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**BRINGING PEOPLE TO THE PARK:
INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE**

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Lethbridge, 2006

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

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To my Dad

Abstract

In 2003 the Rotary Club of Lethbridge, Alberta proposed a revitalization of Galt Gardens, a small historic park in Lethbridge's downtown which was perceived to be the focus of particular kinds of "negative use." Over the course of the revitalization the park changed significantly – public washrooms and a water feature were installed, and private security guards were introduced. According to the local newspaper, developments have transformed the park into an "idyllic scene of children splashing and playing, families picnicking and people strolling" (Gauthier, 2008). This thesis explores the revitalization of Galt Gardens through a consideration of various texts and practices that (re)produce, not only the park, but also the "public" (and "non-public"). My analysis focuses on the ways in which a revitalized Galt Gardens is discursively represented and materially practiced to include and exclude particular users and uses, with potential consequences for the construction of public social space.

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Introduction

Located at the extreme edge of the southern border of Alberta, Lethbridge is just one hour from the United States, about the same distance from the Rocky Mountains, and is situated in close proximity to several large Indian Reserves, including the largest land-based reserve in Canada (Blood 148). Lethbridge, which today has a population of roughly 86,000, had its beginnings as a whisky trading post in the mid-nineteenth century. In the heart of Lethbridge's downtown, surrounded by Park Place mall, a number of small businesses, and a recently abandoned grocery store is Galt Gardens, a 9.16-acre public park that has recently been the focus of an urban revitalization initiative.

Galt Gardens was outlined in Lethbridge's original city plan by two of the city's founders, Elliot and Alexander Galt, in 1884 (Johnston, 1988). It was originally meant to be "a park and playground - a breathing space for the city that . . . would one day surround it" (p. 3). The park, which at the time was simply known as the Square, was used "as a place to tie up horses and park . . . carriages . . . and wagons" and later as "a playing field for soccer, lacrosse, and baseball" (p. 4). Over the years Galt Gardens has undergone a number of changes. Writing just over twenty years ago, local historian Alex Johnston noted that "Galt Gardens . . . has evolved from an expanse of native prairie to a civic playground, a meeting place, an ornamental park, and finally to a sedentary sitting down type of park" (p. 9). Johnston goes on to discuss the "anti-social behaviour"¹ that became commonplace in Galt Gardens beginning in the 1950s. An article published in the

¹ Johnston reports the following as among the "anti-social behaviour" reported to the city council of Lethbridge in July of 1965: "Galt Gardens were being used by transients. There was much litter, considerable drunkenness, panhandling and begging" (p. 10).

April 23, 2003 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald* repeats this claim of a problem of “anti-social behaviour,” arguing that it persists in the present:

over time a problem developed that led to diminished use of the park. *Lethbridge: A Centennial History*, written by Alex Johnston and Andy den Otter, notes that in 1944, the city’s board of trade, whose Galt Gardens office also housed the bandstand, abandoned the park, which “had become a hangout for drunks and idlers.” That problem persists to this day and raises the lone concern about the Rotary Club’s proposal. (Galt Gardens improvement, 2003)

The Rotary Club’s proposal, to which this article refers, is part of a larger Galt Gardens revitalization effort initiated by Lethbridge’s city council nearly two decades ago in 1990. The revitalization was scheduled to be completed in five phases over a period of nine years. The first phase of the project, defined by the construction of an open-air public events facility framed by a semi-circular pergola, was completed in 1992 at a cost of approximately \$1,000,000. The second phase of the revitalization was delayed until 2003, four years after the anticipated final completion date, when Lethbridge’s downtown Rotary Club proposed the project as part of Rotary International’s 2005 centennial celebrations. It is this second and most recent phase of the Galt Gardens revitalization project which is the focus of my thesis research. However, rather than relying on what might be considered to be the factual details of this latest revitalization effort, I use a form of discourse analysis informed by Michel Foucault (1995) to explore instead what I refer to as *representations of the transformation of Galt Gardens*. More specifically, I look at the revitalization of Galt Gardens in order to explore the ways this historically contentious place is represented as changed or changing during the revitalization process, and to consider how these representations might be effective in articulating who uses the park and how, as part of a coding of public space and civic identity. To invoke the

language of others interested in the social production of space (Lefebvre, 1996; Mitchell, 2003), the present research is interested in who has, and who no longer has, the right to Galt Gardens.

The thesis research presented here follows from a small pilot study conducted in the Spring of 2008, when I interviewed five White, middle class, long-time residents of Lethbridge on their perceptions of and experiences in Galt Gardens. The purpose of these interviews was to begin an investigation into space as a social product, to investigate the park not merely as physical setting, but as “social spatialisation” (Shields, 1991), a concept I elaborate in following chapters. Specifically, I was interested in people’s experiences in and perceptions or ideas of Galt Gardens. This study marked the beginning of, and gave direction to, my Master’s thesis research on Galt Gardens. Interviewees represented Galt Gardens as a somewhat dangerous place where one runs the risk of “being approached.” Further, in these interviews Galt Gardens was associated with those who are impoverished in the city, and First Nations people, specifically.

In the months following these preliminary interviews the park underwent a substantial revitalization – public washrooms and a water feature were installed, and private security guards were employed to patrol the area. According to the local newspaper, the *Lethbridge Herald*, these developments have transformed Galt Gardens from a “hangout for the city’s street population” to “an idyllic scene of children splashing and playing, families picnicking and people strolling” (Gauthier, 2008).

Before engaging in a more conceptual discussion on the social production of space, it may be useful to outline what it is that I actually did in this research, and why.

The decision to focus on what might be considered a small and insignificant park in a small and insignificant city, was not entirely, or even mostly, arbitrary. Perhaps most fundamentally, this decision was the result of a combination of my longstanding interest in architecture, and my formal education in sociology. Socio-cultural understandings of the production of urban space immediately resonated with me, leading me to pursue such interests in my own Master's research. But why not study a "real" city like Paris, New York or Vancouver? After all, it is metropolises like these that are the focus of much of the eminent socio-spatial literature. The answer to this question is twofold. First, I was familiar with the city of Lethbridge. Many years living here has provided me with a valuable cultural sense of the city. Lethbridge comprised the many spaces of my everyday life, and once I looked beyond what had become a kind of banal familiarity, local spaces began to look interesting. In short, I decided to start with the city I knew best, my own. Second, the very fact that most academic research has focused on larger urban centres has resulted in a lacuna in the literature on urban space. While urban processes, such as gentrification, may be observed in many cities (both large and small) across the globe, it is important to recognise that these processes are always contextual. Thus, it is necessary to analyse such processes in relation to the specific places in (and through) which they occur.

I began my thesis research in the summer of 2008 by conducting 20 participant observations in Galt Gardens. In total I spent over 30 hours in the park, observing various social and socio-spatial interactions. Admittedly, my research interests were, at the time, quite broad, making effective observation challenging. I was interested in who used Galt

Gardens, as well as in the specific ways they used it. I was also interested in the park as both a contested and racialized space. Through participant observations I acquired an invaluable sense of place that provided a foundation for further research on Galt Gardens.

After completing participant observations in the park, I shifted my focus to representations of Galt Gardens. In other words, I stopped (formally) observing what was happening in the park and began an investigation into the ways in which local “stakeholders” talked about it. This decision was based on an ontological position that holds forms of representation, including talk, to be not merely descriptive but also productive (or constitutive). Being especially interested in speaking with regular park users, I conducted my first interview in the fall of 2008 with Susan, a middle aged homeless woman who identified herself as First Nations. I had visited with Susan many times while observing in Galt Gardens and was looking forward to hearing what she had to say about the park. This particular interview experience, which is discussed in detail below, ended up being particularly unsettling, both personally and in terms of the direction of my thesis research. Reluctantly, I shifted my attention away from park users, and began to focus on others who would likely have an interest in the park, such as planning professionals, proximal business owners, police officers and representatives from the local homeless shelter. In total I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews between the fall of 2008 and the fall of 2009. The transcripts produced from the interviews are taken up below as texts that give meaning to the material practices implemented in the park as part of its most recent (Phase Two) revitalization.

Continuing my investigation into representations of Galt Gardens, I collected articles published in Lethbridge's leading newspaper, the *Lethbridge Herald*, between January 1, 2003 and September 21, 2009. I was primarily interested in analysing articles that described Galt Gardens' most recent revitalization. Like interview transcripts, newspaper articles were analysed, not merely as descriptive texts, but as meaningful and productive articulations of space. Although there are some notable differences between interview transcripts and newspaper articles, both may be considered as representations that work to frame and give meaning to the objects and subjects they describe. Towards the end of the thesis, special attention is given to a letter to the editor published in the January 5, 2009 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald*. I demonstrate how this letter, which is ostensibly subversive of racialized discourse, also relies on and reproduces particular discourses that produce First Nations people in the downtown as "other."

In the final stage of my thesis research I analysed the material culture associated with Galt Gardens' most recent (Phase Two) revitalization. In order to do this I relied on field notes as well as personal photographs of the park. Drawing on the work of Roland Barthes (1972), I analysed a number of large-scale representations associated with the revitalization of Galt Gardens and downtown Lethbridge. In the analysis that follows I discuss the ways in which these particular representations work to symbolically frame a revitalized park space. After looking at the murals that have recently been added to buildings surrounding the park as part of the revitalization, I went on to consider other material interventions in the park, including newly introduced benches, picnic tables, washrooms, and fountains.

The research that follows was not straightforward. Instead of adhering to a predetermined plan, I meandered a little, adjusting my methods as I went. This is not meant disparagingly, but to provide the reader with a sense of how “what I did” actually transpired. At the beginning of this project I was interested in the various representations and practices that surrounded Galt Gardens. However, rather than conceive of these representations and practices as existing separately from the park, I attempted to see them as inextricably entangled in the production of the space itself.

I add that what follows does not constitute a comprehensive account of the social production of Galt Gardens, but is an exploration, an analysis of a selection of representations, practices and material forms that work to produce Galt Gardens as a meaningful social space.

In Chapter One, I describe the research undertaken for this thesis, and attempt to clarify underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions relating to the sociological study of space. Here I discuss the conceptions of space with which I engaged with in my research, particularly as they relate to Galt Gardens. In this chapter, special attention is given to outlining Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) three moments of spatial production. In Chapter Two, I situate my research in relation to some central themes in a larger, somewhat disparate, body of relevant literature. In Chapter Three, I describe in detail the particular methods used in this study. Chapter Four marks the beginning of my findings with an analysis of the discursive construction of the revitalization of Galt Gardens. Here I focus on constructions of legitimate/illegitimate park users. Similarly, Chapter Five focuses on discursive constructions of legitimate/illegitimate park uses. In

Chapter Six, I analyse spatial practices in relation to the park, looking specifically at the material developments associated with Galt Gardens' most recent revitalization. The final chapter is dedicated to a discussion of racialized space, focusing on a particular representation of space - a letter to the editor published in the January 5, 2009 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald*.

Chapter One: Description of the Research

The purpose of this section is first to provide an introduction to some prominent scholars' work on space, specifically taking up the notions of "representations of space" and "spatial practices" (Lefebvre, 1991) as key to the conceptualisation of this research. Second, I identify and discuss how the space of Galt Gardens is analysed in my research. Throughout this section I attempt to clarify central ontological and epistemological assumptions relating to this analysis of space.

Interest in space among social scientists has grown enormously over the last three decades. Scholars such as Soja, (1980), Harvey (1989), Shields (1991), Smith (1996), Mitchell (1995) and Low (2000) have all contributed to the study of space in the social sciences. This broad area of interest has spawned a wide array of research in a number of academic disciplines including geography, anthropology, and sociology. This recent "spatial turn" owes much of its popularity to the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. His book, *The Production of Space*, presents a unified theory that attempts to reconcile physical, mental and social space. In his writings Lefebvre (1991) aimed to "to reconnect elements that have been separated . . . to rejoin the severed and reanalyse the commingled" (p. 413). As one prominent Lefebvrian scholar notes, "For Lefebvre, the realms of perception, symbolism and imagination, although distinguishable, are not separable from physical and social space" (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523).

It is from Lefebvre (1991)², and the many who have followed in his footsteps, that I take my basic ontological position regarding the character of space. In the context of

² *The Production of Space* was originally published in French in 1974 and was translated into English by Donald Nicholson-Smith in 1991.

this research, space is understood as much more than merely “the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds” (Car et al., 1993, p. 3). Rather, the spatial is understood to be fundamentally inseparable from the social. As Zukin (2002) notes, “I can’t deny the reality of such geological and geographical formations as oceans, islands or volcanoes, but . . . as soon as humans notice it, space becomes social” (p. 345). But how, more specifically, do we understand space as a social product?

Massey (1992) notes, “the issue of the conceptualization of space is of more than technical interest; it is one of the axes along which we experience and conceptualize the world” (p. 67). An examination of the literature reveals inconsistent and often times incompatible formulations of space. Indeed, a number of authors have commented on this problematic concept (see Lefebvre 1991; Soja, 1980; Shields 1991; Massy, 1992). The difficulty of “space” lies in its wide and at times diverse usage, but also in its apparent transparency and neutrality - “to question ‘space’ is to question one of the axes along which reality is conventionally defined” (Shields, 1991, p. 31). This conceptual difficulty only increases the need for elaboration and clarification.

As Foucault (1980) points out, within the social sciences space has a history of “devaluation”: while time was “richness, fecundity, life, dialectic,” space was “the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile” (p. 70). Indeed, as Razack (2002) states, such an innocuous view of space seems quite intuitive:

Space seems to us to be empty. Either we fill it with things (houses, monuments, bridges) or nature fills it with trees, a cold climate, and so on. Space in this view is innocent. A building is just a building, a forest just a forest. Urban space seems to evolve naturally. (p. 7)

It is the job of critical research to challenge such a taken-for-granted “innocent” view of space. As Razack puts it, “[t]o question how spaces come to be, and to trace what they produce as well as what produces them, is to unsettle familiar everyday notions” (p. 7).

Described as “the patron saint of the study of space” (Rogers, 2002, p. 23), Henri Lefebvre conceptualises space very differently from the idea of spatial “innocence.” In contrast to conceptions of space as a neutral container of social relations, he proposes the existence of “social space.” “Indistinguishable from mental and physical space,” social space contains “the social relations of production and reproduction” (Razack, 2002, p. 8). Lefebvre (1991) identifies three elements involved in the production of space: representations of space, spatial practice and representational space.³ That there are three elements rather than two is indicative of Lefebvre’s general distaste for binary categories. As Soja (1996) notes, “when faced with a choice confined to the either/or, Lefebvre creatively resisted by choosing instead an-Other alternative, marked by the openness of the both/and also . . . , with the “also” reverberating back to disrupt the categorical closures implicit in either/or logic” (p. 7). Thus, it is three interrelated and ultimately inseparable moments that form the “weight bearing epistemological pillar” (Merrifield, 2006, p. 109) of *The Production of Space*. At the risk of fostering abstraction, the present research focuses primarily on representations of space. Although spatial practices and, to a lesser extent, representational space, are considered, this research is primarily interested in how space gets articulated.

³ These elements correspond with conceived space, perceived space and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38), or, according to Harvey’s (1989) interpretation, imagined space, perceived space and experienced space (p. 219).

Representations of space refers to space as it is conceived, conceptualised, mapped and imposed by technocrats such as city planners, architects, social engineers and designers, all of whom “identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). It is this element of spatial production that is most emphasised in the present research. Representations of space, as Merrifield (1993) puts it, is “always a *conceived* and *abstract* space since it subsumes ideology and knowledge within its practice” (p. 523). Representations of space indicates a largely discursive realm in which spatial practices are conceptualised and given meaning. According to Harvey (1989), “representations of space encompass all of the signs and significations, codes and knowledge, that allow . . . material practices to be talked about and understood, no matter whether in terms of everyday common sense or through the sometimes arcane jargon of the academic disciplines that deal with spatial practices (engineering, architecture, geography, planning, social ecology, and the like)” (p. 218). Accordingly, the present work, complete with its own “arcane jargon,” must also be taken up self-critically as a reflexive representation of space.

To illustrate the idea of representations of space, I provide an example from my research on Galt Gardens. Last summer, as part of a larger revitalization process, a water-feature was constructed in the south-east corner of Galt Gardens Park in Lethbridge, Alberta. This water-feature, which is part of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, is real in the sense that it exists empirically in the world; it is perceivable and measurable. However, it is only through discourse that such an empirical reality is able to exist in any meaningful

sense. The following excerpt from an article in the *Lethbridge Herald* demonstrates this point:

It wasn't that long ago an idyllic scene of children splashing and playing, families picnicking and people strolling in Galt Gardens might have seemed like a hopeless fantasy. Such scenes have been a daily reality, however, since the opening in late June of the Rotary Centennial Plaza fountains. Long a popular hangout for the city's street population and largely avoided by the public, Galt Gardens is quickly becoming a popular destination thanks to the new water feature. The rapid transformation has surpassed the expectations of downtown stakeholders, said Ted Stilson, managing co-ordinator of Downtown Lethbridge. (Gauthier, 2008)

If space is understood as a kind of pre-social entity, as merely a setting, this article would naturally be understood as something that exists quite independently of Galt Gardens Park. Indeed, the report would merely constitute a more or less accurate description of the park and its recent "transformation." This research, however, conceptualises space, and the relationship between discourse and space, quite differently.

As Cooper (1999) states, "a number of writers concerned with spatial issues have turned to the study of discourse as understanding the social production of space" (p. 377). For example, Shields (1991) uses the term "social spatialisation" to refer to the "social construction of the spatial which is a formation of both discursive and non-discursive elements, practices, and processes (p. 31). Social spatialisation, says Shields, "allows us to name an object of study which encompasses both the cultural logic of the spatial and its expression and elaboration in language and more concrete actions, constructions and institutional arrangements" (p. 31). Social spatialisation brings together discourse and space, allowing the newspaper article cited above to be understood as part of a larger cultural formation that positions (or "places") certain people and activities in relation to Galt Gardens. While studying space through its representations (i.e. discursively) allows

only a partial understanding (Shields, 1991), it is an important and often overlooked method of spatial inquiry.

When considering the importance of discourse in the production of space it is useful to introduce the work of Michel Foucault. In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1995) describes discourses as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). According to Foucault, discourses are more than descriptions or classifications. Rather, discourses are constitutive - they work through the production of texts to construct meaningful social objects and subjects. Such a view is related to Lefebvre’s (1991) first moment of spatial production, “representations of space.”⁴ Drawing on the writings of Foucault (1995) and Lefebvre (1991), this research views spatial discourse as constitutive and productive rather than merely descriptive. Taking this position requires us to consider the above article (Gauthier, 2008) as a discursive representation that is as much a part of the production of Galt Gardens as the concrete and steel used in the construction of the Rotary Centennial Plaza.

Whether Gauthier’s (2008) report on Galt Gardens is accurate is not the primary concern of this research. It is, despite its degree of accuracy (or non-accuracy), a spatial discourse that relies on other discourses (e.g. a discourse of homelessness) to produce Galt Gardens as a particular space in relation to which we speak and act. This closely relates to a point made by the prominent spatial scholar Rob Shields (1991) who, in his analysis of the north-south divide in England, found that there is indeed a higher chance of becoming, and remaining, unemployed in the “North” of England than there is in the

⁴ For Shields (1999) representation of space is tantamount to “discourses *on* space” (p. 161).

“South” of England (p. 237). Here, “the myth of a ‘Divide’ . . . is associated with statistical indicators of geographical inequality” (p. 237). This “close liaison” between fact and fiction does not, however, change the fact that “these factual differences are augmented by imaginary elements” (p. 237). The point then, is not to deny the existence of real statistically demonstrable socio-geographic differences, but to emphasise the role of mythology and discourse as productive and meaningful social forces which incorporate, configure and communicate such differences in particular ways.

According to Foucault, discourses do not exist in isolation, but rely on a myriad of other intersecting discourses which affect the deployment of particular terms. In the newspaper article cited above we have the construction of Galt Gardens as a social object, but we also have the construction of other subjects. The text makes an explicit distinction between “the city’s street population” and the “public.” It is implied that there is a population of park users who are not classified as “the public.” Further, it suggests that the park has long been a popular hangout for this “non-public” and, because of this, has largely been avoided by the “public.” According to the article, it is only recently, and with the completion of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, that the public is making Galt Gardens a recreational destination, a “people place.” But the question arises, who qualifies as the public? In the article, the city’s “street population” is discursively produced as non-public. In this research, I analyse the discursive production of downtown Lethbridge and Galt Gardens along with the subjects that are produced as part of these urban spaces, through concepts such as “public,” “negative user,” “homeless” and “stakeholder” and through tropes of vulnerability, threat, productivity and leisure.

Focusing on representations of Galt Gardens in the form of newspaper articles and interview transcripts, I explore the ways in which the park's revitalization is simultaneously represented and produced through discourse. I collected articles addressing the second phase of the park's revitalization in the *Lethbridge Herald*, between January 1st, 2003 and September 21st, 2009. In addition, I conducted interviews with a number of people directly involved in the revitalization of the park, as well as with proximal business owners, representatives from the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre (LSRC), and one homeless woman.

As Margaret Rodman (1992) notes, "it is time to recognize that places, like voices, are local and multiple. For each inhabitant, a place has a unique reality, one in which meaning is shared with other people and places" (p. 643). Indeed, places are polysemic in that they are experienced and understood differently by different people. That said, Wright (2000) argues that the way in which two people experience and understand a place is more likely to coincide if they occupy a similar institutional space: "different social institutional spaces . . . translate into varying conceptions and expectations over the uses of meanings of urban space" (p. 24). Although I originally intended to interview people from diverse "institutional spaces," certain difficulties caused me to abandon my plan to interview marginalised park users.⁵ Admittedly, this decision has resulted in a silencing of dissonant voices, as well as certain gaps in the findings, which will be discussed in more detail below.

