to do with cameras or the safety aspect, its choice"; the Centre seeks to promote itself as an all inclusive site for relaxation and leisure time recreation and yet, respondents seemed to feel less enthusiastic about visiting as a pleasurable pastime. Pippa felt that "it's a bit too big for me... I often go to the Trafford Centre and don't buy anything, it's too confusing". Similarly, Hazel felt that she would not visit to use the varied facilities.

"If I was going to the cinema... or for something to eat I wouldn't go to a shopping centre... if I need a certain item I'll go to a shop... I use the small shops because they need your support."

It would seem that the Centre does not necessarily spell the demise of city or town centre shopping and is generally used as an additional place to visit where parking is almost guaranteed and the damp northern climate can be

avoided. Amongst those asked, local shops and more traditional town centres are still considered a good place to visit and these preferences are tied in to a desire for freedom of movement and local character whilst also having the safety that comes from a well used and meaningful locale. Perhaps the designed in security and control features of the Trafford Centre, more than the presence of CCTV are what mark the site out as less attractive to visit than other spaces. As Ron observes, security,

“Was in their mind when they made these places. It’s to get everything in one area because it’s easier to control rather than have a shop over there and one over there, it must have been part of the plan... the actual working of the thing everyday... wherever you walk you can see what’s going on.”

The Centre describes itself as being a “shopping machine” (T.C. Information Pack 2001, 4) and I was interested to ask respondents what they thought of this statement. In line with Ron’s last comment it could be argued that the site is indeed industrial in its approach, as Audrey asserts, she would not want to visit a place that was,

“Sterile, it’s like a shopping hospital... you go to hospital for certain things and they [the Trafford Centre] want you for certain things, to extract money from you... if the world becomes a world of [malls]... choice is taken away... without freedom you’re nothing but a zombie.”

Phil could see the attraction of having all the shops in one place but noted that when he worked in North America, malls had taken shops away from city centres leaving only business areas in the downtown zones. He felt that the ‘shopping machine’ construct was manipulative “they’ve obviously set out to make it a money making machine”. Hazel believed that the working environment at the Trafford Centre resulted in the staff behaving,

“Like machines... [they] don’t have to be nice to you... they see so many people... nobody cares when it’s big... very impersonal. When I go to big places like that it’s not warming... it’s a shopping machine because the people work like machines because you’d have to work in that environment.”

It would appear that individuals do not visit the Centre with safety uppermost in their minds, as Pippa pointed out, “In some ways the Trafford Centre is like a gated community; once inside you are safe, but I hadn’t thought about it from that perspective”. Generally, those asked valued their freedom of choice, using their own preferences and local knowledge in deciding where to shop. Bearing this in mind, the Trafford Centre does not appear to replace more localised consumption habits and is considered somewhere to visit occasionally rather than regularly. The services and amenities a town or neighbourhood area offers and the network of familiar places that provide support for people in their daily lives would seem still to be of importance to those whose views I have sought.

7.5 Public space, private views

When asked for any other thoughts or comments on public space, the issue of freedom of choice became more apparent, and, strangely, led me to consider that CCTV does serve a flawed but nevertheless accepted means of providing some security in some areas to some people. None of those I discussed CCTV with saw it in a particularly bad light and were happy for it to take up some of the burden of keeping streets and spaces reasonably safe. At a time of social fragmentation, a more mobile population and, in some cases, a broadening gap between social groups, its presence would appear to be tolerated as long as the individual’s right to move around with relative ease is not infringed. There is, as always with public space, a conflict between peoples’ right to access spaces and the need for some measure of safety, with the balance being tipped in either direction according to current trends. As has been demonstrated in this project, the tension between freedom and order should continuously be examined and tested, bearing in mind the current and ongoing establishment of “more and more surveillance units suggesting a logical end-point in which universal observation is made possible” (Atkinson 2003, 1833). As Ron observes, surveillance may become so embedded that, “the young ones will grow up and they’re [CCTV] there anyway”.

Although there was a general acceptance of surveillance, a common belief amongst the respondents held that public space was still a valid arena for groups and protesters to put forward their views.

“If it’s public space you’re entitled... if it’s peaceful... if people don’t get together and complain and shout enough against the government... we wouldn’t get a voice. We need a voice and one person isn’t big enough for a voice... public space, that’s the only place they can have it... it’s no good writing a letter... sometimes it’s the only way.” (Audrey)

I asked Phil for his thoughts on political demonstrations and canvassing in public and he too felt that “people have every right to voice their opinions as long as it’s peaceful”, and I discussed with him whether it should be permissible for extremist views to be promoted in public space, he felt that, “they’ve got as much right to put across their viewpoint however wrong you think it is”. Although radical views may be unpalatable, tolerance of such differences can be a price worth paying in order for public space to remain a collective, diverse and common ground. This raises the issue of how far the democratic process may go in protecting the right to protest and hold personally determined views as against the need for a measure of equanimity in public spaces. Whilst malls, gated communities and over-zealous management techniques may clear space of the more troublesome, or threatening aspects of society, this, as already examined also has a detrimental effect. The less differences and individual opinions people encounter, the more sensitive to these they may become, if space is used as a device in purifying or neutralising difference, the more extreme may be the polarities within society.

Abbey suggests that urban spaces could allocate a “speaker’s corner” of sorts, providing a recognised area where individuals and groups would be able to air their views in a public forum; as with the other respondents, Abbey felt that as long as such demonstrations and rallies were peaceful they were acceptable. Overall, the consensus of opinion would appear to be that the individual has a right to move freely within their world, unimpeded as much as

possible by others, as CCTV does not directly affect such movement it would not seem to be a problem for the respondents. More strongly felt was the notion that freedom of movement within and between places was an important facet bringing resonance and value to people's lives. "Place is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience the world. Place, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning" (Cresswell 2004, 12). Individual users make and imbue space with values, thus, "places are constructed by people... and in this sense are never 'finished' but are constantly being performed" (ibid, 37). If space and place are to continue holding meaning, issues of safety, profit and image should be examined in order to ensure that creeping and overarching methods of surveillance do not become an unquestioned norm. Complexity over simplistic notions of the use of space should be acknowledged; when conforming bodies are considered the ideal, to be contained within and by socially narrowing structures and rules, the outcomes may be hard to reverse. As has been suggested by the views of respondents, multiple meanings exist, created by the individual and despite new methods of surveillance. So that whilst there are indeed various and at times coercive means of containment and control, there also exist personal reworkings of space, they may not appear subversive but are, nevertheless, individualised accounts, personalised and valid narratives of daily life.

Conclusion

Whilst there can be no definitive statement regarding surveillance, monitoring and other related control mechanisms, it is evident they can not be considered a neutral process protecting the good from the bad. It is valuable to question these multiple practices as what is acceptable and unacceptable is very much open to dominant political, cultural and economic variants. Surveillance activities can reinforce stereotypes and unequal power relations and yet remain obstinately tricky to define, address and redress, “it seems all the more difficult to ‘humanise’ surveillance practices when the nature of neoliberal rule is so obscure to the public eye and lines of accountability so blurred” (Coleman 2004, 305). Surveillance is propelled by multiple forces and “protecting the truly vulnerable is not the job of a contemporary urban surveillance camera” (ibid, 306). Although surveillance practices are not omnipresent, the less positive facets can foster a sense of insecurity, playing upon our most basic instincts. The ambiguity of knowing we are being watched and that the watcher fulfils the dual role of being both guardian and guard can cause anxiety. As Koskela has noted, surveillance works at a visceral and emotional level that may “increase security but... induce feelings of mistrust” (Koskela 2000, 258). These liminal feelings may be difficult to convey and document but, nevertheless, have an impact on those under surveillance and consequently upon society in general. ‘In the context of emotional space, the practical issue of video-surveillance is not something one can either oppose or support: it is far more complex’ (ibid 259). Indeed, it is problematic and contradictory, yet proponents forward surveillance in its various forms as an effective method of crime reduction. It is valuable, therefore, to attempt to state the less obvious impacts emanating from surveillant practices despite the difficulties in doing so.

Methods of control lack depth and an accommodating of spontaneity, they do not recognise people’s “personal qualities... the technical equipment... makes it difficult for the space to be recognised as a lived, experienced

space" (Koskela 2000, 251). Thus, whether the means of control is electronic, built or other, the ethos is to pre-empt and curtail those actions considered inappropriate or unconventional, "closing off access to those who challenge those conventions" (Wakefield 2005, 543). In this process, seemingly innocuous or playful behaviour may be considered an offence, when place becomes saturated with specific messages and meanings, those who choose to imbue the site with alternative narratives can become a potential subversive. This could be viewed as a positive dynamic, however, as it highlights the singular brandings of publicly accessible sites;

"just as place has features that make it useful in the manipulation of people, in the control of behaviour, and in the creation of values, it also has features that make it efficacious as a site and object of struggle."
(Cresswell 1996, 162)

This fact can open up not just actions, but also discussions and theories about space and place; arguments and writings need to be as fluid and contingent as some of the sub-cultural acts documented in this project have been; "the stories that we tell about surveillance will be important factors in how we counter, and encounter, it" (McGrath 2004, 209). To write and think of place as being totally in the clutch of all-powerful forces is to ignore and devalue the alternative versions that exist and will hopefully continue to. As documented in the previous chapter, individuals, whilst aware of the presence of surveillance do not necessarily consider themselves to be constrained by it. This supports a more fluid notion of space, one that recognises the presence of control and surveillance, but also acknowledges the ability of people to "resist the construction of expectations... by using places and their established meanings in subversive ways" (Cressell 2004, 27). Writing, thinking, doing and being may all provide means to validate multiple definitions whilst accepting that the "goal can never be to close down surveillance, but rather... to deconstruct its power structure" (MCGrath 2004, 219).