⁵ The specific difficulties of interviewing marginalized park users and the decision to abandon these interviews (as well as the effects of this decision) are discussed further in Chapter Three.

I now move to further elaborate the notion of spatial practices as it is taken up in the present work. *Spatial practices*, Lefebvre's second moment of spatial production, "refer to the physical and material flows, transfers, and interactions that occur in and across space in such a way as to assure production and social reproduction" (Harvey, 1989, p. 218). As Shields (1991) notes, "this involves the range of activities from individual routines to the creation of zones and regions for specific purposes" (p. 52). Spatial practices complicate what might otherwise be understood as a simple binary relation between conceived space and lived space. As McCann (1999) states, spatial practices continually mediate between these two forms of social space, "working within the bounds of the conceived abstract spaces of planners and architects while simultaneously being shaped and shaping individuals' perceptions and uses of space" (p. 173). Rogers (2002) interprets Lefebvre's spatial practices as "the materialized, socially-produced space that exists empirically. It is directly sensible or perceivable - open to measurement and description. It is both the medium and the outcome of human activity, behaviour and experience" (p. 29). In this research, spatial practices were identified primarily through participant observations. Spatial practices analysed as part of this research include recently built and redesigned public benches, recently removed public benches, the Rotary Centennial Plaza, public washrooms, and a number of historical murals.

Representational Space, Lefebvre's (1991) final moment of spatial production, is perhaps the most difficult to grasp.⁶ Indeed, it has even been suggested that in order to

⁶ Shields (1999) prefers the term "spaces of representation" to "representational space" (p. 161).

fully comprehend this “thirdspace,” one must abandon traditional ways of thinking (Soja, 1996). According to Lefebvre, representational space refers to “space as it is directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” (p. 39). Spaces of representation are “alive.” As Merrifield (2006) puts it, “they don’t involve too much head: they’re felt more than thought (p. 110). In short, representational space is the “space of the body, of everyday life, of desire, of difference . . . of Anti-Logos” (Merrifield, 1995, p. 297). Shields (1999) describes it as “space *as it might be*, fully lived space (*l’espace vécu*) which bursts forth as . . . ‘moments’ of presence” (p. 161).⁷

Here we have, in its general form, Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad. *The Production of Space* is considered by most to be a difficult read. As Merrifield (1995) notes, “Lefebvre’s tantalizing vague writing style - which is loose, episodic and frequently prolix - further compounds the inaccessibility of the text” (p. 295). It is, however, at least in part, this “tantalizing vague writing style” that makes Lefebvre so appealing to social thinkers interested in the study of space. Rather than a rigid typology, Lefebvre provides a complex and useful, if somewhat undeveloped, way of thinking about space. It is from Lefebvre that I take my basic ontological position regarding the character of space. As is hopefully by now clear, in the context of this research, space is understood to be fundamentally inseparable from the social; it is always at once conceived, perceived and lived.

⁷ For a discussion on “‘moments’ of presence” see Chapter Five of Shields’ (1999) book *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (p. 53).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the concept of “place” and, more specifically, how it is understood in relation to “space.” There has been much discussion among spatial thinkers concerning the difference between space and place. In a section entitled “what space is not,” Gieryn (2000) states, “place is not space - which is more properly conceived as abstract geometries (distance, direction, size, shape, volume) detached from material form and cultural interpretation” (p. 465). For Gieryn, “space is what place becomes when the unique gathering of things, meanings, and values are sucked out” (p. 465). A similar understanding is expressed by Tuan (1974) who states, “place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning” (p. 213). For Tuan, “place . . . constitutes a substantial dialectical opposite to the cosmic emptiness of space” (Olwig, 2001, p. 93). However, while some have invested their work in ensuring a meaningful delineation between space and place, others have rejected such space/place antagonisms, viewing space and place as ultimately part of the same productive process. According to Merrifield (1993), place is the “moment” when the conceived, the perceived and the lived attain a certain “structured coherence” (p. 525). They are not two antagonistic, or even separate, entities. Rather, space and place are “different aspects of a unity” (Merrifield, 1993, p. 527). Drawing on Merrifield’s “Lefebvrian reconciliation” of space and place, I understand place to be, in a sense, the local enactment of space. As Merrifield explains, “what is conceived in thought expresses a specific representation of space, but this is actualized materially only in place.” (p. 525). It is for this reason that it is best to start with a particular place when theorising

space (Merrifield, 1993, p. 527). In my research I took Galt Gardens, and to a lesser extent downtown Lethbridge, as empirical starting points (i.e. places) for theorising space.

Before discussing the production of these places in particular, I situate my research within a larger body of literature on space.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Scholars from a variety of academic backgrounds have contributed to a growing body of literature on space and place. In this section I review some of the theoretical underpinnings of the field as well as some relevant research on space and place that has been done over the last three decades, beginning with a brief introduction to modernist planning practices and moving to a discussion of more socio-cultural perspectives on the city. I conclude the chapter by identifying some common themes that help tie together what is a somewhat disparate body of literature, and indicate how my research and findings address them.

Modernity and Planning

When discussing modernist planning it is difficult to overstate the significance of the French urban planner Baron Haussmann. Indeed, Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris in the 1860's has become one of the most cited examples of modernist planning. It is thanks to Haussmann, writes Sennett (1970), "that we owe the impetus to urban reform that has come to dominate our own era" (p. 88). A year after a military coup had established the Second Empire in France, Haussmann was recruited by the recently elected Napoleon III to "modernize" the capital city. At this time Paris was an immense maze of narrow streets and allegedly dilapidated buildings, which made transportation slow and difficult. As Sennett notes, "especially frightening to the political authorities was the fact that there was no way of controlling the workers in case of civil insurrection, since the twisted streets were perfect for setting up impromptu barricades" (p. 70). It was this concern, and memories of the difficult military suppression of 1848, that inspired Haussmann's

strategic building of the new boulevards - wide, straight “public” avenues designed to permit military access and bypass barricades (Harvey, 2006, p. 20). However, according to Harvey, military domination was only “a minor aspect of what the new boulevards were about” (p. 20). They were also “public investments designed to prime the pump of private profit in the wake of the serious economic recession of 1847-1849” (Harvey, 2006, p. 21).

What makes Haussmann’s reconstruction of Paris decidedly modern is its abstract⁸ order, an order that, according to Lefebvre (1991), is itself a product of a particular society or, more specifically, mode of production (p. 31). Far from being anomalous, Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris constitutes only one of many examples of the “modern spirit” (Le Corbusier, 1971, p. 220). In *The City of To-morrow and its Planning* Le Corbusier (1971) clearly articulates this spirit, advocating for the construction of geometrical machine-like cities. Interestingly Le Corbusier’s utopian city was not a redeveloped pre-existing city, but an altogether new one:

WE MUST BUILD ON A CLEAR SITE. *The city of to-day is dying because it is not constructed geometrically. To build on a clear site is to replace the “accidental” lay-out of the ground, the only one that exists to-day, by the formal layout. Otherwise nothing can save us.* (1971, p. 220, original emphasis)

Le Corbusier’s dream nearly came true with the construction of Brasília. Although not directly involved in the building of the new capital, Le Corbusier’s ideas greatly influenced its design (Scott, 1998, p. 118). As per his (1971) declaration, Brasília was built “on a clear site” (p. 220), unhampered by social history and urban disorder.

⁸ According to Lefebvre (1991), abstract space is constituted by three mutually constitutive/concealing elements: *the geometric formant*, *the optical (or visual) formant*, and *the phallic formant* (p. 285 - 287). Being products of the the same historical process the three formants “imply one another and conceal one another” (p. 285).

Designed by Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, Brasília has come to be a primary example of a modernist city.⁹ Despite (or perhaps because of) its architectural “rationality” (characterised by repetition, uniformity and efficiency), Brasília was not the utopia its designers had imagined. As Scott (1998) notes, “the real Brasília, as opposed to the hypothetical Brasília in the planning documents, was greatly marked by resistance, subversion, and political calculation” (p. 130).

In her critique of the planning practices of Le Corbusier, writer and activist Jane Jacobs posed a groundbreaking rupture in modernist planning. In the midst of “a high tide of modernism” (Scott, 1998, p. 132) Jacobs published what has come to be one of the most famous critiques of modernist urban planning. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she criticises the modernist planning practices of Haussmann, Le Corbusier and Costa. For Jacobs, “their most fundamental error was their entirely aesthetic view of order” (Scott, 1998, p. 132). Jacobs rejects an aesthetically motivated “bird’s-eye view” of the city, focusing instead on the functioning of quotidian spaces, such as parks, sidewalks and neighbourhoods.¹⁰ For Jacobs, space is not an abstraction that can be superimposed overtop complex and always changing social worlds. “The very jumble of activities, buildings, and people - the apparent *disorder* that offended the aesthetic eye of the planner - was for Jacobs the sign of dynamic vitality” (Scott, 1998, p. 137).

⁹ For a detailed analysis of Brasília see James Holston’s (1989) book, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*.

¹⁰ To put it in terms outlined in this thesis, it could be argued that Jacobs criticizes modernist representations of space by focusing on spatial practices, those intricate “place ballets” (Shields, 1991, p. 53) that are a fundamental part of the production of space.

Despite what appear to be trends away from modernist planning, such as that expressed by Jacobs, some of the central tenets of modernism remain in many efforts to construct spaces. For example, the ability to control public behaviour in spaces in terms of a larger organisational schema remains a priority in urban planning. As will be demonstrated in the analysis of a small park in southern Alberta, modernist priorities continue to find expression both in language and in the built environment.

Studies on Social Spatialisation

As an introduction to *Places on the Margin* Shields (1991) establishes the epistemic and ontological importance of the spatial. He suggests that “a ‘discourse of space’ composed of perceptions of places and regions, of the world as a ‘space’ and of our relationship with these perceptions are central to our everyday conceptions of ourselves and of reality” (p. 7). While it is true that space has long been an element of sociological enquiry, it has rarely been the focus of such enquiry. Shields describes his book as one of “reappraisals and re-readings of the taken-for-granted, which sets out to cover a great deal of terrain and to produce a workable mapping of the cultural importance of the spatial” (p. 10). It is important to recognise that Shields sees his project as a fully sociological one. Instead of examining individual perceptions and motivations, he is interested in the “socially-maintained *reputation*” of places and regions (p. 14).

An individual’s subjective mental image of a particular scene is not merely a personal reflection of the *real* world (Shields, 1991, p. 13). Rather, there exists a strong element of intersubjectivity that requires sociological investigation. Shields is interested in researching the “culturally mediated reception of *representations* of environments,

places or regions which are ‘afloat in society’ as ‘ideas in currency’” (p. 14). For him, a fundamental question is, how does “the shared character of lived experience and meaning” come to be shared?” (p. 16). Or, in other words, “how is it that reality is constructed socially by and for us such that meanings and meaningful experiences the emotional affect of a place can be communicated?” (p. 20).

Although Shields (1991) tends to avoid using the word “space” (due to its “wide range of conflicting usages” (p. 30)), he does provide a succinct definition of this famously ambiguous term: “a space,” says Shields, “denotes a limited area: a site, zone, or place characterised by specific social activities with a culturally given identity (name) and image” (p. 31). For Shields, a more useful term is “social spatialisation,” which has already been defined as “the ongoing social construction of the spatial at the level of the social imaginary (collective mythologies, presuppositions) as well as interventions in the landscape (for example, the built environment)” (p. 31). Shields illustrates social spatialisation by presenting four detailed case-histories: Brighton (a resort town on the southern coast of England), Niagara Falls, the Canadian north, and northern England. Rather than provide a detailed summary of Shields’ work on each of these places, I focus on the argument they serve to illustrate. I also outline some core concepts helpful to understanding the theoretical framework used in my own research.

A place image refers to a set of “core images” that forms a “widely disseminated and commonly held set of images of a place or space” (Shields, 1991, p. 60). Place-images usually come about through oversimplification, stereotyping, and labelling (p. 47).

As Shields notes, “images, being partial and often either exaggerated or understated, may be accurate or inaccurate” (p. 60). Taken collectively, a group of place-images generates a *place-myth*. Place or space-myths are not static; as the core images of a particular place or space lose their connotative power, new place images emerge. This, in turn, results in altered place or space-myths (p. 61). This is demonstrated by Shields in his discussion of the “changing mytho-poetic position of Niagara Falls” (p. 156). According to him, the falls have changed from being a “remote, exotic Shrine, an icon of the sublime, through being a concretisation of moral values, to a liminal site of *rites de passage* and, lately, a confused site of spectacle and consumption” (p. 156).

Shields (1991) recognises that opposed groups may generate antithetical place myths. However, his emphasis is on the general process of spatialisation as significant in its own right. “Spatialisation,” says Shields, “must, to some extent, cross class, ethnic and even ‘cultural’ lines in the form of basic perceptions and orientations to the world if there is to be the maintenance of a basic sociability between these groups” (p. 62). While Shields acknowledges the possibility of group-specific place-myths (e.g. Japanese vs. North American spatialisations of Niagara falls), his focus is on the ways in which dominant hegemonic discourse produces and reinforces a unified place-myth through specific place-imagery (p. 62). As Shields notes, “the focus of attention here is the logic of common spatial perceptions accepted in a culture. This interest directs us away from perception studies of the subjective and idiosyncratic to the social level of collective myth and the culturally-regular/regulated affects accompanying spatial concepts” (p. 29).

Place, however, is more than mythology and discourse; place is also the cultural practice of mythology and discourse. Shields (1991) emphasises this point towards the end of the first chapter:

[A]n overarching order of space, or social spatialisation, is reproduced in concrete forms as a practice *upon* the world. It restates as well as reproduces ‘discourses of space’ which constitute it. In this manner, spatialisation is theorized to operate as a Foucauldian *dispositif* or formation. (p. 65)

Shields describes spatialisation as “a constellation of myths and images” that act as guiding metaphors for “practices of space and regimes of thought” (p. 256). Place-myths and images work to orient embodied individuals in the real world in relation to and often in spite of *real* spatial conditions. It is important to note that Shields does not suggest that place-myths and images are necessarily unrelated or antithetical to spatial “realities.” To illustrate this, I return to Shields’ analysis of the north-south divide in England, which demonstrated that those living in “the North” of England were more likely to be unemployed than those in “the South” (p. 237). While Shields acknowledges these spatial differences as real and with material consequences, he sees the place-myth as a salient social force:

the myths were not simple fictions but related in a complex manner with tangible conditions. In many cases, the images accentuated those conditions; in others, the images became self-fulfilling prophecies which were incorporated into the logic of concrete arrangements of space (e.g. architecture and urban plans) over time. (p. 245)

The question then arises, what is the status of the spatial in terms of causation?

Shields (1991) is careful not to extend causal powers directly to the spatial: “it would be a mistake to fetishise ‘space’ *per se* as a locus of causal relations except where spatialisation has social impacts as an element of belief” (p. 57). In *Places on the Margin*

spatialisation is “exemplified as a causative cultural formation, a concrete abstract, *more* than a ‘contingent effect’ or contentless abstraction to be ignored, but less than a causal force” (p. 259). Thus, as Shields contends, “rather than ‘a cause’ the spatial is *causative*” (p. 57). Ultimately, it is human agency that has causal power, not spaces. The spatial is causative in the sense that it persuades or influences human agents to do the actual causing. Human agency actualises spatial images and myths. Thus, human agents cause through thought as well as practice. Shields (1991) describes the ways in which this kind of causative force operates in the way people act:

The manner in which spatialisation is most visible is in spatial practices and in the connotations people associate with places and regions in everyday talk. One notices the spatial metaphors people use, but it is when people attribute certain characteristics to a place and then make a decision – such as whether or not to go there – on this basis that talk becomes deed. (p. 47)

Revealed in Shield’s claim here is not only an account of how spatialisation might work, but also a means by which spatialisation might be investigated.

Drawing on the theoretical contributions of Shields (1991), Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1989), Matthew Cooper (1999) finds “social spatialization” to be a particularly useful concept for thinking about the discursive production of the Toronto waterfront. In his discussion of this term, Cooper states that, “[t]hrough spatial discourses, people elaborate ideologies of place, which variously and ambiguously help/lead/force them to think and act in certain ways” (p. 378). What Cooper refers to as the “re-imagining of the Toronto waterfront” began with the creation of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (RCFTW) in 1988. Appointed by the Government of Canada, the purpose of the RCFTW was to assuage growing controversy by investigating future

development of the Toronto waterfront. Over the three years of its operation the RCFTW published a number of documents, including 15 major discussion papers, two interim reports, 11 working papers, 12 technical papers and a final report (p. 386). Through these texts the royal commission effectively re-presented the waterfront through a discourse of bioregionalism. In turn, these representations paved the way for material interventions in the landscape, such as trail construction and habitat restoration (p. 394). As Cooper argues, the bioregionalist re-production of the Toronto waterfront effectively created a “new social spatialization” (p. 394).

Cooper (1999) separates “Western spatial discourses” into two general categories, *transcendental* and *humanistic* (p. 379). “Transcendental discourses ground their analysis and prescriptions in allegedly universal and immutable characteristics of the world or being. Humanistic ones ground theirs in human characteristics, needs, and aspirations, however conceived” (p. 379). What is interesting about the spatial discourse of bioregionalism is that, according to Cooper, it constitutes a departure from both of these categories. As Cooper notes, bioregionalism “defines place in terms of natural characteristics, derived from the universalizing discourse of science” (p. 395). That said, bioregionalism rejects the dualism between the “natural” and the “human”: “[t]he bioregion, in its very physical nature, is constituted both by natural forces and by human activity” (p. 395). Cooper concludes his chapter on a somewhat optimistic note, positioning bioregionalism in an advantaged position. In contrast to transcendental and humanistic discourses, bioregionalism allows the simultaneous consideration of planning, environmental, economic, and social issues. Cooper effectively demonstrates the

importance of spatial discourses in the production of social space. However, his analysis lacks attention to contestation. While he provides a detailed and useful description of the “re-imagining” of the Toronto waterfront through bioregionalist discourse, he gives little attention to the presence of counter-discourses or acts of resistance. Other scholars, such as Stillerman (2006) and Mitchell (1995) have taken contestation as their starting point.

Contested Spaces

Above, I described Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris as an example of modernist planning. In *The Political Economy of Public Space* Harvey (2006) goes beyond a discussion of architecture and design to discuss what he calls the “secondary effects” of Haussmann’s boulevards (Harvey, 2006, p. 21). Drawing on the work of Sennett (1978), Harvey (2006) claims that “Haussmann set about a process of ‘embourgeoisement’ of the city center” (p. 21). Harvey’s argument is part of a larger body of literature describing the “end of public space” (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006). This growing literature which includes Davis (1990), Sorkin (1992), Mitchell (1995) to name a few, is united by the same question that Lefebvre (1996) posed forty years ago: “who has the right to the city?” (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006, p. 144).

“As cities have redeveloped,” says Mitchell & Staeheli (2006), “public space has become a key battleground over the homeless and the poor and over the rights of developers, corporations, and those who seek to make over the city in an image attractive to tourists, middle- and upper-class residents, and suburbanites” (p. 144). In his look at 19th century Paris, Harvey (2006) contends that Haussmann’s interventions effectively

transformed Paris' boulevards into a fundamentally different kind of "public space," one that was connected to commercial space, and therefore exclusionary:

The café (an exclusive commercial space) and the boulevard (the public space) form a symbiotic whole in which each validates the other. But this presumes that the public space can be properly controlled. The poor, no matter how "worthy," must be excluded from it just as they are from the café. (p. 21)

According to Harvey, the poor were excluded from Haussmann's "spectacular" boulevards through both a process of "embourgeoisement" that included the removal of industrial activities (and the associated class) from the city centre and a fundamental reorganisation of public/private space (p. 21).¹¹ Thus, the boulevards had the temporary effect of hiding "the other" behind "the fetish of the commodity, as well as within the folds of the urban crowd" (Harvey, 2006, p. 29). the hiding of the other is ultimately temporary, says Harvey, because "the eyes of the poor would not be everted. Nor could they be sent away . . . the spectacle of the commodity may mask, but it can never erase, the raw facts of class relations" (p. 31).

In his widely cited article, *The End of Public Space*, Mitchell (1995) argues that increased privatisation and control of public space decreases the possibilities for democratic action. He begins his analysis with a description of the turmoil that began on August 1, 1991 when 20 activists, hoping to stop the redevelopment of People's Park in Berkeley California, were confronted by police. It was not long before the surrounding streets became a battleground between police and those opposed to the park's redevelopment: "Police repeatedly fired wooden and putty bullets into crowds and reports

¹¹ This process has been described elsewhere as the transformation "from public space to pseudo-private property" (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006, p. 153).

of police brutality were widespread . . . but neither did protestors refrain from violence, heaving rocks and bottles filled with urine at the police” (p. 108). For protestors, the park was politically valued as a refuge from the private control of the larger urban landscape (p. 109). For representatives of the University of California the park was a space plagued by what they understood as inappropriate, “criminal” activities: “the evident disorder of the park invited criminality and excluded legitimate, ‘representative’ users. Illegitimate behaviour, coupled with the scruffy appearance of the park, confirmed that People’s Park was a space that had to be reclaimed and redefined for ‘an appropriate public’” (p. 110).

Similar themes are explored by Mitchell & Staeheli (2006) in their analysis of public space, property redevelopment, and homelessness in San Diego. However, following the lead of Blomley (2004) and Waldron (1991), they give special attention to “the relationship between *property* and public space in redevelopment” (p. 145). It is *that* relationship, say Mitchell & Staeheli, that determines the fate of homeless people (p. 145). In other words, instead of understanding privatisation in “metaphorical terms - as a stand-in for a more general process of exclusion or a limiting of access” the authors examine “the nature of property itself” (p. 148). The relationship between public space, private space, property, and the rights of homeless people is discussed in more detail below.