The evidence gathered regarding issues of surveillance and control would seem to support the notion that, "vision is becoming separated from

experience" (Robins 1996, 130). This is propelled and supported by an image conscious ethos where the individual's status is as a consumer both of goods and environments, rather than as an engaged citizen and this remoteness is replicated in built forms where consumption is prioritised over sociability. As a counter to this, the recognition and acknowledgement of individual understandings of urban space, as undertaken in this thesis, may be a way to destabilise these unequal power relations. Whilst it can be hard or even impossible to reverse current trends, the anonymity of surveillance and control can, to some extent, be subverted through the singularity of personal involvement and multiple interpretations. Authorship does not need to be overtly contentious; it may be the emotional and imaginative response an individual or group superimposes onto space. Alternatively it can be a physical act that undermines sites which are "determined not by culture, but by the desire for profit taking" (Gottdiener 1995, 86). Subversions can be polysemic, gaining momentum in their scattered and uncoordinated diversity and uprooting the official meanings and designations of urban sites. Such actions and philosophies can value place as providing,

"an unstable stage for performance. Thinking of place as performed and practiced can help us think of place in radically open and non-essentialized ways where place is constantly struggled over and reimagined in practical ways. Place is the raw material for the creative production of identity rather than an a priori label of identity. Place provides the conditions of possibility for creative social practice... an event rather than a secure ontological thing." (Cresswell 2004, 39)

This research process has followed several strands of "complex articulation between a wide array of moral and social values, some with long histories, but no more predictable as to their future trajectory for all that" (Miller et al 1998, 192). Nevertheless, the forecasts and issues raised may provide markers about the way different sections of society are dealing with changes. As a reaction, in part, to socially diverse cultures and values, withdrawal into gated communities provides security and continuity, likewise the management of public and semi-public sites may adopt defensive measures that help define and curtail inappropriate behaviours. These factors express some anxiety

with mobility and a desire to “anchor social life at a time when it is experiencing rapid change” (Gottdiener 1995, 125). Such reactive measures may not generate or maintain socially meaningful interactions, but nor will a counter-reactionary attitude be helpful, whereby the sterility and stasis of some surveillant processes is matched by an overstatement of their efficacy and reach. Thus, just as “place as an event is marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence” (Cresswell 2004, 39), so also thought and theory work creatively when free from the didactic and the absolute. Reactions to exclusionary tactics of withdrawal and control may, of themselves create walls of difference. Better, would be a fluidity that thinks, writes and creates places with an acceptance that there can be no truly singular naming, this should not detract from a particular site’s inherent characteristics but animate spaces regarding them “as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (Massey in Cresswell 2004, 69).

Whilst the focus of this thesis has been the versions and subversions of sites within a relatively non-controversial context, the arguments considered can be opened out to a broader world view. Anxieties about authenticity, roots and just who has the right to claim and inhabit space in specific ways can lead on to conflicts that encompass inflammatory political, religious and moral differences with devastating results. Thus, the issues I have raised which, by contrast are of a less contentious nature, recognise that place and space are not value neutral, but are axiomatic in struggles over meanings and versions.

“Places do not have meanings that are natural and obvious but ones that are created by some people with more power than others to define what is appropriate”. (Cresswell 2004, 27)

In closing, it would appear that space and place are more inclusive when the dynamics of social interaction and human agency can find some expression within them. As a means of crime control and establishing norms of behaviour, surveillance and other security measures avoid effectively

addressing social needs and inequalities, focusing as they do upon outward appearances. They may, ultimately, polarise inequalities and displace crime whilst supporting a less socially responsible attitude that relies upon technological advances rather than social accountability. 'We are now in a situation where electronic surveillance seems to be the first and easiest option... accepted with relatively little critical discussion' (Koskela 2000, 244). As a reaction to crime and disorder, the control and surveillance of spaces may provide relatively cheap and effective results, but it does not offer an inclusive forum for more socially productive methods to be considered. As specified here, whilst documenting and enacting alternative versions does not necessarily provide solutions, the process does articulate and foreground the plural, the subjective and creative. These can be a countering force and a more "effective form of resistance than the efforts to avoid the gaze(s)" (Koskela 2003, 307). In so doing, alternate versions can create their own means of resistance to the technologically propelled normalisation, control and abstraction of individuals.

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