Stillerman (2006), another scholar interested in contested urban space, uses ethnographic, interview, and documentary data to analyse the spatial politics of street markets in Santiago, Chile. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Lefebvre (1991), Stillerman investigates the relationship between *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived space*,

which correspond with *spatial practice*, *representations of space* and *representational space*, as defined in Chapter One. In addition to one-hundred and twenty hours of participant and non-participant observation, Stillerman carried out twenty-four formal interviews with legal street vendors (*feriantes*), scholars, government researchers, and marketing professionals. Further, he “visited websites and collected relevant newspaper articles, marketing studies, government data and studies, and NGO reports” (p. 515). Stillerman found that Santiago’s street vendors protest encroaching *abstract space* through spatial adaptation – a restructuring of *lived spaces* (p. 527). He uses Lefebvre’s term *abstract space* to denote space that is constructed by the political elite. This term exists in relation to *lived space* which refers to the space of experience. Stillerman associates the rise of big box supermarkets with the growth of abstract space and demonstrates how vendors, through local actions, penetration of state and international agencies, and discursive critiques of state policies, seek to defend and reconstruct lived spaces (p. 527).

It is easy to recognise the contested nature of a space when bottles are being thrown and bullets are being fired; but what about public spaces that have not seen such violent forms of resistance? Low (2003) argues that, although material settings of resistance are important, “the contest over public space is also about . . . meaning, which reflects differences in a war of cultural values and visions of appropriate behaviour and social order” (p. 128). In her nuanced analysis of the South American plaza, Low (2000) examines contestation by considering the use, design and meaning of Parque Central and Plaza de la Cultura in San José, Costa Rica.

Low (2000) makes a distinction between two conceptions that are often used interchangeably in the social sciences, the *social production* and the *social construction* of space:

The *social production of space* includes all those factors - social, economic, ideological, and technological - that result, or seek to result, in the physical creation of the material setting. The materialist emphasis of the term *social production* is useful in defining the historical emergence and political/economic formation of urban space. The term *social construction* may then be conveniently reserved for the phenomenological and symbolic experience of space as mediated by social processes such as exchange, conflict, and control. (p. 128)

As noted above, the materialist most famous for his emphasis on the *social production* of space is Henri Lefebvre (1991). It is important to note that what Low calls the *social construction* of space does not go unaccounted for in Lefebvre's theory of spatial production. While Lefebvre focuses on political and economic production, he considers the lived, phenomenological component to be of equal importance. Indeed, it is Lefebvre's contention that these realms can never be fully separated. Low addresses this concern, acknowledging the illusory nature of the categories she constructs: "I agree with Henri Lefebvre (1991) that social space is a whole and that any one event or illustration has within it aspects of that whole" (p. 130). While Low and Lefebvre both rely on "partially illusory" categories for the purpose of analysis, they both recognise the complex and contradictory nature of these categories.¹²

Karen Wells (2007) adapts Lefebvre's (1991) triadic theorisation of space to study "objects and ways of seeing in cities" (p. 136). Wells discusses *representations of space* in relation to the material culture of cities. More specifically, she looks at "how

¹² As will be demonstrated, in this work it is also necessary to rely on these insufficient though still useful categories.

governments materialize their rule on the organization of surveillance of urban space and the erection of monuments and memorials” (p. 138). Wells is interested in power as “a thing that some people have and others lack” (p. 139) and contends that the recent proliferation of (what she takes to be) Foucauldian interpretations of power have obscured the power of the state and its role in the production of urban landscapes. It is the state, says Wells, that has the capacity to “render its vision concrete in the built environment,” and in this way it is able to “penetrate and organize” public life (p. 140). In other words, drawing on a Marxist framework, Wells is primarily concerned with state power as it is constituted in urban material forms.

Wells (2007) claims to provide a way of analysing space that avoids reducing it to *text*. For her, *textual* analyses of space evade questions regarding the “specificity of the material and visual dimensions of urban culture” (p. 137). Lefebvre (1991) expresses a similar concern: “Any attempt to use [literary] codes as a means of deciphering social space must surely reduce that space itself to the status of *message*, and the inhabiting of it to the status of reading” (p. 7). Lefebvre is far more interested in the productive processes that work to produce social space. Following Lefebvre, Wells contends that an “analysis of things and images” can reveal the power relations that actively structure urban life (p. 138). Indeed, space has physicality; it is constituted by material forms such as benches, walls, buildings, and monuments. According to Wells, such materials act as conduits of state power.

As noted above, Wells (2007) makes a point of distancing herself from what she takes to be Foucauldian understandings of power “as a kind of force that flows between

people” (p. 139). Here it can be argued that Wells is in fact distancing herself, not from Foucault per se, but from a particular discursive construction of Foucault as an “idealist,” or as a textual reductionist. (The later Foucault placed particular emphasis on the production of “power” and “truth” through discursive practices, in a manner somewhat similar to Dorothy Smith, in “The Social Construction of Documentary Reality”). While ostensibly distancing herself from Foucault (as “idealist”), Wells goes on to allude to his famous analysis of the panopticon:

The monument may be considered as a concrete panopticon. Of course the monument cannot see the subject but nonetheless it reminds the subject that he or she can be seen and of the consequences of being seen. In the monuments memorializing of people and events, people are reminded that their selves and their actions can be captured and inscribed in stone. (pp. 139-140)

Interestingly, Wells uses the term “panopticon” rather than panopticon, and thus avoids acknowledging Foucault in her brief discussion of the relationship between monuments and surveillance.

While not traditionally thought of as a spatial theorist, Foucault is increasingly cited for his reflections on space (Massey, 1992, p. 65). Indeed, it is Foucault (1986) who stated that “the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time” (p. 23). “Disciplines,” remarks Foucault (1977), “embody specific power arrangements that allow for the “meticulous control of the operations of the body” (p. 137); they produce bodies that may be “subjected, used, transformed and improved” (p. 136). In short, disciplines produce what Foucault has called “docile bodies.” Foucault contends that this process involves a particular distribution of bodies in space. While Foucault discusses power and space in relation to particular institutions (i.e.

hospitals, prisons, schools, and factories), his insights have been applied more generally to the study of urban space (see Rabinow, 1989; Holston, 1989). As Low (2000) contends, “[Foucault] examines the relationship of power and space by posing architecture as a political ‘technology’ for working out the concerns of government - that is control and power over individuals - through the spatial ‘canalization’ of everyday life” (p. 129).

Other scholars have used a more general Foucauldian framework to study urban spaces. For example, Gur (2002) focuses on Sultanahmet, Istanbul to illustrate how discourse is spatialised and, specifically, how urban space can be reconstructed through discourse. Gur begins this article by providing a definition of spatialisation that aligns closely with that of Shields (1991):

Spatialisation as a term puts space at the centre of the arguments on dialectical relations between power, knowledge, discourse, and representation and inserts space into social thought and imagination. In so doing, it helps us to explain the manner in which social and spatial relations are mutually inclusive and constitutive of each other and how society and space are simultaneously realised by thinking, experiencing, and making social actors. (p. 237)

In contrast to Wells (2007), Gur finds Foucault’s understandings of power, knowledge and discourse to be useful, rather than detrimental, to investigations of material form and power.

Gur (2002) defines representation as a “space-bound concept that is first embedded in language and then in the institutions of culture and political domain” (p. 239). Representation does not constitute simply a more or less accurate reflection of the real world. Rather, representations are implicit in constructing lived experience. As Gur (2002) puts it, “each representation is involved in a process that continuously constructs

and reconstructs the borders and the framework of what is real and what is to be expected from what is real. In other words, it constructs the way in which we should act toward what is real” (p. 239). Gur’s study “approaches urban space as the materialization of discursive representations, of power struggles through using the means of architecture” (p. 239). He focuses on the Sultanahmet district in Istanbul, viewing it as an “archival space,” a material manifestation of different historical discursive representations. In other words, the district’s architectural structures, taken as discourse, are analysed as evidence of larger historical-political developments. Gur, however, is not advocating a simple causal relationship between political discourses and architectural structures: “an urban space or a building with its historical attributes becomes simultaneously both the cause and the result of the knowledge or discourse of the productive process” (p. 249).

Combining the work of Lefebvre and Foucault, Gur (2002) conceptualises urban space as the “materialization of discursive representations, of power struggles through using the means of architecture” (p. 240). However, rather than engaging in a unidimensional reading of spatial forms, Gur analyses historical-material representations as discourses in the context of Lefebvre’s three moments of spatial production. The result is an analysis of social space that focuses on discursive representations while at the same time recognising this to be only part of a larger dialectical process. While Gur (2002) focuses on material evidences he does not do so at the expense of the experiential or mental realm: “to understand how urban space is materialised and experienced, one should look into how urban space is constituted in the mental realm” (p. 242).

Pfeiffer (2006) uses critical discourse analysis to investigate the ways in which elites use discourse to displace public housing tenants and carry out redevelopment plans. Her research was conducted in Cabrini Green, an African-American public housing community in Chicago. She contends that residents of Cabrini Green were displaced from their homes both physically and discursively. Specifically, Pfeiffer discusses the renaming of neighbourhoods as a form of discursive displacement. According to Pfeiffer, “developers and city officials alter neighborhood names to foster a private landscape that excludes low-income minorities and constructs a space comprised of racial, rather than class, diversity” (p. 52). Pfeiffer goes on to discuss the disparity between negative media representations of Cabrini Green and *real* neighbourhood conditions. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) used a neo-liberal narrative to portray the redevelopment of Cabrini Green as empowering to residents. As Pfeiffer notes, “this narrative is convenient for CHA because it stipulates that social mobility occurs through altering one’s behaviour, and that poverty is a consequence of antisocial choices” (p. 58). According to Pfeiffer, “public housing redevelopment accentuates poverty by denying residents “safe, decent and affordable housing” (p. 58). Interestingly, Pfeiffer found that residents of Cabrini Green were able to successfully contest elite discursive strategies by subversively framing the proposed redevelopment project as a “human rights crisis.” Recognising their discursive power as political citizens, the residents of Cabrini Green fought fire with fire. In this way they were able to stall demolition and remain in their homes.

Conlon (2004) provides an account of the social production of Christopher Park, a small public park located in Greenwich village, New York. Conlon’s main argument is

that Christopher Park is best understood, not as a stable “queer space,” but as a “polemic process” of contestation (p. 463). More specifically, she argues that “despite the historical accounts and monuments marking this area as gay turf, there is a present and pervasive reiteration of heteronormativity” (p. 467). Conlon draws on both Lefebvre’s productive view of space and Butler’s theory of performativity to construct a unique and insightful theoretical framework. It is Conlon’s contention that while Lefebvre recognises “the mutual constitution of bodies and space, bodies that are gendered and have sexual identities get short shrift in his analysis” (p. 464). By incorporating Butler’s theory of performativity, Conlon attempts to “extend the reach of Lefebvre’s theoretical work, as well as that of queer theory, by exploring a queer theorization of social space:”

Butler’s analysis of identity as performative parallels Lefebvre’s productive view of space. Each theorist proposes that institutional knowledge, or alternatively, in the terms proffered by Lefebvre and Butler respectively: ‘representations of space / *discourses*’, constrain the gendered/sexed production of the social spaces of everyday life and operate to produce ‘concrete abstractions/*the citation of norms*’. (p. 464)

However, Conlon concedes that the theories of Lefebvre and Butler do not “make for a seamless coupling” (p. 465). While Lefebvre (1991) emphasises political economic forces, Butler is primarily concerned with the productive nature of discourse. For Butler, “discourse is viewed as having material effects that cannot be separated from the construction of identity and social reality. As such, discourse and materiality are bound up together” (p. 465). By drawing on the work of Butler, Conlon is able to emphasise the relationship between space and identity. As she states, “Butler’s discursive analysis explicates the materializing effects of discourses, and to this I would add representations, on identity” (p. 465). While Conlon is primarily concerned with sexual identity, her

framework is also useful for understanding the relationship between space and race. It is this relationship that we turn to next.

The Postcolonial City

In her study of the social construction of Aboriginal people in relation to urban space Peters' (1996) analyses four books written by non-Aboriginal people in Canada. Peters finds that "aboriginal people are confronted again and again with explicit or implicit messages that cities are not where they belong as people with vibrant and living cultures" (p. 60). Peters' research is part of a larger body of literature that addresses the close and intricate relationship between the construction of the "other" and space (Said, 1978; Sibley 1981). What distinguishes Peters' research, and makes it particularly relevant to my own, is its focus on the relationship between Aboriginal people and urban space in Canada. Although there has been much research done on postcolonialism, "the recognition of the city as a postcolonial space has been limited" (Blomley, 2004, p. 108). The present research helps to fill this lacuna by analysing the ways in which Aboriginal people are constructed in relation to downtown city space.

Blomely's (2004) work is particularly relevant to the present research for two reasons. First, he is interested in the colonial encounter as a process that is continually played out through contemporary city space. Second, unlike much of the work on the "postcolonial city" (Jacobs, 1996), Blomley focuses on a Canadian city, namely Vancouver, British Columbia. Although Lethbridge and Vancouver are, in many ways very different urban spaces, they are both Western Canadian cities that share a history of colonialism, dispossession and displacement of Aboriginal peoples. Blomley contends,

“to the extent that the lands upon which colonial settlements were established were held, in some form, by indigenous peoples, the settler city requires their dispossession” (p. 109). At the same time, however, he rejects the assumption that dispossession has resulted in the erasure of indigenous people from city space (p. 109). The distinction between dispossession and displacement is important to Blomley’s (2004) analysis. While dispossession is “the specific processes through which settlers came to acquire title to land historically held by aboriginal people,” displacement refers to “the conceptual removal of aboriginal people from the city, and the concomitant ‘emplacement’ of white settlers” (p. 109). Blomely (2004) rejects the notion that these processes are of the past. For him, “Both dispossession and displacement were, and still are, vital to the making of the settler-city” (p. 109).

Taken together, the processes of dispossession and the process displacement produce something which resembles what Razack (2002) refers to as a “white settler society.” According to Razack, such a society is created through “the dispossession and near extermination of indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans” (p. 1). Like Blomley (2004), Razack focuses on postcolonial experiences in a Canadian context. Specifically, she explores “gendered racial violence and the continued colonization of Aboriginal people” in Canada by focusing on the murder of Pamela George.

On April 17, 1995, Pamela George, an Aboriginal woman and mother of two who occasionally worked as a prostitute, was brutally murdered in Regina, Saskatchewan (p. 123). The two murderers, Alex Ternowetsky and Steven Kummerfield, were young middle-class White men, both of whom played on university sports teams. Two years

after the murder a trial was held in which both men were convicted of manslaughter. Many people, both Aboriginal and White, felt that the conviction was unjustly “soft” given the brutal nature of the crime. While Razack stresses the injustice of the case, she does not explain this injustice solely in terms of patriarchal violence: “I deliberately write against those who would agree that this case is about an injustice but would de-race the violence and the law’s response to it, labeling it as a generic patriarchal violence against women, violence that the law routinely minimizes” (p. 126). Razack goes on to say that “the men’s and the court’s capacity to dehumanize Pamela George came from their understanding of her as the (gendered) racial other whose degradation confirmed their own identities as white - that is, as men entitled to the land and the full benefits of citizenship” (p. 126). So, while issues of race, social position, and gender were largely treated as non-issues throughout the trial (p. 155), it is Razack’s contention that these factors are inseparable from both the murder of Pamela George and the legal proceedings that followed.

As Razack (2002) states, “the encounter between the white men and Pamela George was fully colonial - a making of the white, masculine self as dominant through practices of violence directed at a colonized women” (p. 128). The violence inflicted on Pamela George was, according to Razack, an enactment of a “quite specific violence perpetrated on Aboriginal bodies throughout Canada’s history” (p. 129). It is a violence that has “not only enabled white settlers to secure the land *but to come to know themselves as entitled to it*” (p. 129).

Razack (2002) includes a historical analysis to support her claim that the events of April 17, 1995 were indeed shaped by colonialism. Moreover, in describing Canada's colonial history, she calls attention to the ways in which race is spatialised: "racist ideologies and their accompanying spatial practices (confinement on reserves for example) facilitate the nearly absolute geographical separation of the colonizer and the colonized" (p. 129). Further, it is important to note that the end of what Razack refers to as the colonial era did not mark the end of racialized segregation in Canada.

the segregation of urban space replaces these earlier spatial practices: slum administration replaces colonial administration. The city belongs to the settlers and the sullyng of civilized society through the presence of the racial Other in white space gives rise to a careful management of boundaries within urban space. (p. 129)

In short, Razack contends that "the spatial configuration of the nineteenth century and the social hierarchies it both engenders and sustains remain firmly embedded in the white Canadian psyche and in social and economic institutions" (p. 133).

The concept of spatialized justice refers to "the values that deem certain bodies and subjects in specific spaces as undeserving of full personhood" (p. 126). In her discussion of spatialized justice Razack notes the salience of race as a determining factor. Race, says Razack, "overdetermined what brought Pamela George *and her murderers* to this brutal encounter. Equally, race overdetermined the court's verdict that the men bore diminished culpability for their actions" (p. 126). The stroll (the area where George was picked up by the two men) was described by police as "a world of drugs and prostitution, and most of all, as a space of Aboriginality" (p. 141). Further, throughout the trial Pamela George was represented as a body that "naturally belonged to . . . spaces of prostitution,

crime, sex and violence.” Alex Ternowetsky and Steven Kummerfield, on the other hand, were far from home. They were foreigners who had temporarily left the familiar spaces of respectability for the racialized degeneracy of the stroll. It is Razack’s argument that Ternowetsky and Kummerfield, as young White men in a degenerate space, were able to commit extremely violent acts with virtual impunity:

I suggest that it was difficult for the Crown to disturb the argument of drunkenness and disorderly conduct as opposed to murder, primarily because of an implicit spatial underpinning which was never challenged and was indeed shared by the Crown. While Pamela George remained stuck in the racial space of prostitution where violence is innate, the men were considered to be far removed from the spaces of violence. She was of the space where murders happen; they were not. (p. 152)

Issues of race, social position, and gender were, for the most part, made invisible during the trial process. As Razack notes, “the social meaning of spaces and bodies was deliberately excluded as evidence that would contaminate the otherwise pure processes of law” (p. 155). It is in this way that the law was able to ignore the historical and social context that defined the brutal murder of Pamela George.

In another illustration of the relationship between race and space, Nelson (2002) looks at Africville, a small Black community situated within Halifax, Nova Scotia. She begins by providing a brief account of the historical circumstances that led to the establishment and eventual demise of this unique community. According to Nelson, the land that delineates Africville was purchased by William Brown and William Arnold in the 1840s, and it wasn’t long before it became an established community with a church, an elementary school, a post office, as well as a few small stores (p. 215). However, over the next 120 years the community experienced a number of ominous and deeply symbolic

encroachments by the City of Halifax, including the moving of the city dump directly onto Africville land. By the late 1960's "Africville was expropriated by the City of Halifax for the purposes of industrial development, as well as for the alleged benefits of "slum clearance" and "relocation" of the residents" (p. 216).

Nelson's (2002) analysis is informed by the basic assumption that the "use and characterization of space is socially determined, and that the ideologies surrounding race are socially produced" (p. 217). In her article she discusses the various ways in which Africville was produced as a degenerate space. According to Nelson, this production coincided with a production of "official" knowledge that serves to justify domination and destruction. As Nelson notes, "the ideologies produced in the making of Africville-as-slum involve narratives about raced bodies that are tied to, but must not be conflated with, the spaces they inhabit" (p. 218). Once Africville was produced and accepted as a degenerate space, the solution to the "problem" was destruction. As Nelson states, "when suffering is seen as 'obvious' and incurable, destruction can be looked at as a form of rescue" (p. 222).

Themes and Application

To conclude this chapter I will briefly identify a few themes that emerged in my review of the literature, beginning with the thematic tension between those discussions of space and power which imply an underlying "reality" (Wells, 2007; Pfeiffer, 2006) and those that focus on how space is an effect of contingent practices (Conlon, 2004). While the "materialists" argue that power is real and locatable in "real" social, political or economic formations, or in real agents, "post structuralists" show how agents, social

formations, and states are themselves the contingent effects or accomplishments of practices. A self-described Marxist (Soja, 1996, p. 33), Henri Lefebvre is often considered to be a materialist. Indeed, Lefebvre (1991) contends that each society, with its specific mode of production, produces its own space, and that this spatial production is fundamental to the (re)production of that society. Other spatial theorists such as David Harvey (1985) and Neil Smith (1996) have taken up Lefebvre's political economic framework, analysing the hegemonic character of capitalist space. However, one need not adhere to a Marxist ontology to benefit from Lefebvre's theoretical insights. As Borden (2000) notes, "Lefebvre's (1991) main underlying formulation for the production of space is . . . not historical or utopian but analytical" (p. 6). Independent of his larger Marxist apparatus, Lefebvre provides a useful, if undeveloped, framework for analysing space as a social product.¹³ Indeed, it may be argued that Lefebvre's triadic formulation can actually work to bridge the divide between "materialist" and post-structuralists interpretations of the production of space.

The present research is concerned with the social production of urban space, and it is this overarching theme that ties together the somewhat disparate literature reviewed above. Generally speaking, the purpose of this chapter has been to familiarise the reader (as well as myself) with a literature that considers the socio-political character of urban spaces. While all of the literature discussed above has helped frame my thinking, some elements of this discussion proved to be more instrumental in my own research than others. For example, the discussion of modernist planning practices is less evident in the

¹³ As Merrifield (2006) notes, Lefebvre (1991) outlines his spatial triad "only in preliminary fashion, leaving us to add our own flesh, our own content, to rewrite it as part of our own chapter or research agenda" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 109).

following analysis than the discussion of “social spatialisation.” Like Lefebvre’s tripartite theory of space, Shields’ (1991) notion of “social spatialisation,” along with his related concepts of “place image” and “place myth,” has provided me with a theoretical position from which to study Galt Gardens as a space that is at once materially and discursively constituted. More specifically, Shields’ contention that spatialisation can be found in “everyday talk” (p. 47), and that such talk is not merely “subjective and idiosyncratic” (p. 29), helped fortify my analysis of interview transcripts as pertinent representations of space. Cooper’s (1999) analysis of the “re-imagining” of Toronto’s waterfront is relevant to the following analysis, not only in its use of Shields, but also in its emphasis on the discursive component of spatial production. Others who emphasised the discursive production of space include Pfeiffer (2006) and Conlon (2004). Like these authors, I analyse texts as productive articulations of space that are intimately connected with other material interventions.

By reviewing some of the “end of public space” literature, I emphasised the contested nature of a number of public spaces, from Haussmann’s Parisian boulevards, to People’s Park in Berkeley, to the streets of Santiago, Chile. While each of these analyses provided a specific, and somewhat unique, example of the contested nature of urban public space, they hold in common the idea that space is always political. This idea, a fundamental component of Lefebvre’s writings on space, frames my own research, where I ask the question, “who has the right to Galt Gardens?”

Significantly, the redevelopment of Galt Gardens was not met with the same kind of resistance as the redevelopment of other more famous parks, such as People’s Park in

Berkeley or Tompkins Square Park in New York (see Smith, 1996). In fact, it seemed that most people I spoke with were quite approving of the Galt Gardens revitalization.¹⁴ So, how exactly does this thesis research take up the idea of contestation if there was no obvious resistance to the revitalization of Galt Gardens? Rather than study contestation itself, I construct a frame for understanding the meaning of the term “public” as it relates to the revitalization of the park. As Low (2000) notes, contestation is as much about cultural meaning as it is about physical resistance.

The postcolonial city literature is, more than anything else, used here to illustrate the intersection between race and space. Generally speaking, authors such as Peters (1996), Blomley (2004), Razack (2002) and Nelson (2002) demonstrate how race transcends physical bodies, and exists and operates in the social production of urban spaces. This literature continually returned me to questions about the ways in which urban space might be racialized. I attempt to address some of these questions in an analysis of a letter to the editor published in the *Lethbridge Herald*, as well as an analysis of four murals that have recently come to frame Galt Gardens.

Like much of the research discussed above, the present work looks at discourse as an integral part of the production of space. This is not to deny the material reality of space, but to recognise that material reality is always a contingent effect of discursive practices (which are themselves also material). Although material space seems to speak for itself, it is always spoken for and about. It is, in short, always political. Returning to the project at hand, it is this kind of integration that I utilise in my analysis of

¹⁴ This, however, is likely due to the fact that I was unable (due to reasons I elaborate below) to speak with those identified in the literature as the people most likely to be excluded from revitalized public spaces (see Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006; Smith, 1996; Mitchell, 2003), that is, homeless people.

representations of Galt Gardens. While I consult and refer to much of the literature reviewed here to develop ideas about how the space of Galt Gardens is produced, both discursively and materially, I will continue to rely primarily on Lefebvre's (1991) framework of space production. Before moving on to consider the particular ways in which Galt Gardens is socially produced, it is necessary to address the question of methodology.

Using a form of discourse analysis informed by Foucault I analyse interview transcripts and newspaper articles, not as descriptive texts, but as productive practices that work to constitute the objects and subjects of which they speak. Through the revitalization process, both displacement and emplacement occur (Blomley 2004); Galt Gardens is made a place for recreational, short-term consumption, for a particularly classed and raced "positive user." Through these representations Galt Gardens also displaces, as it is produced as an exclusionary space, one from which so called "negative users" are banned. Otherwise hidden in discourse, this research demonstrates the ways in which representations contain the power to admit and exclude. In the final chapter special attention is given to the way First Nations people are constructed in relation to the city.

While I recognise the production of space to be a complex and dialogical process, a comprehensive triadic analysis of downtown Lethbridge and Galt Gardens is beyond the scope of the present research. This is not to say that elements of spatial practice (perceived space) and representational space (lived space) will not be considered, only that the focus will be on representations of space (conceived space).¹⁵ With this in mind,

¹⁵ Lefebvre (1991) argues that the three moments of spatial production cannot be fully separated.

it may be more useful to frame the present research in terms of social spatialisation, a concept which has been used to emphasise the relationship between discourse and space (Shields, 1991; Cooper, 1999; Gur, 2002). Using discourse analysis informed by Foucault (1995) I analyse interviews I conducted in 2008-2009, as well as relevant newspaper articles. I show that these representations effectively determine who uses the space, and for what purpose.

Chapter Three: Methods

In my investigation of the social production of the revitalization of Galt Gardens I employed multiple methods, including participant observation, interviewing, discourse analysis, and material culture analysis. I began with participant observations, primarily to observe the “spatial practices” (Lefebvre, 1991), or “space ballets” (Shields, 1991, p. 53), that actualise the space. This decision stemmed from an ontological/epistemological position (described in detail above) that sees space as something that is always practiced. Thus, it may be said that I conducted participant observations in Galt Gardens, not because I was interested in what was happening in the park, but because I was interested in how people (and things) practiced the space. In my mind there is no objective separation between the space of Galt Gardens and the various things and people that occupy and use it. The same fundamental ontology informed each of other three methods employed in this research. Interview transcripts and newspaper articles were not taken to be writings about an independently existing Galt Gardens. Rather, they were conceptualised as (re)productive articulations, “representations of space” (Lefebvre, 1991), that could not be meaningfully separated from the more “objective” or physical space of the park. In this way, Galt Gardens (along with all other social spaces) transcends its physical borders, existing in a dispersed and complex web of representation. To conclude my empirical research, I returned to the physical space of Galt Gardens (and photographic representations of this space) to conduct an analysis of some of the park’s recent “revitalizing” material interventions. Again, the material culture

of Galt Gardens (e.g. the Rotary Centennial Plaza, murals, park benches) was conceptualised as fundamentally implicated in the production of the space itself.

Theorising space as multidimensional calls for a multi-method exploration. The decision to make use of multiple methods was informed primarily by my understanding of Lefebvre's (1991) tripartite theory of space. While interviews and discourse analysis allowed for an analysis of "representations of space," observations, along with material culture analysis, allowed for an exploration of "spatial practices." The fact that Lefebvre's (1991) final moment of spatial production, "representational space," is given less attention in the following analysis is not because it is considered less important. On the contrary, as is discussed in the conclusion, the present research is itself considered to be an invitation to the possibility of "representational space."¹⁶

Before discussing my specific use of discourse analysis, interviewing and participant observations, I speak to my general method of analysis.

Analysis

As noted above, it is from Henri Lefebvre (1991)¹⁷ and Rob Shields (1991) that I take my ontological and epistemological position regarding the social character of space. Both of these theorists provide a theoretical framework that allows space to be understood and investigated as at once materially and discursively produced. Specifically, Lefebvre's tripartite theory of space and Shields' "social spatialisation" have allowed me

¹⁶ I emphasise "invitation" to signal my awareness that this thesis is also an abstract representation that, along with other representations, is somewhat removed from Galt Gardens as it is lived and experienced.

¹⁷ While Lefebvre outlines a highly complex theory outlining the relationship between capitalism and space, this is not the focus of the present research. Instead, I make use of his moments of spatial production, as well as Shields' (1991) "social spatialisation," in order to explore Galt Gardens as a multi-dimensional, socially produced space.

to study the production of the revitalization of Galt Gardens through relevant newspaper articles, interview transcripts and material culture. The theoretical writings of Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1991), as well as others, such as Mitchell (1995) and Razack (2002), provided much more than background for this thesis. Many of the ideas and concepts discussed in this literature helped to frame my own research, providing an analytical starting point. In other words, the following analysis was, even in its incipient moments, already theoretical.

In her book *Qualitative Researching*, Jennifer Mason (2002) criticises the idea that any research is “begun and undertaken in a theoretical vacuum” (p. 181). According to Mason (2002), even Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) inductive grounded theory approach is, in practice, always theoretically informed on some level. In saying this, I do not mean to underplay the value of grounded theory. In fact, while I acknowledge that my own research has, from the start, been theoretically informed, I have attempted to research the social production of Galt Gardens inductively, relying loosely on a version of the grounded theory method to help guide my analysis.

My analysis of newspaper articles, interview transcripts and field notes involved a two-stage coding process. As Coffey & Atkinson (1996) note, “coding is much more than simply giving categories to data; it is also about conceptualizing the data, raising questions, providing provisional answers about the relationship among and within the data, and discovering the data” (p. 31). I began my analysis of newspaper articles, interview transcripts, and field notes with “open coding,” the purpose of which was to “open up the data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them” (Corbin &

Strauss, 2008, p. 160). In this initial stage of analysis I made sincere attempts to abandon any preconceived ideas about what I might find, allowing categories and themes to emerge from the data. The recurring themes that emerged during “open coding” were then analysed in greater detail during a second round of “focused coding.” For both open and focused coding I worked with physical documents, noting concepts, categories and themes in the margins.

This general method of analysis was combined with discourse analysis techniques informed by Michel Foucault, whose constitutive theory of discourse is elaborated in the following section.

Discourse Analysis

As indicated in Chapter Two, a number of scholars have discussed the importance of discourses in the construction and re-construction of social space (see Cooper, 1999; Richardson & Jensen, 2003; Conlon, 2004; Skillington, 1998). Before outlining the specific methods used in the present research I engage in a brief discussion of the methodological practice of discourse analysis. For, like the analysis of space, discourse analysis has become a methodology with wide ranging and often conflicting meanings.

The term discourse was traditionally used by linguists to refer to “passages of connected writing or speech” (Hall, 2001, p. 72). To speak of a medical or pedagogical discourse was simply to identify a central topic or theme. Foucault appropriated this classificatory term, radically transforming its meaning to engage with a constructivist ontology. It is Foucault who is often credited with the popularisation of discourse analysis as a method in both the social sciences and humanities (Fairclough, 1992, p. 37). In *The*

Archeology of Knowledge, Foucault (1995) describes discourses as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). In other words, rather than mere descriptions or classifications, discourses work through the practical production of texts to construct meaningful social objects and subjects.¹⁸

Foucault’s conception of discourse collapses the traditional divide between language and practice. What is said is also, and at the same time, practiced. In short, discourse is constitutive - it defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. As Foucault (1981) states, “we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher. The world is not the accomplice to our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour” (p. 67). This constitutive definition of discourse is fundamental to an understanding of Foucault’s (and other postmodernists’) epistemology. As the above quotation suggests, Foucault’s theory of discourse denies the existence of a singular, objectively-meaningful reality. It is only through discourse, says Foucault (1995), that meaningful objects and subjects are formed.¹⁹

Lees (2004) describes two kinds of discourse analysis, distinguishing a Marxist strand from a poststructuralist strand. Under the former, “discourse analysis is a tool for uncovering certain hegemonic ways of thinking and talking about how things should be done that serve certain vested interests” (p. 102). Marxist discourse analysis is ultimately

¹⁸ According to Fairclough (2003), texts are not confined to the written and printed word, but include things such as interview transcripts, web pages and television programs (p. 3). Perhaps even these relatively common examples too narrowly define what might be understood as a text. In his chapter on discourse Parker (2004) broadens the definition of *text* to include all things meaningful. “Texts,” says Parker (2004) are “delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in *any* form that can be given an interpretive gloss” (p. 253).

¹⁹ For further discussion on the various definitions of discourse see Mills, 2004.

concerned with the unveiling of ideology, its aim being to examine how the text points behind or beyond itself; to “get behind” the text and discover how discourse works to serve the ideal and material interests of the ruling class. Indeed, if dominant discourse is believed to be the expression or representation of ruling ideas, it seems appropriate for analysis to focus primarily on uncovering the *real* conditions of its existence. Foucault, however, ultimately rejects the classical Marxist problematic of ideology, arguing that it reduces “all the relations between knowledge and power to a question of *class* power and *class* interests” (Hall, 2001, p. 75). Instead, Foucault adheres to an ontological position that privileges discourse itself as an interconnected web of practices and their products (“texts,” “authors,” etc).

In the chapters that follow I make use of discourse analysis to study newspaper articles and interview transcripts, not to reveal the “true” nature of Galt Gardens, but to critically explore some of the ways in which the park is discursively (re)produced as a particular kind of public space. It should be noted that, although newspaper articles and interview transcripts are conceptualised as interchangeable “representations of space,” there are some differences between the two texts, most obviously in relation to their production and distribution. However, these differences do not preclude the analytical “interchangeability” of newspaper articles and interview transcripts, as both texts articulate, and therefore (re)produce, the revitalization of Galt Gardens.

Newspaper Articles

For the following analysis I collected articles relating to the most recent revitalization of Galt Gardens published in Lethbridge’s leading newspaper, the

Lethbridge Herald, between January 1st, 2003 and September 21st, 2009.²⁰ Although the first phase of the Galt Gardens revitalization officially began in 1991, the present research focuses on more recent revitalization efforts. I decided to analyse *Lethbridge Herald* publications beginning in 2003 as this is the year that the Rotary Club of Lethbridge first proposed their plan to revitalize Galt Gardens. September 21, 2009, the last day of summer, marks the end of my analytical moment.

For editions of the *Lethbridge Herald* available electronically (2003 - 2007), searching for relevant articles was a two step process. An initial search was done using an integrated search engine which allowed me to find all occurrences of the phrase “Galt Gardens” between the years 2003 and 2007.²¹ This preliminary search produced over 600 results. However, not all of these results were relevant given my research interests. A number of my preliminary results consisted of brief, nondescript articles that simply identified Galt Gardens as a location for various events.²²

Such articles, while informative in regards to the kinds of events reported to be held in the park, are less useful as instances of productive spatial discourse given that

²⁰ All editions of the *Lethbridge Herald* published between 2003 and 2007 are available electronically from an online database accessible via the University of Lethbridge library website. Those newspapers published between 2008 and 2009 are available as microform from the University of Lethbridge library microform collection. Finally, the most recent editions of the *Lethbridge Herald* are available in paper copy form in the University of Lethbridge serials collection.

²¹ While “Galt Gardens” was the target phrase, an initial search of the term produced only a few results (9). After some experimentation I discovered the ineffectual search was due to a mis-recognition by the online search engine which mistook the “l” for an “i” in the phrase “Galt Gardens.” This initial setback was eventually overcome by searching for all occurrences of both “Galt” and “Gait” Gardens.

²² For example, an article entitled “Street Machine Weekend” retrieved online from the “News, Weather & Information” section of the Friday, July 11, 2003 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald*:

The Street Wheelers Car Club will present the 25th annual Street Machine Weekend including a Show and Shine today through Sunday in Galt Gardens. About 350 cars are registered and many will cruise down 3 Avenue and Mayor Magrath Drive South starting at 5 p.m. Saturday. (A2)

they say little of the park itself. More relevant to the present research are those articles that discuss and describe Galt Gardens in some kind of detail, and particularly those that address recent revitalization efforts.

A secondary, and more refined search was done by revisiting initial search results and removing those articles that failed to describe either Galt Gardens or the associated revitalization efforts. After completing this process I was left with 38 newspaper articles published between 2003 and 2007.

Editions of the *Lethbridge Herald* published in 2008 and 2009 are available on microform from the Woodworth collection in the University of Lethbridge library. The search for relevant articles published in these years was similar to the two-step process described above. It began with a preliminary search of the *Lethbridge Herald's* online archives.²³ Like the library's database, this archive includes an integrated search engine which allowed me to search for all instances of the phrase "Galt Gardens" between the years 2008 and 2009. This search produced 274 results, which consisted of relevant article titles and brief article descriptions.²⁴ Moreover, each result included the date of the edition in which the sought-after article could be found. This allowed me to locate the newspaper and corresponding article in the university's microform collection.

Publications not available as microform were collected from the library's serials collection.²⁵

²³ The *Lethbridge Herald* archives are available via their official website (<http://www.lethbridgeherald.com>).

²⁴ While full articles were available directly from the *Lethbridge Herald* archives, they cost \$2.90 per publication.

²⁵ Only the most recent editions of the *Lethbridge Herald* were unavailable in microform (those published between July 31 and August 31, 2009).

A second, more discriminating search was also conducted on this site, reducing preliminary results to include only those articles that described Galt Gardens or the Galt Gardens revitalization effort in some detail. After the secondary search there were 13 newspaper articles published between 2008 and 2009.

At the end of the selection process I was left with a final sample of 51 *Lethbridge Herald* articles published between January 1st, 2003 and September 21st, 2009.

Interviews

A number of scholars interested in the study of space and place have made use of interviews (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006; Low, 2000). Mitchell & Staeheli (2006) conducted interviews with redevelopment officials, civic boosters, and social service providers in order to explore the details of a San Diego redevelopment project. They found that “for proponents of downtown redevelopment, one of the crucial issues has always been - and remains - the homeless and other street people” (p. 145). As part of her ethnographic study of the Latin American Plaza, Low (2000) also conducted interviews with a number of different people, from regular plaza users to local historians to architects and planning officials. These interviews were analysed together with field notes, maps, photographs, and historical documents to produce an in-depth analysis of the design and meaning of the contemporary plaza. In the following section I outline how the present work makes use of interviews both as sources of information and, more importantly, as particular representations of space.

When conducting interviews for social research it is important to conceptualise the relationship between the sample and the population. According to Mason (2002), this

is especially true of qualitative research due to the “prevalence of a representational logic in more quantitative forms of sampling [which] sometimes lead to the assumption that sampling is inherently about empirical representation of a wider universe” (p. 122). Qualitative research is, for the most part, less concerned with the statistical generalizability of its findings. Rather than engaging in representational sampling, this research employs “strategic sampling,” a technique which aims “to produce . . . a relevant range of contexts or phenomena” (Mason, 2002, p. 124). What constitutes a “relevant” or “meaningful” range is ultimately determined by a theoretical, rather than a representational, logic (though it is possible for the two logics to align). The general theoretical logic behind my sample is this: what people say about a particular place is, to some degree, productive, and may be analysed as such. Thus, for my sample I sought out people who, presumably, would have a lot to say about Galt Gardens. In other words, my interview sample was composed of stakeholders (i.e. individuals whom I identified as having an interest or concern in the revitalization of Galt Gardens). Drawing on Lefebvre’s (1991) definition of representations of space, I selected a number of “technocrats” (p. 38), such as city planners and members of the downtown Business Revitalization Zone. While most of these informants were purposefully selected prior to field research, a few were selected using snowball sampling which involves interviewing participants based on the referral of other interview participants. I also selected other stakeholders, such as business owners, police officers and shelter representatives. My directed approach to sampling allowed me to compare and analyse the discourse(s) of “technocrats” with the discourse(s) these other stakeholders. I add only briefly that while

at the outset I planned also to interview everyday park users, this strategy was abandoned early in the project, a decision I will return to at the conclusion of the chapter.

In total, I conducted 15 interviews with various stakeholders, including three proximal business owners, five professionals involved in the planning process, three representatives from the Lethbridge Regional Police, three representative from the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre (including the co-ordinator of Lethbridge's Mobile Urban Street Team), and one regular, marginalised park user.

The purpose of the interviews was twofold. First, they provided valuable information about Galt Gardens and its revitalization. Second, and more importantly, interviews were designed to get people to talk about the park. I was interested in how people understood and gave meaning to the material practices implemented in the park as part of its revitalization. The transcripts produced from the interviews were treated similarly to newspaper articles in that they were taken to be representations of space. Both *Lethbridge Herald* articles and interview transcripts are analysed, not as objectively factual descriptions, but as productive texts that constitute Galt Gardens as a meaningful urban space.

There are, however, a few important differences between these two forms of textual representation (i.e. interview transcripts and newspaper articles) that must be addressed. First, the process by which newspaper articles and interview transcripts were produced differs significantly. While *Lethbridge Herald* articles had already been produced in anticipation and response to revitalization efforts in Galt Gardens, interview

transcripts were produced out of conversations that I actively initiated and conducted.²⁶

These particular representations of space would not exist if I had not called upon individuals to speak, to respond to questions designed specifically to call forth representations of the park. As Smith (1974) notes, “in sociological enquiries we routinely treat only what the respondent says as data,” suggesting that the interviewer’s purposeful questions are somehow independent and unimportant. In subsequent chapters I focus primarily on interviewees’ accounts of space, in many cases leaving the questions that prompted such accounts outside the realm of analysis. This is not because these questions are considered to be insignificant, but because their significance is largely conceptual, and is acknowledged, more generally, here.

To reiterate, the present research is not interested primarily in what people think about Galt Gardens, but in how they articulate it. In other words, I do not presume that interviewees have an already formed, pristine, image or description of Galt Gardens that needs only the opportunity to be expressed. Rather, despite all efforts to mitigate bias, the “structuring effect” (Smith, 1974, p. 262) of interview questions is taken as fundamental to the accounts they help to facilitate.

Participant Observation

Broadly defined, observation refers to “methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research ‘setting’ so that she or he can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting” (Mason,

²⁶ This is not to ignore the fact that newspaper articles were themselves produced by journalists as news items, or by readers as letters to the editor. In both instances, they would have been (albeit differently) selected and edited according to the organizational priorities of the commercial production of news. However, I was not personally involved in their production.

2002, p. 84). Observation has been revered as “the fundamental base of all research methods” in the social sciences (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 389) and has informed countless sociological and anthropological studies. More than observation, my time in the field was defined by my interactional participation as a young, White, middle class and able bodied man. Thus, it would be more accurate to describe my fieldwork in Galt Gardens as participant observation. The purpose of my participant observations was to get a sense of place, and specifically to explore some of the spatial practices that contribute to its production. In doing so, I had to take into account the kinds of attention that my presence in the park generated.

Shields (1991) provides a useful explanation of *spatial practices*, referring to them as the “habitual routines of ‘place ballets’” (p. 53). It is through such “place ballets” that space is appropriated and reaffirmed in relation to structured socio-spatial arrangements (p. 52). Lefebvre (1991) states, “the spatial practice of society is revealed through the deciphering of its space” (p. 38). In order to explore the spatial practices of Galt Gardens I engaged in participant observation on 20 occasions. The duration of each session ranged from 30 minutes to four hours, and they all took place during the summer and fall of 2008. During participant observations I focused on the “place ballets” taking place in and actualising Galt Gardens. I was interested in how users make use of the park through their everyday activities, and how these uses differ depending on social structural markers, such as race and class. During my observations I was particularly sensitive to two areas: 1) social interactions between people (including between myself and others) and 2) socio-material interactions (interactions between people and their material

environment). In other words, I was interested, not only in how people interact with each other, but with how they interact with their material environment.

Traditionally, practitioners of social sciences, especially those involved in quantitative research, have aimed for detachment and objectivity in their research design. By emphasising these ideals “field researchers espouse the principle of *subject-object dualism*: the belief that the object (known) can be effectively separated by methodologically scientific procedures” (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 31). It follows from this ontological position that proper observations should not include “participation” if they are to be considered scientifically valid. Such naturalistic epistemologies are increasingly contentious and have been widely criticised by a number of scholars (Coffey, 1999; Adler & Adler, 1987; Stake, 2000; Smith, 1974). As Coffey (1999) states, “we cannot divorce our scholarly endeavours from the bodily reality of being in the field” (p. 68). Indeed, the moment a researcher enters the research field she/he is, to a greater or lesser degree, participating (whether this is recognised or not). My participation in the present research cannot be separated from my various findings. During my participation I was directly involved in the construction of the observational material I later used as data, and I cannot be separated from this data in any meaningful sense. In my study I have situated myself as both participant and observer.

Being interested in the revitalization of Galt Gardens, I tended to focus my observation of socio-material interactions on the recent architectural developments in the park. The most prominent of these developments is the Rotary Centennial Plaza, which includes a large circular fountain, light show and soundscape. I was also interested in the

completion of the pergola, the installation of park benches, and the increased private security presence in Galt Gardens. While an important part of the productive process, these “material practices” cannot be considered outside the realm of discursive practice, for, as Foucault (1995) argues, it is through discourse that meaning is produced, and embodied social practices also incorporate, display and actualise discursive statements.

Spatial and Temporal Sampling

I engaged in field work in Galt Gardens from August through October, 2008. As noted above, I visited the park on 20 separate occasions, observing for between 30 minutes and four hours on each occasion. In total I completed over 30 hours of observation in Galt Gardens between the hours of 8:00 am and 11:00 pm.

Taking up four city blocks, the very size of Galt Gardens presented an obstacle for participant observation. I had to devise a method that allowed me to adequately observe social interactions between people as well as socio-material interactions in the 9.16-acre park. I addressed this problem by making use of an aerial photograph of Galt Gardens obtained from Lethbridge City Hall. I altered the photograph, dividing it into four distinct sections and labelling the benches and tables within each section. This allowed me to quickly and accurately refer to particular locations in the park. Oftentimes there were a number of interesting things going on simultaneously, making it impossible to observe all happenings at once. In order to mitigate against this difficulty I focused my observations on particular sections. Low (2000) utilised a similar technique in her ethnography of Parque Central and Plaza de la Cultura in Costa Rica. This strategy allowed me to better focus on the interactions and spatial elements of the park.

Even after dividing the park into separate observational subsections I often found myself unable to record all that was going on. I do not consider this to be a fatal methodological flaw. As is the case in all qualitative research, my observations were shaped by the selective nature of my sampling. As Mason (2000) notes, observations are inevitably selective and “based upon a particular observational perspective” (p. 90). Rather than affect observational neutrality, Mason advocates for a “critical awareness” of the relationship between the observer and what she or he is observing:

The key is to try to understand *how* you are using selectivity and perspective, rather than to assume - or to hope - that you are not. This means that you must have at least some sense of what you are looking for in the setting, and some critical awareness of how that has informed what you have observed, and what you have found interesting and relevant. (p. 90)

Indeed, I am aware that I entered the field equipped with particular questions and interests that worked to direct my gaze and shape my observations. For instance, because I was interested in power as it is expressed through contestation and processes of exclusion, I focused on the activities of the park’s hired security guards and on the ways they interacted with various park users. Further, I became particularly attuned to the ways in which such interactions varied depending on the apparent class and racialized status of park users.

I was also sensitive to the ways I differentially attended to various groups in the park. Because this research is interested in spatial manifestations of social inequality, I tended to focus on park users who I had already identified as marginalised. Specifically, I focused my attention on people who were seemingly homeless and on those whom I identified as First Nations. In the case of First Nations users, identifications were made

subjectively and on the basis of physical markers such as skin colour. In the case of homeless users, identifications were made on the basis of self-description or, more commonly, on dress and behaviour.

Initially I engaged in space sampling, ensuring that I covered all four sections of the park equally during each observation session. However, while I continued to observe all areas of the park, after the first few sessions my attention narrowed. I began to focus on two areas, the *pergola area*, a section designed for concerts, community events, picnics and meetings and the *plaza area*, an area designed for recreational and family use. These locations were of particular interest for two reasons: 1) they were the foci of phase two revitalization efforts and 2) they were generally more “active” than other areas of the park. Here I do not mean to imply that less populated areas of the park are uninteresting; even empty space is political, and always exists in relation to occupied space. However, given time constraints, and my particular research interests, I spent the majority of my time observing the more “occupied” areas of the park.

Through my participant observations I identified two primary groups of park users, *regular users* and *casual users*. These two groups made use of Galt Gardens in significantly different ways. Regular users tended to congregate in the pergola area, a section of the park architecturally defined by an outdoor stage designed for events and concerts. Regular users would often spend extended periods of time at the picnic tables and benches in this area. Casual users, on the other hand, largely avoided the pergola area. Instead, they tended to gather in the plaza area, a section defined by the Rotary Centennial Plaza. Unlike regular park users, casual users tended to keep their visits

relatively brief, rarely staying for longer than half an hour. Among those considered to be casual users were people who were “just passing through.” These users only spent a few minutes in the park as they made their way to some other destination, such as the adjacent shopping mall (Park Place Mall). For those casual users who made the park a destination in itself, it was typically for recreational purposes. Many casual users came to enjoy the spectacle of the plaza, often while consuming food and drinks from nearby restaurants and coffee shops, such as Pita Pit and Starbucks. Thus, not only a site of recreation, Galt Gardens is, for many casual users, also a site of consumption.

Through my observations it became clear that regular users and casual users were divided by more than their use of the park. They were also divided in terms of their apparent markers of race and class. Typically First Nations, usually homeless²⁷, and often disabled, regular users clearly represent a marginalised and disenfranchised group of individuals. Casual users, on the other hand, were typically White and middle class. From my observations I propose that these two groups used the park in fundamentally different ways; what for casual users was a place of recreation and consumption, for regular users was a place of necessity, since it provided their home setting - a place to congregate, rest, chat, or simply be. Finally, casual users and regular users differed in their relationship with the park’s hired security guards. Significantly, the attention of security guards was almost exclusively directed towards regular users. On a number occasions security guards forced regular users from the park. In contrast, not once during my time in the park was a casual user asked to leave Galt Gardens. The casual/regular user distinction is by no

²⁷ Here, and on other occasions throughout the thesis, homelessness is assumed to be the case.

means a rigid typology. Rather, it is a useful way to subjectively describe the various park users and illuminate the contested nature of Galt Gardens.

As the only public park in Lethbridge's downtown core, Galt Gardens has long been a haven for the city's most marginalised people. Unwelcome in many of the private spaces that comprise the major part of the city's downtown, many of these people take refuge in the public space of the park. However, their presence in Galt Gardens has not gone uncontested. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, regular park users, described in the *Lethbridge Herald* as "undesirables" (Shurtz, 2003a), are considered by those involved in the revitalization process to be an impediment to the revitalization process.

As noted above, my observations lasted between half an hour and four hours. While I did not engage in strict time sampling, I was able to observe activity on all days of the week, at a number of different times, and during a number of different events. In the field I used a pocket notebook to jot down brief field notes. These notes were used as an aid in the construction of more extensive field notes at the end of each observation session.

My participation in Galt Gardens was twofold, reflecting the differing spatial practices of different park users. First, I participated simply by *being* in Galt Gardens. However, this form of participation was relative; my being in Galt Gardens was perceived differently by casual users than it was by regular users. Despite the fact that my purpose for being in the park was different, my behaviour was, in some ways, quite similar to that of a typical casual user. Like casual users, I spent time walking the paved paths, sitting on benches and at picnic tables, and "hanging out" in and around the Rotary

Centennial Plaza. For the most part, casual users didn't hang around long enough to notice my extended stays and unusual observation related behaviour. I felt comfortable and unobtrusive while observing in the *plaza area*. However, for regular users and security guards my presence was much more conspicuous. I was a White, middle class, able bodied person, in other words, I fit the description of what I have loosely characterised as a typical casual user. However, a number of things differentiated me from this group. For one thing, I spent a significant amount of time in the pergola area, a section of the park typically avoided by casual users. Also, casual users tended to visit the park in the afternoon, while I made sure to observe at various times of the day, including early in the morning and late in the evening. Finally, I was distinguished by my equipment and behaviour. As one regular user commented, "every time I see you you're writing in that book." It was clear to many regular users that I was not a casual user interested in recreation. In short, how I was perceived in the field depended, not only on my being in Galt Gardens, but also on how other users related to my being a White, middle class, and able-bodied man.

More active participation came in the form of casual conversation with some of the park users. Often these conversations were initiated by regular users in search of spare change or cigarettes. I used these opportunities to ask people about the security presence in the park, the new public washrooms, and the recently built Rotary Centennial Plaza. On one occasion a conversation with a casual user was prolonged by her young son, who kept approaching me at the fountain. Before engaging in these brief conversations I made sure to inform people of my role as social researcher.

On Methodological Flexibility

I conclude this section with an account of my foray into interviewing, and how initial experiences in interviewing changed the direction and design of my research.

Up until I began data collection for the project I had planned to interview users of the park as well. Having already started my participant observations in Galt Gardens, and because I wanted to hear from marginalised park users, I decided to begin arranging interviews with people in the park. Potential interviewees were invited to participate through casual conversations that developed directly out of my participant observations. On three separate occasions I made arrangements with regular park users to meet for an interview. None of these potential interviewees showed up for the scheduled meeting and, in retrospect, this is not surprising. It was perhaps naive to think that people dealing with the daily hardships often associated with homelessness would prioritise an interview with a social researcher interested in the social production of space.

It soon became apparent that interviews with regular park users, if they were going to happen at all, were going to have to be held on the spot. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, I was finally able to record an interview with Susan (pseudonym). It was this somewhat troubling interview experience that caused me to reconsider my decision to interview marginalised park users.

Susan was a middle aged homeless woman who identified herself as First Nations. Susan was also physically disabled and, at the time of the interview, was in a wheel chair. After indicating that she was not comfortable being interviewed in Galt Gardens, we decided to relocate. Our search for a new interview location turned out to be

quite the adventure. At one point, as I pushed her wheelchair across a busy street, one of Susan's shopping bags fell, spilling its contents across the asphalt. As we frantically tried to collect the scattered objects the light turned green and oncoming traffic slowly began encroaching. While holding up traffic (and obviously irritating a few motorists) we gathered Susan's dispersed belongings and managed to safely cross the street.

As we continued on our journey Susan began drinking what she identified as vodka from a plastic water bottle. Later, Susan told me that she had been drinking throughout the day and, by the time we found a suitable interview location, it became obvious that she was intoxicated. The interview itself lasted about 30 minutes. At various times during our conversation Susan became extremely upset and, at one point, began to cry.

As my first foray into field work and methodological practice, my attempts to interview regular park users as well as my interview with Susan forced me to struggle with notions of power and responsibility in qualitative research. These experiences fundamentally shifted the focus of my thesis research. Although I had originally planned to analyse regular users' representations of Galt Gardens, this particular project proved unfeasible for two reasons. First, I had a very difficult time arranging one on one interviews with regular park users. Second, when I finally did manage to conduct an interview with a regular park user, it did not go as expected. Although it was clear that the interviewee had strong feelings about the revitalization of Galt Gardens, her intoxicated condition made effective communication difficult. Further, the fact that she was intoxicated when she provided informed consent made using the interview material

ethically questionable. For these reasons, I reluctantly decided to abandon my original project of interviewing regular users and, eventually, park users altogether. This decision fundamentally changed the course of the research, admittedly resulting in a silencing of the park's (and city's) most impoverished residents.²⁸ Again, this decision was made reluctantly, and only after a number of unsuccessful interview attempts.

This shift in my research is significant in that it illustrates the imperfect relationship between social research as it is conceived and social research as it is practiced. This research has itself been an exploratory process that has transformed over its course, and, rather than hide or deny such changes, I acknowledge their significance. In this chapter I have outlined each of my methods in a relatively balanced fashion. However, as will be seen, my actual findings tend to rely more on interview transcripts, newspaper articles and material culture, and less on participant observations.

As noted above, my empirical exploration of the social production of Galt Gardens began with participant observations. Here, I was interested in power as it was spatially practiced. More specifically, I was interested in how park users interacted with each other and with the material environment. The main analytical finding from my time in the field was the distinction outlined above, that between *regular users* and *casual users*. This distinction was important, as it informed my analysis of interview transcripts, newspaper articles and material culture. Although participant observations are not featured as prominently in my findings chapters as they are in my methods chapter, it is

²⁸ The ways in which my own research practices have, in *fact*, though not in *intention*, been a reinstatement of silencing and exclusion are discussed further in the conclusion of this thesis.

important to note that they provided me with an invaluable sense of Galt Gardens as a space divided by different users and uses.

If space is conceptualised as multidimensional, it makes sense to use multiple methods to study its different dimensions. While I originally intended to rely equally on each of my chosen methods, I ended up focusing primarily on representations of space, supplemented by considerations of spatial practices. The result is an in-depth, albeit somewhat unbalanced, socio-spatial exploration of Galt Gardens and its most recent revitalization.

Chapter Four: Findings

Downtown on the Margin

As the title of his book suggests, Shields (1991) is especially interested in “places on the margin.” But what exactly characterises such places? According to Shields, the “marginal status” of a particular place “may come from its out of the way geographic locations, being the site of illicit or disdained social activities, or being the Other pole to a great cultural centre” (p. 3). Shields’ primary interest lies in places on the social, rather than geographical, periphery. As he notes in his book, “the marginal places that are of interest are not necessarily on geographical peripheries but, first and foremost, they have been placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other” (Shields, 1991, p. 3). Though not as prominent as the case studies provided by Shields, Galt Gardens provides an example of a place that is concurrently geographically central (albeit within the geographically peripheral city of Lethbridge) and socially peripheral.

Bordered by 1st Avenue on the North, 7th Street on the East, 3rd Avenue on the South and 5th Street on the West, Galt Gardens is located in, as the president of the Rotary Club of Lethbridge once phrased it, the “heart of the heart of the city” (cited in Gallant, 2008). However, despite its being at the centre of Lethbridge, Galt Gardens has been socially peripheral, being associated with what Johnston (1988) refers to as “antisocial behaviour,” including “drunkenness, panhandling and begging” (p. 10). The park has also come to be highly racialized as evidenced in this quote taken from my interview with Kevin, a young White, long-term resident of Lethbridge:

There's a whole lore in this town surrounding the park . . . and what I said about the sense of ownership . . . I mean if you talk to the average local person it's the Indian park, you know, it's where all the drunk Natives hang out, um, so I mean like everyone I think that you would talk to would have heard a story and that's what I mean by the lore surrounding that park, the mythology of it.

This quotation, taken from a preliminary interview I conducted as part of my pilot study refers to Galt Gardens as “the Indian park,” the place where “all the drunk Natives hang out.” (The respondent's phrasing is interesting. He discursively separates himself from his own overtly racist discourse by attributing his description of Galt Gardens to the “average local person.” Whether or not he considers himself to be an “average local person” is not made clear). Kevin's statement constitutes an example of what Shields (1991) refers to as a *place image*. “Place images,” says Shields, “are the various discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality” (p. 60). Always partial, and usually the result of stereotyping, place images do not necessarily reflect an external reality. A place where “all the drunk natives hang out” is a construction, a “place image” of Galt Gardens that has, arguably in the past more so than now, had currency in the “discursive economy” (Shields, 1991, p. 61) of Lethbridge.

Galt Gardens has long been a particularly racialized space. I make this claim based not only on interview accounts, but also on my own lived experiences as an “average local person,” a White middle class university student who has lived in Lethbridge for more than 20 years. Indeed, my own spatial experiences and imaginings played a fundamental role in my decision to study Galt Gardens in the first place. Even as a child, before ever having stepped foot in Galt Gardens, the park held a meaningful place in my imagination. I knew it as troublesome, somewhat threatening and,

significantly, as “the Indian park.” Later, as I finished my undergraduate degree at the University of Lethbridge and became more interested in social perspectives on the city, I began to reflect on these place images, eventually deciding to focus on Galt Gardens for my thesis research.

“Place images,” it is important to note, are not tantamount to individually derived opinions about space. While such idiosyncratic associations certainly exist, “they generally,” according to Shields (1991), “find expression in descriptions only where they are set into the terms of more conventional and widely understood core images” (p. 61). Above, the interview informant perceptively referred to the “mythology” of Galt Gardens. According to Shields, a “place-myth” is nothing more than a collection of core “place-images” with connotative meanings (p. 61). “Thus, there is both a constancy and a shifting quality to this model of place- or space-myths as the core images change slowly over time, are displaced by radical changes in the nature of a place, and as various images simply lose their connotative power, becoming ‘dead metaphors’, while others are invented, disseminated, and become accepted in common parlance” (p. 61).

A Dramatic Transformation

Considered on the terms of city officials and business owners, the revitalization of Galt Gardens has been an overwhelming success. Indeed, nearly everyone I spoke with agreed that since the recent developments and the hiring of private security guards, the park has, as Tracy, a local business owner and member of the downtown Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), states, “changed dramatically.” Steven, a member of the Lethbridge Regional Police service notes, “there’s a lot more activity [in Galt Gardens],

you're seeing a lot more happening now than you did over the years." Tom, another member of the BRZ, characterised the recent revitalization as a "significant change," noting that prior to the revitalization the park was "underutilized and . . . perceived [by] the public as . . . dangerous."²⁹ James, a city official closely involved with the Heart of Our City revitalization plan, talks specifically about the construction of the Rotary Centennial Plaza in Galt Gardens as "a real turning point . . . in terms of how the park is being used, [and] who's using it." Similarly, Tom identifies the newly constructed fountains as "the main impetus" behind the park's transformation; "It's a real attraction to families," says Tom, "lots of people go down there at lunch time . . . there's music and lights and things like that, so it's attracting positive use, and the negative users, there may still be some around, but they're definitely in the background . . . it's made quite a dramatic change, almost overnight change, in park usage." Other informants attributed Galt Gardens' "dramatic change," not only to material developments within the park (i.e. the construction of the Rotary Centennial Plaza), but also to initiatives in the larger downtown area. For example, Wendy, a middle aged Caucasian whose business faces the park, elaborates on her decision to move from the outskirts of the city into the downtown: "it has a lot to do with the positive changes in the park, with the businesses that are established now along Third Avenue, with cleaning up some of the bars and areas downtown . . . you know, compared to where it was twenty years ago, yeah it's significantly different. I mean, even the storefronts, everything looks so much better.

²⁹ Here, "underutilized" is presented without any qualifier, but it is meant to be heard with an active but suppressed qualifier, "underutilized *by the right sort of people.*"

It is Galt Gardens' "dramatic change" and, more specifically, the discourse that coincides with (constitutes) this change, that is the primary focus of my analysis. What was described as "an empty dead space" (Tracy) plagued by "negative users" has become a popular recreation destination where "families" can safely gather to enjoy the spectacle of the fountain. This theme of transformation was strongly represented in both interview transcripts and newspaper articles. As one front page *Lethbridge Herald* article states, "the fountain is proving to be a popular spot for young and old alike as Galt Gardens continues to be transformed into a family destination" (Gauthier, 2008). Here, the use of the word "continues" suggests a partial metamorphosis. While the park is becoming more of a "family destination," the transformation remains incomplete. In other words, the park is represented as not only a highly changed space, but also as a liminal space, a space both spatially and temporally *in between*.

Who has the right to Galt Gardens?

[Galt Gardens] is meant to be used, not underused as it is now. "It's meant to be a public gathering place for the community." (Shurtz, 2003)

The article from which this particular quotation is taken was first published in the *Lethbridge Herald* in 2003, five years before the dedication of the Rotary Centennial Plaza. From this short, ostensibly transparent quote come a number of important questions that will be explored in detail below. Few would argue with the assertion that public spaces such as Galt Gardens should be used, and to say that a public park is "meant to be a public gathering place for the community" seems obvious, even redundant. Interested in both the social and the discursive production of space, the

present research pays critical attention to what might otherwise be considered obvious or neutral statements about space and place.

According to the 2003 article, Galt Gardens is not as it should be; it is described as “underused” as opposed to “used.” Moreover, the article suggests that the park is not fulfilling its role as “a public gathering place for the community.” It might reasonably be assumed that in 2003 Galt Gardens was a generally unpopular park. However, such a conclusion relies on the assumption that the “community” in question includes all people in Lethbridge. If, for example, the article was referring to a specific type of community, say, the “decent” community, then it is conceivable that Galt Gardens was in fact quite popular in 2003, just not among the “decent” community. There is, of course, nothing in this particular quotation that suggests “public” and “community” refer to anything other than all people. When it is written that the park is “meant . . . for the community” we likely assume that “community” is all inclusive. Indeed, this quotation is taken up here as an example of *inclusionary discourse*, discourse that produces Galt Gardens as a place where ostensibly “all” people are welcome. At the same time, however, the categories on which this quotation relies (i.e. public, community) are not necessarily all inclusive. As I demonstrate below, such seemingly inclusive representations often coincide with exclusionary representations of “other,” less desirable park users. Looking at various representations of Galt Gardens, I ask a critical question, one that is deceiving in its simplicity: who has “the right to the city?” (Lefebvre, 1996; Mitchell, 2003). More specifically, I explore who is and who is not represented as included in categories such as “community” and “public.”

In both interview transcripts and newspaper articles, a strong theme of inclusivity emerged. By this I mean that a number of the texts analysed produced an idealised Galt Gardens as a park where, as Laura, a White business owner whose business faces the park, stated, “anyone is welcome.” Brent, a White middle-aged city official closely involved with the revitalization process, imagines the park as a place “where all people can feel comfortable”:

my goal is to have the park as open and people friendly as possible, and that includes all people - the park has a historic role in Lethbridge as you know - originally farmers would come in and tie up their horses when they came to town, and of course we are in the heart of Blackfoot territory . . . so I think it’s appropriate that we control inappropriate behaviour, um, you know, that isn’t acceptable, that isn’t what we want in the park, but I don’t think we want to limit it to middle class Whites only - if this is going to be a living and vital community, it’s going to have to reflect the diversity of this community . . . it needs to be a place where all people can feel comfortable.

Brent represents Galt Gardens as a park where everyone (so long as they abstain from “inappropriate behaviour”) is welcome. Further, he situates the park in the “heart of Blackfoot country,” stating that its use should not be limited to “middle class Whites only,” but rather, should “reflect the diversity of [the] community.”³⁰ Laura goes on to talk about the park in largely inclusionary terms.

M: In terms of having security guards in the park, do you think . . . it inhibits the park as a public space where everyone is welcome . . . ?

L: well I think anyone is welcome there . . . I think the security guards are present for safety, so I don’t think it’s fair to exclude anyone as long as they’re not vandalising or misusing the property or acting in an inappropriate manner that would harm anyone, of course we can share with everyone.

Again, Galt Gardens, it is emphasised, is a park that “we can share with everyone” so long as they’re not using the space “inappropriately.” Such statements are perhaps not all

³⁰ Brent’s statement refers to spatial associations of both race and class that are discussed in more detail below.

that remarkable. Indeed, urban revitalization projects are typically characterised by a desire to attract people to a particular area of a city. The revitalization of Galt Gardens and the larger downtown area is no exception: “The facelift to Galt Gardens ties in with the revitalization plan for downtown Lethbridge to not only make it a place the community can be proud of, but to also entice more visitors to the heart of the city” (Keith, 2008). For the most part, the revitalization of the park is represented through discourses of inclusion (or emplacement). This theme is recapitulated in the form of a question posed by a city development officer in the *Lethbridge Herald* during the planning stages of the park’s revitalization, “what would it take to bring people back to the park?” (Shurtz, 2003b).

However, as I argue below, discourses of inclusion are accompanied by, and in some cases contingent upon, discourses of exclusion and displacement which effectively produce “undesirable” and “negative” park users. These “kinds” of people are discursively placed outside the borders of a revitalized Galt Gardens.

Positive Users

Before turning to discourses of exclusion, I look at who is discursively emplaced in interview transcripts and newspaper articles. Although the park is ostensibly “open to everyone,” there are a number of instances where certain categories of subjects are given special attention, firmly placed within the borders of a revitalized Galt Gardens. In newspaper articles and interview transcripts Galt Gardens is represented as a place for “seniors,” “children,” “people of all ages,” and, most typically, “families.” Indeed, this has already been demonstrated above, most notably in Tom’s comments regarding the

park's transformation. According to Tom, Galt Gardens has undergone an "almost overnight change," becoming a "a real attraction to families." Here, "families" are constructed as clearly belonging in the park; classified as "positive" users, "families" are helping to move the remaining "negative users" to the "background" where, it is implied, they belong. Similarly, Laura associates "families" with Galt Gardens' revitalization, stating that the park was not a place she would "have wanted to take [her] kids for a picnic." "But now," says Laura, "I see families there walking through the park and, you know, I think it's becoming more family friendly, family oriented, you know, I think families feel safer to go there now." "Families" are also included in newspaper articles. In the April 22, 2003 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald*, Darrell Alexander, president of the Downtown Rotary Club, is quoted as saying, "we want to make our park a family friendly place" (Mabell, 2003). In these representations, "families" represent moral uprightness and vulnerability, and are produced as the most sacred of park users.

Steven, a senior member of the Lethbridge Regional Police, includes both "families" and "kids" when talking about the Galt Gardens revitalization: "the Rotary project with the spray park is just fantastic, it's brought tons and tons of kids and families down there and it's infused all of those positive users back in the park and breathed, I think, a new fresh life into the park." Tracy also associates the "success" of the Galt Gardens revitalization with the presence of kids: "when you see its success and you see people driving up and the kids are running up in their bathing suits - so clearly they've said mom we want to go - so, you know, they pack the car and they've driven down and they take them there - um, that's really rewarding." Tom notes, "I think the Rotary

centennial plaza was a huge positive addition to that park - almost instantaneously it drew people to that park, whether to come there for lunch or to bring their kids to play in the water feature.” Again we have the production of “positive users,” a seemingly neutral category which has come to include “families,” “kids,” and “children.” Like “families,” “kids” and “children” are represented as desirable, sacred and vulnerable users of a revitalized Galt Gardens.

The final category of user that is specifically included in representations of a revitalized Galt Gardens is “seniors” and the “elderly.” Dan, a member of the Lethbridge Rotary club states,

I frequently go to the park to have a sandwich and sit by the fountain and have excellent feelings that I had some significant role in this happening, and you look around and there’s kids running in the water and there’s elderly people that are from all the residences in the downtown core that now feel safe to walk over and hang out in the park and have lunches and picnics and watch kids play and, you know, I don’t remember the last time I saw a negative use in the park.

Here we have the identification of both “kids” and “elderly people” as categories of park users that cause “excellent feelings.” Constructed in opposition to “negative use,” these categories of users are discursively emplaced within the borders of Galt Gardens. Here, “kids” and “elderly people” are constructed as particularly “vulnerable” park users, a finding that is discussed in more detail below.

Negative Users

While Galt Gardens is ostensibly “open to everyone,” only particular kinds of people, specifically “families,” “kids”/“children,” and “elderly people”/“seniors,” get articulated as belonging in the park. I am not, of course, suggesting that such people ought not be included in representations of a revitalized Galt Gardens. I do argue,

however, that the very construction of desirable categories of park users, described as “positive users,” necessarily suggests antithetical categories, “other” undesirable, unworthy and dangerous users not included in a revitalized Galt Gardens; it suggests, in short, “negative users.”

Given the imprecise nature of those characterised as “positive users,” it is difficult at this point to infer their opposites and construct a list of those discursively excluded from the park. For example, one might conclude that the inclusion of “kids/children” suggests the exclusion of “adults.” However, the concurrent inclusion of “elderly people/seniors” and “mothers” clearly includes “adults.” It might be said then that “young adults” are excluded from representations of a revitalized Galt Gardens. After all, there are no instances where “young adults” are explicitly included in representations of the park. However, because “families” are included, and because “families” and “young adults” are not categorically exclusive, we can not reasonably infer that young adults are necessarily excluded from representations of the park. While I will return to the matter of inclusion below, for now I only say that the community of people produced as legitimate park users includes “families,” “kids/children,” and “elderly people/seniors.”

As stated above, the discursive production of “positive users” already suggests an opposing category of “negative users.” However, the existence of such a category is not only logically/theoretically deduced, but also explicitly articulated in newspaper articles and by interview informants alike. While we have inclusionary discourse, further analysis suggests that such representations coincide with, and are contingent upon, the exclusion of “other” negative park users.

In my conversation with Tracy, the term “negative users” was employed to describe people who interfere with the success of the newly revitalized Galt Gardens. According to Tracy “positive users encourage negative users to go somewhere else and be negative users . . . it’s not complicated, all you have to do is build a positive space,” and this, says Tracy, is exactly what has happened with the redevelopment of Galt Gardens. But, who are the “negative users” exactly? Interested in the discursive distinction between a “negative” and “positive user,” I asked Tracy to clarify:

Michael: how would you define a positive versus a negative user?

Tracy: a negative user is probably someone who’s using the space in a negative way, and probably to be fair, getting a policing definition of that (pause) . . . you know if you’re intoxicated you’re a negative user, there are things that are clearly against the law

Michael: right

Tracy: now drinking in a public place is against the law, being intoxicated IS against the law, those would be negative users

Michael: okay

Tracy: solicitation is a negative use, those are illegal

Invisible in this transcript excerpt is a discomfort and tension I felt upon asking Tracy to elaborate on the distinction she had invoked. It was as if I had, simply by asking this question, undermined the conversation we had been having, a conversation that was structured by a mutual understanding of what constituted a “negative user.” After some hesitation, Tracy resorts to defining negative users in terms of criminal activity, such as public drunkenness and solicitation. “To be fair,” she suggests, it would be best to get a

“policing definition” of the term.³¹ However, while “negative user” is a term with obvious discursive currency, it has no official “policing definition.” In the broadest sense, it may be said to refer to someone who is, in one way or another, “undesirable.” However, only upon further analysis can we say who gets represented as “negative users.”

I first came across the term “negative users” in an article entitled “missionary policing,” published in the February 25, 2009 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald*. The article describes a new, more intensive and “socially conscious” policing strategy aimed at “cleaning up” the city’s downtown. It identifies “prostitution, loitering, public drunkenness and graffiti” as “issues that regularly surface from some of the people who frequent the streets in downtown Lethbridge.”³² Towards the end of the article police sergeant Leon Borbandy is quoted as saying “every couple of years we need to re-evaluate and see what’s working and keep an open mind to try something different. We’ll always have a certain level of negative users in our downtown, but the more positive users we have the more the negative blend in.” Again, while hardly explicit, in the article the category of “negative users” is associated with minor criminal activity and dangerousness.

Later on in our conversation, Tracy makes another reference to “negative users”:

[E]verybody needs to be able to use [Galt Gardens], but the negative users need to be moved around, and again, we’re beginning to become a larger community - we’ve got kids, what do kids do? not all but, you know, they’re out there looking

³¹ Tracy’s use of the phrase “to be fair” can be read as an indirect admission of possible “unfairness” in assumptions.

³² Here, and in other texts I analysed, “the streets” are placed in opposition to the home, as dangerous and necessarily unruly, as opposed to the home

for whatever to do, you know, they're zooming around on their skateboards. Clearly [there is] nothing wrong with skateboards, but the little eighty five year old grandma who hears a skateboard smoking past her is frightened, so [security] has to be there.

Again, there are a number of interesting things going on in this quotation. Tracy's statement that "everybody needs to be able to use" Galt Gardens is quickly qualified by the assertion that "negative users need to be moved around." This qualification implies that "negative users" do not have a right to emplacement in Galt Gardens. It also implies that if they were not to be "moved around" there could be negative effects for the legitimate, but ostensibly vulnerable, "little eighty five year old grandma." Further, it is made explicit here that "negative user" is not a label only reserved for law breakers. In this instance, "negative users" are potentially "kids . . . looking for whatever to do . . . zooming around on their skateboards." It is because of these *kinds* of kids, says Tracy, that security is necessary in Galt Gardens.

Constructions of Homeless People in Newspaper Articles

As Kawash (1998) contends, "renewal has most often meant a two-pronged attack on the most economically and socially marginal members of the urban community via a combined gentrification of residential areas and privatisation of previously public spaces" (p. 320). This claim is supported by what has been referred to as the "end of public space" literature (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006, p. 144), and includes the work of scholars such as Mike Davis (1990), Don Mitchell (1995), Michael Sorkin (1992) and Neil Smith (1996). The present research may be considered to be a part of this growing body of literature insofar as it too poses the defining question: who has the right to the city? However, rather than provide an economic critique, I focus on the discursive

production of Galt Gardens, looking at who is and who is not constructed as having the right to the park which continues to be defined as public space. Thus, the park's "privatisation" does not entail a redefinition of the park as property, but a redefinition of the "public" which uses it.

Interview transcripts and, more commonly, newspaper articles exclude homeless people from a revitalized Galt Gardens by producing them as "negative users." For example, in a 2003 *Lethbridge Herald* article, "the city's homeless"³³ along with "others who loiter in the park" are constructed as obstacles to the revitalization of Galt Gardens:

Money is only one obstacle. The other is developing a park that will attract residents of all ages all year long, and trying to keep the park free from the city's homeless and others who loiter in the park, often asking for money and harassing people. (Shurtz, 2003b)

The author finishes this section of the article with the following question: "What would it take to bring people back to the park?" (Shurtz 2003b). Perhaps the most striking thing about this article is the language used in the construction of "the city's homeless and others who loiter in the park." The stated goal of keeping "the park free from the city's homeless" produces homeless people as less than public, likening them to pests or vermin. The article produces a clear distinction between seemingly inclusionary language, articulated as a desire to attract "residents of all ages," and clearly exclusionary language, articulated as a need to keep out the "the city's homeless and others who loiter in the park." While the aim is reportedly to "attract residents of all ages," homeless people, regardless of their age, are constructed as illegitimate, as "not people." Homeless

³³ This ubiquitous characterization of homeless people as "the homeless" effectively strips these people of their humanity, and thus discounts their position(s).

people are produced as solely problematic; they are, according to the article, one of only two “obstacles” preventing “people” from using Galt Gardens.

In another *Lethbridge Herald* article, this one published shortly after the official dedication of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, homeless people are explicitly constructed as other than public:

It wasn't that long ago an idyllic scene of children splashing and playing, families picnicking and people strolling in Galt Gardens might have seemed like a hopeless fantasy. Such scenes have been a daily reality, however, since the opening in late June of the Rotary Centennial Plaza fountains. Long a popular hangout for the city's street population and largely avoided by the public, Galt Gardens is quickly becoming a popular destination thanks to the new water feature. The rapid transformation has surpassed the expectations of downtown stakeholders, said Ted Stilson, managing co-ordinator of Downtown Lethbridge. (*Lethbridge Herald*, July, 2008)

According to the article, it is only recently, with the completion of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, that the “public” is making Galt Gardens a recreational destination. The “idyllic scene” depicted in the first sentence of the article evokes/relies on “place images” that, not long ago, would have had little discursive currency (Shields, 1991, p. 61). In other words, to talk about Galt Gardens as a place where the “public” gathers to play, picnic and stroll would have, a few years ago, fundamentally contradicted the place-myth of the park, a myth composed of place-images constructed as other than the “idyllic scene” represented. But what constitutes an other to “children splashing and playing, families picnicking and people strolling”? Or, to put the question more broadly, what constitutes an other to a “public?” In the third sentence of the quotation we get an answer with the explicit distinction made between “the city's street population” and the “public.” Here it is implied that there is a “population” of park users, namely homeless people, who do not classify as members of “the public.” Further, it suggests that, while the park has

been quite popular among this “non-public,” this has caused the (deserving, moral, docile) “public” to avoid the park. However, according to the article, this has all changed since the opening of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, which is credited with transforming a “hopeless fantasy” into a “daily reality.”

In another *Lethbridge Herald* article, this one published during the planning stages of the Phase Two revitalization, it is reported that the revitalization of Galt Gardens will “require taking on some challenges, including ridding the park of “undesirables.”” The text is not subtle in its identification of “undesirables” as “the city’s homeless.” According to Shurtz (2003a), “the park has become a hangout for many of the city’s homeless, which discourages use by others, particularly children and the elderly who don’t feel safe in the park, especially at night.” Not only does the article produce “the city’s homeless” as “undesirables,” it also produces them as threatening to more legitimate users, specifically “children and the elderly,” who are constructed here as “vulnerable.”

Considering these newspaper representations together, it can be said that while it is hoped that a revitalized Galt Gardens will “attract residents of all ages,” including “children and the elderly,” homeless people are explicitly excluded from these categories and from the revitalization process in general. Even more troubling is that homeless people are, in effect, represented as illegitimate, as other-than “public,” other than “people.” Instead, homeless people are constructed as obstacles, objects of a cleansing strategy.

Constructions of Homeless People in Interview Transcripts

The production of homeless people in relation to Galt Gardens is far more varied both within and between interview transcripts than it is in newspaper articles, making it difficult to identify ubiquitous themes. For example, in response to a question regarding the presence of homeless people in Galt Gardens, Laura, a local business owner, commented “you know what, if they’re not harming anyone they have a right to be there too, right . . . that’s part of life, right, and that’s fine for parents to explain that to their children, you know, that’s the real world, right.” Laura constructs homeless people as rightful users of public space (albeit users that need to be explained within “families”). Another interviewee, this one involved in the Phase Two revitalization, identified homelessness as a problem: “the park has been I guess, uh, its, its been a problem with um, I guess transients or homeless, homelessness and some of the pressures that those folks deal with. I know there’s been . . . violence down there, um there’s been drugs down there . . . there’s been people living there . . . sleeping on the benches and camping” (Doug). According to Doug, such “problems,” though less prevalent in the park since the introduction of private security guards, have “spread out” to other areas of the city, requiring randomised security checks throughout the city.³⁴ James refers to this phenomenon as one of the “unintended consequences” of a security presence in Galt Gardens. Both Doug and James admit that while a security presence in the park has been a good thing, it has not “addressed homelessness,” only moved the “problem” out of the public eye. However, as James notes, the city has been working on strategies to deal with

³⁴ Here, the use of the phrase “spread out” likens the city’s most impoverished residents to a kind of epidemic that has begun to “spread” across the city.

the “problem,” one of which is to “create a sort of a roving security team, so they’ll hit what they call the hot spots to deal with graffiti or parties or whatever that aren’t supposed to be in those locations.”

A number of interview informants discussed the Employment Rejuvenation Program (ERP) whereby homeless people are paid a minimum wage to clean the city’s streets. One of the main partners and supporters of the program is the Downtown Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ). As Tracy, a member of the BRZ notes,

we have a group of people who are marginally employable, I think that would be the appropriate language, from the shelter. Now they can’t work all day, but they can work short periods of time, they don’t have to have jobs of course because they’re in the shelter. They get hired, and they actually go out and physically clean the streets, and if you’re out at seven O’clock in the morning they’re out, and they probably work harder than everybody you’ve ever seen, it’s really quite amazing, quite amazing, they go hard. In terms of employment, they take a huge amount of pride in their job and they’re thrilled to have the money.

Here, what might be considered to be the “good homeless” are incorporated within a “protestant ethic” work discourse. Rather than hanging out on the street or sleeping in the park, these homeless are putting themselves to use, conforming to “neoliberal notions of proper personhood” (Kingfisher, 2007, p. 197).

Interestingly, discursive productions of homeless people are often found within broader discussions of park security and safety, and the nature of urban space more generally. More specifically, they are constructed as the illegitimate users that have required a security presence in the park. Speaking of the newly revitalized Galt Gardens, Wendy, a local business owner and member of the BRZ, notes, “there’s . . . lots of people there, but . . . as [the fountains] would begin to attract the wrong people the security people were in there to move them along. They don’t want to hang out where there’s

security.” Once again we have the production of legitimate park users, “people,” and illegitimate park users, “the wrong people.” According to Wendy, security guards are in place to prevent “the wrong people,” a group she associates with homeless people, from visiting the revitalized park.

In response to my question “do you think increasing the security is . . . a good idea?” Tracy responds:

Yeah, it’s critical. If you’re looking at a budget and you’re deciding where the money has to go, it has to happen, it has to be there because we still have the fact of where we live . . . we still have three Reserves on either side, we still have a homeless population, having said that . . . everybody can use that space.

In this case, a security presence in the park is said to be critical because of “where we live.” Tracy forges a three-way link between Galt Gardens, nearby Indian reserves and the “homeless population.” According to Tracy, it is “our” proximity to reserves as well as “our” homeless population that engenders the need for security guards in Galt Gardens.³⁵ While Tracy states that “everybody can use [the] space,” it is clear that certain users are produced as more legitimate than others. To attribute the need for security to the “homeless population” produces homeless people as illegitimate in the specific sense of being a drain on resources, rather than being “productive.” Moreover, while Tracy does not explicitly refer to race, she does refer to “Reserves,” geographical areas strongly associated with First Nations people. To attribute the need for security to Reserves produces Reserves themselves, as well as the people associated with these racialized

³⁵ I emphasize “our” in order to signal Tracy’s use of “we,” a designation that produces me as one of “us” in relation to “them.”

spaces, as inherently problematic or dangerous. In relation to Galt Gardens, First Nations users are, by association, produced, along with homeless people, as illegitimate.

While geographically separate, a meaningful link is made between Galt Gardens and the nearby Indian Reserves. This connection is also established in an interview conducted as part of my pilot study. Chelsey, a long time resident of Lethbridge, and a few friends had spent some time distributing bagged lunches to homeless people in Galt Gardens. “It originally started from the church I go to,” explained Chelsey, “but . . . [it] wasn’t so we would say like ‘hey come to our church’.” According to Chelsey, she and her friends were simply acting in accordance with the bible, specifically the “verse that talks about feeding the hungry.” Again, while race is not explicitly mentioned in my conversation with Chelsey, “the Reserve” is. “I met a few people that would come in from the Reserve,” says Chelsey, “they didn’t have rides home so they’d just end up being there ‘cause that’s where everyone kind of congregated.” The relationship between race and space and, more specifically, Aboriginality and downtown Lethbridge, is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

The revitalization of Galt Gardens was described in newspaper articles and interview transcripts as a dramatic and positive change. Compared to the “empty dead space” (Tracy) of the old (pre-revitalized) Galt Gardens, the revitalized park was constructed as a popular recreational destination for the “public.” However, a closer analysis of discursive constructions of the revitalization revealed a preference for a particular kind of “public.” While Galt Gardens was ostensibly “open to everyone,” only “families,” “kids/children,” and “elderly people/seniors” were specifically produced as

“desirable” and “positive” park users. Such inclusionary identifications were accompanied by, and indeed contingent upon, identifications of “undesirable,” “negative” users. In a number of instances, it was the city’s most impoverished residents, referred to as “the city’s homeless” (Shurtz, 2003b), that were explicitly produced as illegitimate. Although Galt Gardens continues to be defined as a public space (in terms of property), a number of newspaper articles described homeless people as illegitimate users of the space, effectively producing them as other than “public,” and even other than “people.” Although interview transcripts were more varied in their constructions, homeless people were again produced as somewhat problematic. Moreover, a distinction was made between what might be considered “the good homeless,” those who seem to conform more closely to neoliberal ideas of proper personhood, and “the rest.”

Continuing with an investigation of representations of Galt Gardens, Chapter Five will look at the discursive production of Galt Gardens, specifically in terms of the concept of “use.” As will be demonstrated, interview transcripts and newspaper articles produce a revitalized Galt Gardens as a space of leisure, recreation and consumption, and not a space for the more private (“primal”) activities of the home.

Chapter Five: Findings

For Habermas (1989), the public sphere, though it has a concrete history, is a kind of normative ideal, a realm of political interaction independent of the state where citizens can discuss their everyday lives as well as critique dominant power structures. It is, as Fraser (1990) notes, more of a “conceptual resource” than a material space. As I have indicated in previous sections of the thesis, in the present research public space is taken to be more than an abstraction; it is a practiced and re-produced (both materially and discursively) social formation. As Peterson (2006) states, “it is important not to reify labels of ‘public’ and ‘private’ but to explore the attenuated meanings of each in changing historical and institutional contexts” (p. 375). At this point in my research, I am not concerned with critiquing ideal or abstract conceptions of the public sphere or public space. Moreover, I do not propose the existence of some quintessential public space against which all others might be measured, for example, the often romanticised Greek agora.³⁶ Rather, I am interested in how a particular public space, namely Galt Gardens park, is discursively produced by newspaper articles and locally identified stakeholders, in terms of the concept of “use,” and in terms of particular ways of representing the public/private distinction.

In order to help conceptualise my findings, I propose two different, though related, meanings of the term “private”: 1) private as the space of “primal human tasks” (Waldron, 1991, p. 301) and 2) private as relating specifically to private property.

³⁶ As Mitchell (1995) points out, the Greek agora was exclusionary in that, while it was open to all citizens, “citizenship was a right denied to slaves, women, and foreigners” (p. 132).

Both of these meanings are discussed, to varying degrees, in the following discussion on representations of the uses and misuses of public space.

Speaking of Galt Gardens, a former president of the downtown Rotary Club was quoted in the *Lethbridge Herald* as saying, “what we want to do is to have people make more use of the park. It's a tremendous asset to have in the heart of the city, but it's an underutilized asset.” These remarks are indicative of a number of newspaper representations published prior to the revitalization of Galt Gardens. In these articles Galt Gardens is often constructed as a beautiful and valuable, though underused, park.³⁷ Having already analysed who is and who is not represented as having the right to Galt Gardens, in this section I consider what is and what is not represented as legitimate park use. In particular, I address the implications of such representations in regards to the way the park might be more likely used by those most impoverished in the city (i.e. those park users already produced as “negative users”).

Waldron (1991, p. 301) argues that public and private (“primal”) spaces have come to be complementary: for example, the private space of the home being the space of “primal human tasks” (i.e. sleeping, washing, having sex, etc.) and the public space of the park being a space of recreation (p. 301). According to Waldron (1991), this complementary production works quite well for those who have access to both private and public space, but for those without access to private homes the situation can be “disastrous.” My research findings demonstrate Waldron’s argument, showing how this relationship might perilously effect the most impoverished residents of a city (those

³⁷ As demonstrated above, the park is produced as underused by “positive users,” such as “families,” “children,” and “seniors,” and overused by “negative users,” such as “the homeless.”

without the “private” space upon which the “public” is contingent), and allow “public” spaces to emerge exclusively as sites of leisure. With the findings presented here, I suggest that without access to the socially constructed and materially produced private places for “primal human tasks,” those without homes must encounter the park outside a normative private/public binary, which frames the perceptions of those defined as “stakeholders” in the park. This analysis, however, must first account for representations that articulate the desired uses of Galt Gardens as a public place.

Consuming the park

In both newspaper articles and interview transcripts Galt Gardens is represented as a place of leisure, recreation and consumption - an ideal public place. In one

Lethbridge Herald article, the reader is asked to imagine the revitalized Galt Gardens as

a spacious green park, complete with lush trees, colourful flower gardens, sparkling waterfalls and crystal-clear pools, food kiosks emanating delicious aromas and entertainers . . . full of people; adults and children alike walking, talking, playing and having fun. . . . [I]n the winter the park is still full of people, many of them skating on an outdoor ice rink under beautifully lit trees. (Shurtz, 2003a)

In another article published the same year, Bernie Carriere, former president of the Downtown Rotary Club, envisions “a vibrant downtown . . . where individuals and families spend time together shopping and playing. He sees a park with a band shell for concerts and outdoor events, a spray park, and outdoor skating rink” (Shurtz, 2003c). In both of these representations there is an apparent alteration back and forth between consumption and recreation, between “shopping and playing,” as if the two were essentially connected. This discursive connection is related to representations of Galt Gardens as an economically valuable space, a “tremendous asset,” that is “underutilized,”

squandered on non-consuming *others*. As Mitchell & Staeheli (2006) note, in modern capitalist cultures there exists an intimate relationship between public and private redevelopment: “[p]ublicly funded beautification of public spaces is used to jumpstart private property redevelopment, in part because these improvements in public space have relational benefit to the value of surrounding private property redevelopment” (p. 150).

Similar idealised representations emerge in my analysis of interview transcripts. When asked whether or not the Galt Gardens revitalization has been a success, Wendy, a local business owner and member of the BRZ, responds:

Yeah, I think it needs to go further though. I mean they have movies in the park and that’s great, you go out there and you see all these people. . .but there’s so much more they could do. Like we’re in downtown Denver . . . the 16th avenue mall, they have a mile-long mall. It is so cool, I realise we don’t have the population, but oh my gosh if we could. So what they have is stores on either side and then the centre is all cement and stone and whatever and they have trees and fountains and seating areas and, things set up where people sell stuff . . . it’s all storefronts and outdoor patio restaurants and it’s just the coolest place. And they have horse and carriage rides you can go on up and down and there’s always tons of people walking around.

Interestingly, Wendy’s model for a successful Galt Gardens is not another public park, but a mile-long transit mall in Denver, Colorado. The 16th Street Mall, as it is more commonly referred to, was built in the early 1980s in response to “a declining downtown retail sector” (Robertson, 1990, p. 264). As suggested by its name, the 16th Street Mall is primarily a space of consumption, built with the purpose of attracting customers to downtown Denver. For Wendy, the largely privatised mall, with its “storefronts and outdoor patio restaurants,” is represented as a paragon of public space, an example of what Galt Gardens could be if revitalization efforts were taken further. Recalling briefly the preceding analysis on who has the right to Galt Gardens, Wendy’s idealised version of

the park includes nothing explicit about ensuring an all-inclusive public space. Rather, her comments indicate that the activity of consumption figures prominently among leisure activities and that leisure tied to consumption should itself be a priority for the public space of Galt Gardens.

Programming the park

Within the representations I analysed, use of Galt Gardens as a public space is constructed as ideally event-oriented. This priority is expressed by Tracy, a member of the downtown Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), when she states that in order for the park to be successful “it has to be programmable.” Indeed, according to Tracy, making the park “programmable” was identified as a prime concern in the BRZ’s assessment of the phase two revitalization. A “programmable” space is identified by Tracy as a space that has the facilities and services needed to accommodate various events. Tracy notes that the building of public washrooms and servery (a facility for food preparation and service) were fundamental in making Galt Gardens more “programmable,” and therefore more useful to the city as well as more attractive to other private organisations potentially interested in booking the park.³⁸ Thus, according to revitalization priorities, the park could, under some conditions, be used as a private³⁹ as well as a public space. However, as the following section demonstrates, these conditions are specific and seem to be in keeping with the above identified priority of consumption.

According to Sally, a City of Lethbridge employee, if a private organisation or community group wants to book a section of the park, they must first apply for a permit

³⁸ Interestingly, Tracy produces these facilities as important for events, not use by individuals in the park.

³⁹ “Private” as it relates specifically to property use.

which ranges in price from zero to several thousand dollars, depending on the services required. If a group books the park over one month in advance and requires no services (i.e. electricity, garbage cans, PA system, etc.) there is no charge. If, however, less than one month's notice is provided, and/or extra services are required, the cost increases accordingly. Having a "programmable" Galt Gardens seems especially important to the city's downtown Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), an organisation that regularly holds public events in the park.

Initial incarnations of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), variously referred to as Business Improvement Areas, Community Improvement Districts, and as is the case in Alberta, Business Revitalization Zones (BRZs), first appeared in the United States and Canada in the 1970's. Since that time these privately funded organisations have become ubiquitous in cities around the world, from metropolises such as New York and London to much smaller cities such as Lethbridge. As John Hannigan (1998) notes, BID's are, in spirit,

an updated version of the neighborhood businessmen's associations of the past which promoted commercial activity along main streets by putting up Christmas decorations, sponsoring prizes for the best decorated shop window and by holding 'Midnight Madness' sales on warm summer nights. (p. 139)

The difference, says Hannigan, is that BIDs "have legal status which allows merchants and property owners to tax themselves in order to provide an expanded repertoire of services" (p. 139).

While many have praised BID's for their role in re-claiming "public space from the sense of menace that drives shoppers, and eventually store owners and citizens, to the suburbs" (Siegel in Zukin, 1995), others (Zukin, 1995; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006) have

given these organisations more critical attention. For example, Zukin (1995) contends that in revitalizing urban spaces BID's work to "nurture a visible social stratification" (p. 36). However, Zukin's (1995) analysis focuses primarily on rich BIDs (e.g. the Grand Central Partnership in New York City), not small, relatively poor districts like the one found in Lethbridge.

Originally formed in 1987, Lethbridge's downtown BRZ is funded by over 560 businesses.⁴⁰ Membership is required for all businesses located within the geographical area known as the Downtown Commercial District (DCD). Consistent with Hannigan's (1998) observation, the BRZ obliges all business located in the downtown to pay a special levy. Money raised by the levy is used to fund the BRZ and its various downtown revitalization initiatives. In talking with various stakeholders and analysing newspaper articles, I found that, as small business owner Dan indicated, the BRZ was "integrally involved" in the revitalization of Galt Gardens. While the BRZ lacked the resources to make large financial contributions, the organisation apparently worked quite closely with the city and the Lethbridge Rotary Club(s) to facilitate and advise on the revitalization of Galt Gardens.

Not only does the BRZ sponsor various events such as the annual Street Machine Weekend Show and Shine, they hold their own events, including Movie in the Park and the Bright Lights Festival. As Tom notes, the BRZ is "trying to do more programming. . .to bring people to the park." It is, of course, in the interest of the BRZ, and the various businesses it represents, to encourage events that bring people,

⁴⁰ According to Tom, the BRZ was created in "response to a downturn in the economy" and "to the fact that a lot of business had left the downtown core and had moved out to the fringes to malls."

specifically consumers, to the park. For example, the BRZ's 2009 Bright Light Festival (an annual Christmas light display to kick off the holiday shopping season) in Galt Gardens coincided with Midnight Madness during which downtown business stayed open late and offer special deals to customers.

Thus, while many of the representations I analysed were ostensibly oriented towards public use of the park, Galt Gardens can also be privately booked. This obfuscates the assumed public character of the park; while usually "open to the public," there are times when certain areas of the park are transformed into the private spaces of wedding photo shoots and corporate barbecues.

In this section I have looked at how Galt Gardens is represented as a place for leisure, recreation, consumption and certain private, "programmable" events. Now I consider how such representations work to impact those without access to the private ("primal") space that the above representations assume to be universal. I then go on to examine representations of security in the park as they relate to the policing of the public and private dimensions of the park.

The Importance of Public Space

For Waldron (1991) the plight of a homeless person is fundamentally spatial:

there is no place governed by a private property rule where [a homeless person] is allowed to be whenever *he [sic]* chooses, no place governed by a private property rule from which he may not at any time be excluded as a result of someone else's say so. (p. 299)

Fortunately, says Waldron, we do not live in a "libertarian paradise" where all areas of the city are governed by a private property rule. There are public places where homeless people are ostensibly allowed to be, such as sidewalks and public parks. I say

“ostensibly” in reference to the fact that while these spaces remain, in a sense, “open to everyone,” they are, as the literature (Mitchell, 1995; Smith, 1996) suggests, becoming increasingly regulated, policed and privatised. This trend, which Waldron considers to be a “modified form of the libertarian catastrophe” (p. 301), often results in the exclusion of the poorest and most marginalised residents from what are, in the case of homeless people, the only places where they are allowed to be.

Admittedly, Waldron’s (1991) argument is most relevant to cities without available homeless shelters. In his article, Waldron argues that homeless people living in such cities have no private (“primal”) space, “no place to perform elementary human activities like urinating, washing, sleeping, cooking, eating, and standing around” (p. 301).

Significantly, Lethbridge does have a homeless shelter which provides many of the city’s most impoverished people with vital services, including washrooms, a place to sleep and warm meals. However, according to employees of the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre (LSRC), public spaces such as Galt Gardens remain extremely important for Lethbridge’s homeless residents.

Indeed, representatives from the LSRC were the only interviewees to emphasise the importance of public spaces such as Galt Gardens for homeless people in the city. Ellen, an employee at the LSRC, noted that public spaces such as Galt Gardens are especially important for those who utilise the shelter because they provide “a social gathering place other than the shelter environment, where they can be free to speak, be free to hold hands.” While it is true that the homeless shelter is a place where homeless people are free to be, they are, according to Ellen, restricted to particular ways of being.

For example, within the shelter “physical contact” is strongly discouraged, making Galt Gardens “a place where a couple can go . . . and actually be together, you know, sit and talk and all that sort of stuff.” In other words, the shelter is not a place where homeless people are free to engage in what are commonly considered to be the private or “primal” activities of the home. For example, while the shelter gives homeless people a place to sleep, they are required to sleep alone. The shelter does not provide a place to have sex or, as Ellen points out, even hold hands. Where, then, might the city’s most impoverished engage in these kinds of activities? According to Waldron (1991), their only hope is in public spaces such as streets, subways and parks (p. 311).

However, urban public places are often highly regulated and homeless people are no more free to act in these places than anyone else. In addition to more ubiquitous legal prohibitions, public places often have their own specific laws. For example, while there exists no general law prohibiting the consumption of alcohol, there is, as noted above, a provincial law prohibiting alcohol consumption in public places.⁴¹ Waldron (1991) provides the example of “making love.” Again, while there is no general law against the act itself, it is most often forbidden in public places. Even if we grant that “public-space laws” apply to everyone equally, it is still the case that they have a particularly insidious and detrimental effect on those people without private homes (Waldron, 1991, p. 313). While the prohibition of sex in public places is unlikely to affect middle and upper class residents (who are free to enjoy the act in the normative and “rightful” place of the home), such a prohibition leaves homeless people with no place legally to have sex.

⁴¹ See Alberta Gaming and Liquor Act (www.gp.alberta.ca), especially sections 89(1), 89(2), 89(3), 115(1), 115(2), 115(3), 115(4), 115(5), 116, 117(1), and 117(2).

While speaking about the role of Galt Gardens for those who utilise the shelter, David, an LSRC employee, comments, “it’s their living room, what you and I would do in our living room, that’s what they do in Galt Gardens.” However, the things “you and I” might legitimately and rightfully do in the privacy of our homes are the very things represented by other interviewees and newspaper articles as illegitimate. As illustrated above, most of the texts analysed produce a revitalized Galt Gardens as a space for leisure, recreation and consumption rather than the private activities of everyday life. Indeed, activities commonly considered to belong in the home, or some other private location (i.e. “hanging out,” “sleeping,” “having sex,” “consuming alcohol”), are explicitly produced as illegitimate uses of the park. In assuming a homogenous middle-class public, the contingent production of public and private space already precludes homeless people from using public space appropriately.

Policing Park Use

An indication of the increased surveillance of public spaces described in the literature (Davis, 1990; Zukin, 1995; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006) is made evident in the new presence of security guards and security lighting in Galt Gardens. According to Zukin (1995), such trends are the result of a “politics of everyday fear” that is often addressed by privatising and militarising public space, “making streets, parks, and even shops more secure but less free” (p. 38). Introducing private security guards into public space is not merely a method of securing space, it is also a practice that complicates the very designation of public space. Mitchell & Staeheli (2006) theorise this complication, referring to spaces that are “formally owned by the state, by the public, but that are

subject to control and regulation by private interests” as “*pseudo-private*” (p. 153). Here, “private” relates to private property, denoting “non-state” space. In this sense, privatisation entails the private (non-state) appropriation of previously state owned and controlled space.

“Privatisation” as “non-state” is useful in describing recent trends in the surveillance and control of public spaces. However, it is important to acknowledge that this conceptualisation relies on the liberal idea that the emergence of the modern state in 18th century Europe coincided with a genuine private sphere, a realm outside the influence of state power.

Jürgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt also propose the existence of “non-state” space, but for them it is found in the public sphere, a “specifically political space distinct from the state and the economy, an institutionally bounded discursive area that is home to citizen debate, deliberation, agreement, and action” (Villa, 1992, p. 712). While a comprehensive discussion of these theories extends the reach of this research, I point here to the fact that both have been criticised by postmodern and poststructuralist theorists such as Foucault, who argues that they “blind us to the constitutive workings of modern power and its fundamental role in the production of subjects” (Villa, 1992, p. 712).

James Security is a private company that provides security services to both Edmonton and Lethbridge. Beginning in 2003, the City of Lethbridge hired James Security to patrol Galt Gardens. Since then security guards have been a constant presence in the park during the warmer months, and take an active role in policing “appropriate” use of the park. In this section I analyse newspaper articles and interview transcripts in

order to answer the following question: How do these texts attribute meaning to the recent introduction of private security guards into Galt Gardens? This question is important for two reasons. First, the introduction of security guards corresponds with, and was indeed identified by interview informants to be, a critical part of the park's Phase Two revitalization. Second, as suggested above, having private security guards in a public space already engenders critical questions regarding the meaning and practice of that space.

Everyone I spoke with agreed that private security guards are a necessary part of Galt Gardens revitalization efforts. For example, while Laura reports being uncertain about the need for security guards in the future, she contends that a security presence is important during the park's current "transition" period. Tom is even more forthcoming in his endorsement of private security:

I think it's fundamental . . . obviously if we're going to have young families we don't want to have open drinking, we don't want to have people that are causing disturbances, we don't want people that are intimidating people . . . I mean, the park is open to everyone, however, just like the rest of society there are rules of conduct, so open drinking is not permitted - if you're drunk and causing a disturbance or harassing people or panhandling - all the things that in any part of our society are frowned upon then we need to make sure that's not happening in Galt Gardens. And for years, that was kind of tolerated in the park.

Sharon Zukin (1995) notes that, "there is no single overriding vision of the city's public, no vision of how to balance the needs of the 'public' and of 'space' . . . the streets, parks, museums, and mixed use commercial centres are torn between a democratic ideology and a restricted access" (p. 266). This tension between "a democratic ideology" and "a restricted access" is articulated by a number of interviewees, including Tom, who constructs Galt Gardens as at once "open to everyone" and closed to "intimidating

people” and others who engage in “inappropriate” activities. Interestingly, while some of the “inappropriate” activities specified by Tom are illegal, illegality is not the grounds on which he deems them illegitimate. Instead, he appeals to our social conscience, suggesting that what should be excluded are “all the things that in . . . our society are frowned upon.”⁴² Tom also identifies some things that might intimidate “young families,” a code word for the “vulnerable.”

A similar tension (between “a democratic ideology” and “a restricted access”) was identified in my conversation with Wendy. When asked about the possibility of employing security guards during the winter months, Wendy responded:

It depends on what they’re going to do. If they do put a skating area in there, or something like that, which would be really cool . . . then they need to because any kind of public place like that will attract people that wanna hang out and it’s not just intoxicated people, it’s also other groups that have started gathering, and so you wanna keep that down so that everybody feels safe and comfortable and [can] [enjoy] it. So if that happens in the winter and you would start getting the wrong people claiming it as their own then . . . you would need to have security.

The park, suggests Wendy, is a public space that requires security guards to protect “everybody” from “intoxicated people” and “others” who might want to “hang out.”

While the park is constructed as a place where “everybody” should feel “safe and comfortable,” the preceding analysis has already indicated that there are certain people unaccounted for by the seemingly all-inclusive category of “everybody.” According to Wendy, if a winter recreational facility were to be built in Galt Gardens, security guards would be necessary to prevent “the wrong people,” those excluded from the category of “everybody,” from “claiming [the park] as their own.”

⁴² While “all things . . . frowned upon” may coincide with all things illegal, this is not necessarily the case. What is and what is not illegal is discussed below.

Out of all interviewees, Wendy had the most to say about the security presence in Galt Gardens. She noted that prior to the introduction of security guards, use of the park included “a lot of drinking . . . a lot of people hanging out and drunk.” “I have seen the brown paper bag being passed around,” says Wendy, “and [people] taking naps . . . it was kind of some people’s personal campground.” Here, both alcohol consumption and “hanging out” are constructed as illegitimate park uses. Indeed, from a legal perspective, both the consumption of alcohol and intoxication are illegitimate uses of Galt Gardens. The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Act (AGLA) states that “no person may use or consume liquor in a public place or any place other than a residence, temporary residence, licensed premises or a place or class of place prescribed in the regulations where liquor may be used or consumed” (89). The AGLA also states that “no person may be intoxicated in a public place” (115-1). Given current law, it is perhaps not surprising that interviewees constructed people who are drinking and/or drunk as illegitimate park users; they are, after all, engaging in illegal activity. However, unlike alcohol consumption/intoxication, “hanging out” and sleeping are not prohibited by any provincial or municipal law. Moreover, while park facilities (i.e. Rotary Centennial Plaza, public washrooms) are only operational during the day, there is no ordinance preventing use of the park at night, nor is there any law prohibiting people from sleeping in the park at any time, day or night. So, the issue here seems to something else, namely particular “uses” that are constructed as illegitimately “privatising.” Wendy’s use of the possessive (“some people’s personal campground”) indicates that she sees those who take naps in the park as being involved in illegitimately “privatising” the park for their “personal” use.

As is made clear in the following paragraph, Wendy's problem is not with people sleeping in the park, but with particular kinds of people, namely homeless people, sleeping in the park and thereby "privatising" it for their "personal" uses. As Wendy's interviewed clarified, problematic park use is coupled discursively with homelessness. She stated, "with the homeless shelter you see . . . them sleeping on the lawn out back . . . that's what would be happening in the park and that's all moved now, that doesn't happen anymore, so that's huge." Wendy was not the only interview respondent to produce homeless people sleeping in Galt Gardens as illegitimate users of the park. During our discussion concerning the "homeless problem" in Galt Gardens, Logan, a member of the Lethbridge Regional Police stated, "a security guard can deal with that, they don't let them set up camps, you know, like all their little cardboard boxes, they can't sleep there anymore, they won't let them do that." Significantly, Wendy and Logan only identified the sleeping *homeless* as problematic. For example, no mention was made of whether a short nap had by a business woman on her lunch break, or two lovers falling asleep together following an afternoon picnic would be considered illegitimate park use. These uses, I suspect, would not be seen as illegitimately "privatising" activity. The only people specifically constructed as illegitimate "park sleepers" are the very people who have reportedly been relocated by security guards to a (the one and only) more "appropriate" place of rest, namely the homeless shelter. This reinforces Wright's (2000) point that "not all bodies are regulated equally" (p. 54). Indeed, "the effects of . . . spatial regulation are experienced unevenly, depending upon one's race, class, and gender position" (Wright, 2000, p. 54).

Like all of the other interviewees I spoke with, LSRC employees constructed security guards as a positive addition to Galt Gardens. However, their representation differed notably from other interview informants. While most interviewees tended to represent security as necessary to guard against “negative users” and “inappropriate activities,” Todd, a First Nations LSRC employee, stated that security is important “for the homeless themselves.” “There’s dangers everywhere for them,” continued Todd, “and the security guards help make the park a safe place for them to be.”

Perceptions of Danger

Doug, a civil servant involved in the revitalization of Galt Gardens, agrees that security is necessary in the park, but admits that “it hasn’t fixed any social . . . or crime problem[s].” “It hasn’t fixed any of that,” says Doug, “it’s moved it.” In response to a question concerning the continued presence of security in the park, Doug notes that the guards are “a reaction to a problem,” and if that “problem is somehow lessened or fixed then the need may not be there.” Especially interesting is a link made by Doug between a *perceived* fear of the park and a *real* need for security:

I don’t see [security] being eliminated in the near future. There’s still a, I guess fear in a lot of peoples’ minds because they wouldn’t go there before, cause they didn’t feel safe . . . now that there’s a crowd they’ll go there because they wanna engage in the fountain or they have their activities. They may still not feel entirely safe . . . I guess maybe if people forget that there used to be a problem there than maybe there isn’t a need for security but I guess as long as people remember and maybe don’t feel as safe there is a need for security.

Doug suggests that while the introduction of security guards has effectively moved the “problem,” he claims that the memory or perception of a problem requires security guards to ensure that people feel safe in the park. Indeed, the idea that the dangers of Galt

Gardens have more to do with perception than reality was articulated by a number of interview informants. Tracy, for example, says that, although “there’s nothing to be afraid of in the park,” security guards are necessary to assuage perceptions: “whether [security guards] really [do] any good or not is a perception. People see security they feel like they’re safer. To be honest, there’s nothing to be afraid of in that park . . . absolutely nothing.”

Tom notes that prior to its revitalization Galt Gardens was “underutilised . . . and perceived by the public as . . . dangerous.” While “that perception may still exist in some minds,” says Tom, most people have re-imagined the park:

I think for the people who have actually come to the downtown and experienced the park, whether it’s Movies in the Park, . . . the Bright Lights Festival, or . . . the Rotary Centennial Plaza, I think their perception of the park would change. Now I think it’s being used as what a park should be, a place to go, to have your lunch . . . to walk in, to go to an event, or to just sit and enjoy the plaza.”

Tom also constructs Galt Gardens as a place that, while not really dangerous, has come to be perceived as dangerous:

The reality is, if you look back on the records . . . there was no major crimes committed in Galt Gardens over those years - there was no real fear of anybody, but perception became reality [and] people thought it was a dangerous place.

According to Tom, the revitalization of Galt Gardens has more to do with subverting perceptions than it does with with addressing any real problems with the park. “My personal opinion,” says Tracy,

is [that]whether it really does any good or not is a perception. People see security, [and] they feel like they’re saferWe really kicked up the security because we understood that at the beginning of this park thing it was critical that people had to have a positive experience.

Security, then, is constructed as necessary insofar as it addresses peoples’ perceptions.

A *Lethbridge Herald* article concerning the Galt Gardens revitalization reads, “increased use of the park by city residents is predicted, and with 24-hour security and regular police patrols via foot and cycle officers, the public will be able to take back the park” (June 21, 2007). The article does not explicitly represent Galt Gardens as a dangerous park, but rather as a park that has been illegitimately expropriated from a rightful “public.” The idea that the park must be “taken back” is also represented in interview transcripts. Tracy, a member of the BRZ, notes, “perception has changed . . . you know, we're going to take *our* park back” (emphasis added). In short, the battle metaphor employed in these quotations (re)produces an illegitimate occupation of Galt Gardens by a non-public enemy.

With the exception of LSRC employees, the presence of security in Galt Gardens is represented by interviewees as necessary to: 1) assuage false perceptions of danger, 2) guard against real “negative” users/uses and 3) aid in the “public’s” reclamation of *their* park. In other words, while the park is produced as *actually* safe, it is also produced as illegitimately inhabited and illegitimately “privatised” by particular park users designated as other than public. The presence of security guards is constructed as having less to do with safety and more to do with public reclamation. But who exactly are these imposturous *others* from whom the park must be reclaimed? As Kawash (1998) notes, “the public, as it is represented in the bourgeois public sphere, is always defined as against the visible, street-dwelling homeless; in this framework, homelessness is not a problem that occurs within the public but a threat that appears from else-where” (pp. 320-321). As illustrated above, interview transcripts and newspaper articles construct “the

city's homeless" and "*others* who loiter in the park" (my emphasis) as both "negative users" and "other than public." Security guards are, for the most part, constructed as an important part of ensuring a "rigorously normative definition of the public that views the propertylessness and displacement experienced by the homeless as a threat to the property and place possessed and controlled in the name of the public" (Kawash, 1998, p. 320).

A 2005 *Lethbridge Herald* article entitled "Perception, reality don't gel" cites some statistics that contradict what are identified as common perceptions of downtown: "According to Lethbridge Regional Police statistics for the year beginning in July 2004, 21 percent of all calls handled by the force came from downtown . . . that compared to, say, 32 percent of all calls that originate in North Lethbridge." Moreover, according to the article, the majority of these calls did not involve violent crimes. Interestingly, the author suggests that the fear experienced by residents may have less to do with a dangerous downtown and more to do with a heterogeneous, and therefore uncomfortable downtown:

Those who don't feel safe may really just be uncomfortable coming face to face with people whose lives don't mesh with our own. They may be poor, perhaps homeless . . . They don't dress like us and their hygiene may not be up to our personal standards.

The author's comments are reminiscent of Harvey's (2006) illuminating interpretation of Baudelaire's poem, "The Eyes of the Poor."⁴³ For Harvey, the poem "encapsulates a whole series of themes and controversies that accompanied Haussmann's interventions" in Paris during the 1860s (p. 18). A century and a half later the poem's themes, as identified by Harvey, remain relevant.

⁴³ The poem "The Eyes of the Poor" can be found in Baudelaire's (1970) collection of poems, *Paris Spleen*.

While sitting in front of a new cafe on one of the Paris' recently built boulevards, Baudelaire and his lover are confronted with a poor family awestruck by the cafe's "dazzling" gold walls. While Baudelaire is "touched" and "even a little ashamed" by the "family of eyes," his lover is indignant:

I turned my eyes to look into yours, dear love, to read my thoughts in them; and as I plunged my eyes into your eyes, so beautiful and so curiously soft, into those green eyes, home of Caprice and governed by the moon, you said: Those people are insufferable with their great saucer eyes. Can't you tell the proprietor to send them away?" (Baudelaire cited in Harvey, 2006, p. 19)

Baudelaire's lover does not fear for her personal safety. Rather, the "violence of her response" is indicative of her expectation of "class homogeneity within the public space" (Harvey, 2006, p. 22). This expectation was not merely a personal matter, but was rooted in "the segregation that set in during the Second Empire" when "the bourgeoisie no longer had contact with, and therefore lost its sense of obligation to and moral influence over the lower classes" (Harvey, 2006, p. 22). In representations of the revitalization of Galt Gardens the expectation of class homogeneity was cloaked in language of victimisation and vulnerability. Lethbridge's most impoverished citizens were represented as scaring off "families" and other "positive" users, and depriving "us" of "our" rightful park. This, in turn, was used to justify depriving homeless people of the use of the park.

Through an analysis of representations of legitimate and illegitimate uses of Galt Gardens, this chapter established a frame for the contested definition of "public space." In both interview transcripts and newspaper articles a revitalized Galt Gardens was largely represented as a "middle-class" space, that is, a space of leisure, recreation and

consumption, and not a space for more private (“primal”) activities (i.e. “bathing,” “sleeping,” “having sex,” etc.).

As illustrated above, it is at times difficult to differentiate between representations of illegitimate park “uses” and “users.” Some park uses are only considered “illegitimate” when linked with particular users. An example of this was found in constructions of “sleeping in the park,” which was represented as problematic (illegitimately privatising) only when it was associated with homeless people.

In the next chapter I move away from discursive representations of space, focusing instead on some of the material interventions (conceptualised as spatial practices) that contribute to the production of a revitalized Galt Gardens.

Chapter Six: The Material Production of Galt Gardens

Having already discussed selected representations of Galt Gardens (i.e. newspaper articles and interview transcripts), I now consider some spatial practices that have coincided with/constituted the park's most recent revitalization. To reiterate, spatial practice "embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). According to Shields (1999), spatial practices

include building typology, urban morphology and the creation of zones and regions for specific purposes: a specific range of types of park for recreation; test sites for nuclear weapons; places for this and that; sites for death (graveyards) and remembrance (memorials, battlegrounds, museums, historic walks and tours). (p. 162)

As part of a more complex spatial ensemble, the materiality of Galt Gardens (the benches, tables, pathways, artworks, monuments, washrooms, etc.) is significant in that it encourages a particular kind of "crowd practice" (Shields, 1999, p. 163). In this chapter I am specifically interested in the material interventions that came about as part of the Phase Two revitalization. After looking at how "positive" and "negative" use is materialised in (and surrounding) Galt Gardens, I draw on the work of Roland Barthes (1972) to analyse four painted murals that frame the park space.

The revitalization of Galt Gardens coincided with the removal of a number of nearby public benches (see Figure 1). These benches, some of the busiest in the downtown, were, according to interviewees, removed to discourage certain "negative" users and uses. Tom, a representative of the BRZ, notes, the removal of the benches "was a response to loitering" and other "negative behaviour." According to Tracy, the removal

of the benches was unfortunate but necessary given that the only people who used them were “negative users or . . . street people.” In general the removal of the benches was represented by those involved as a kind of “necessary evil.” For example, Tom considered the removal to be a kind of a “knee jerk” reaction. “[I]t was kind of the first step and it’s kind of unfortunate,” says Tom, “but we’ve also had to remove benches from other areas in the downtown core for the same type of behaviour.”

James, a City employee involved with a number of downtown revitalization projects, notes that removing public benches is “exactly the opposite of what we’re trying to do,” which is to “create a more pedestrian friendly environment.” He goes on to suggest a more “holistic” approach that focuses on effective security and policing rather than the destruction of public seating:

what we need to do is . . . look at that . . . a little bit more holistically, so that when you look at maybe some of the programming for . . . security, crime prevention, policing, there needs to be a balance between moving people along who might not be contributing to the positive atmosphere, are hanging out basically, scaring people away, and actually providing for people who just need a place to sit.

Although James is critical of the removal of the benches, he maintains a distinction, albeit a hazy one, between “negative” users (those that are “hanging out” and scaring people away) and “positive” users (those “who just need a place to sit”).

When the benches across from the park were sawed off, the brick planters to which they had for decades been attached were left intact, providing a ledge that, although slightly narrow, was appropriated as a new sitting space. In short, the articulated desire to fend off “negative” users/uses was ultimately subverted; sawing off the benches did not stop “kids,” “street people” and other “negative users” from “hanging out,” it just

made “hanging out” less convenient and comfortable. In response to this unanticipated appropriation of space, Tom suggested building a “decorative railing that goes around the flower planters [to] discourage people from sitting there [for] a length of time.”

While benches were being removed across the street from the park, new ones were being built within its borders. The revitalization of Galt Gardens saw the replacement of old benches as well as the addition of several new ones. Moreover, the Rotary Centennial Plaza has its own built-in seating, a circular concrete ledge segmented by the plaza’s five entrances. Indeed, the revitalization of Galt Gardens has seen an overall increase in “sittable” space, which, according to the American urbanist William H. Whyte (1988), is one of the most effective ways to increase desirable park use. Interestingly, however, the new benches are significantly narrower than their predecessors (see Figure 1), making sitting for long periods of time uncomfortable and lying down practically impossible. As Kingfisher (2007) notes, “distinction[s] between “positive” and “negative” users/uses of space [are]. . .revealed in the built environment” (p. 206). The new benches are political in that their very form enforces the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate use. The newly installed, effectively sleep-proof, benches produce extended park visits and sleeping as illegitimate uses, and the people who engage in these activities as illegitimate users.

The square tables positioned along the park’s main pathway have seating on only three of their four sides, preventing people from sitting with their backs turned to patrolling security guards. Thus, not only do the new seating areas distinguish between “positive” and “negative” users/uses, they are also part of a larger technology of

surveillance (Foucault, 1977) that includes security guards, increased policing and improved lighting.

During his time as an urban planner in New York, William H. Whyte worked with a group of research assistants to study a number of public spaces in the city. The findings from these studies were later published in Whyte's (1988) book, *City: Rediscovering the center*. Whyte (1988) found seating that is "built into a place, such as steps and ledges" to be "integral" to the success of public parks and plazas (p. 112). In Galt Gardens, one such built-in space, an inset stainless steel canteen counter, was recently gated off, thereby eliminating the only sheltered "sittable" space in Galt Gardens. While the steel counter was not designed for sitting, from my observations it served the purpose well for some park users, especially teenagers whose size and suppleness enabled them to fit comfortably inside the nook. Instead of embracing the space as unanticipatedly "sittable," the city had a steel gate installed to prevent "misuse" of the ledge. As Whyte (1988) notes, "[i]t takes real work to create a lousy place" (p. 112). Like the park's new unpleasantly narrow benches and the sawed off benches across the street, the gated ledge produces certain uses/users as "negative."

Although Whyte (1988) advises against the production of "defensible spaces," he maintains a clear distinction between "normal" park users and "undesirables." In other words, Whyte (1988) does not advocate for the implementation of narrow benches to prevent homeless people from sleeping in public spaces, not because he is especially concerned with the plight of homeless people in the city, but because evidence suggests a more effective solution to "the undesirables problem" (Whyte, 1988, p. 156). "The best

way to handle the problem of undesirables,” argues Whyte (1988), “is to make a place attractive to everyone else” (p. 158). As Zukin (1995) phrases it, “Whyte’s basic idea is that public spaces are made safe by attracting lots of ‘normal’ users. The more normal users there are, the less space there will be for vagrants and criminals to maneuver” (p. 28).

Whyte’s (1988) argument, which is similar to that of Jacobs (1993), denounces revanchist⁴⁴ practices while maintaining the categories on which these practices rely. For example, Whyte contends that

the most bedeviling problem of access is the public rest room. Its numbers have been declining, and now with the recent increase in the homeless, it is on the brink of disappearance. Failure to deal with the one problem rationalizes the other. Provide rest rooms, it is said, and they will be overrun by the homeless. This would attract yet more undesirables and stop downtown’s revival. This is very much like the argument for spikes on ledges. It is not just the homeless who need rest rooms. Older people, shoppers, visitors to the city, and people in general need them too, and a policy that withholds an amenity from all of them to withhold it from the homeless is a mean one indeed. (p. 162)

As in representations analysed above, Whyte (1988) constructs homeless people as both undesirable and other than public. More specifically, he constructs their need for washroom facilities as less important than “older people, shoppers, visitors and people in general” despite the fact that homeless people need such facilities more because they don’t have them in private homes.

Although Whyte (1988) is speaking primarily of access for “normal” users, other scholars have focused on the importance of public washrooms for homeless people (Waldron, 1991; Mitchell, 1997; Kingfisher 2007). As Kingfisher (2007) notes, the lack

⁴⁴ The idea of the “revanchist city” comes from Neil Smith (1996), who explicitly describes the term in his book, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*.

of public washrooms in Woodridge's Centre Park has forced homeless people "to engage in certain private activities in locally inappropriate public spaces" (p. 207).

For years Galt Gardens, like Centre Park, was without public washrooms. However, recent revitalization efforts saw the reintroduction of public washrooms, a development that is especially important for homeless people in the city. However, the washrooms are only open during the park's hours of operation, 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM from the beginning of May to the end of September. The washrooms are closed at night as well as throughout the winter, leaving the park effectively washroomless for much of the year.

The availability of the public washrooms corresponds with the presence of security guards as well as the functioning of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, the centrepiece of the phase two revitalization. Unveiled to the public on June 26, 2008, the Rotary Centennial Plaza is located in the south east corner of Galt Gardens. Designed specifically to resemble the Rotary International insignia (Dan), the plaza includes flower beds, built-in seating and nearly one-hundred jets which shoot streams of water up to 15 feet in the air. Every 20 to 30 minutes there is a programmed "spray event." During these events the plaza's fountains are choreographed to popular songs including the Canadian national anthem, "Dark Side of the Moon" by April Wine, "If I had a Million Dollars" by the Barenaked Ladies and "Civilization" performed by the Andrews Sisters.⁴⁵ The plaza is especially impressive at night when its fountains are illuminated by colourful LED lights.

⁴⁵ Particularly interesting, considering the racialized character of Galt Gardens, are the lyrics to the 1947 hit, "Civilization" (see Appendix B).

The Rotary Centennial Plaza combines spectacle and recreation. Although originally designed to be a “decorative feature,” the plaza was almost immediately appropriated as a children’s splash park. On warmer days the plaza draws relatively large crowds. Children run through the dancing fountains while adults keep watch from the perimeter. During my observations I found the plaza to be both a site of recreation and consumption. On many occasions people visited the plaza to enjoy a coffee, pita, or crêpe purchased from nearby restaurants and cafés.

Like the new narrower benches, the design of the plaza encourages short-term use. Although suitable for brief visits, the plaza’s short concrete benches make longer visits relatively uncomfortable. This, together with the repetitive “spray events,” makes the plaza a space of short-term recreation and consumption, or what Zukin (1995) calls “a visual and spatial representation of a middle-class public culture” (p. 32).

I observed a particularly revealing incident while taking field notes at a picnic table near the recently opened Rotary Centennial Plaza. It was a hot day in August and the fountains had attracted a crowd. Adults, mostly White women, watched from the periphery as young children ran through the shooting streams of water. I was about to leave my spot at the table when a First Nations man sat down beside me. I had seen him a few times before, but this time he was with a woman, also First Nations. She was in a wheelchair. “She says she’s going to cool down in the fountain,” the man said. I watched as he stood up and began to guide the wheelchair to the edge of the busy fountains, letting go in time to avoid the streams of water. As the woman slowly rolled through the fountains an almost tangible uneasiness fell over the plaza. Adults called children from

the fountains. I watched a White woman step into the waters to grab an oblivious toddler. Soon the evacuation was complete. The only person left in the fountains was the disabled First Nations woman. The crowd watched from the perimeter as she playfully splashed the streams of water with her hands. The apparent infringement did not last long. I noticed two security guards walking purposefully towards the plaza. Before they could arrive the woman had pushed herself from the fountains. The First Nations man took hold of the wheelchair's handles and pushed it towards the nearest exit. The guards slowed their pace, but continued to follow the "trouble makers" to the perimeter of the park, at which point they stopped and waited for them to cross the street. Once they had, the guards made their way back towards the plaza which, by then, had returned to normal; kids played in the fountains while adults kept watch.

The two security guards did not actually remove the disabled woman from the fountain (although it was clear that if they had arrived in time they likely would have). They did, however, escort her and her "accomplice" out of the park, as if they had broken the law. Indeed, as I found out later, they had. According to a list of posted rules, "[n]o wheeled vehicles, including, bikes, skateboards, rollerblades and scooters" are allowed in the Rotary Centennial Plaza. Although wheelchairs are not specifically mentioned, being "wheeled vehicles" they are presumably prohibited in the plaza. However, I suspect it was not merely, or even primarily the wheelchair, that produced that collective sense of infringement. Nor was it primarily the fact that the woman operating the wheelchair was an adult. On many occasions I have seen adults and people on bikes make use of the fountain without a similar reaction. Although the apparent infringement was likely

multifaceted, the fact that the woman was Aboriginal, poor and disabled cannot be overlooked. Indeed, drawing on Mary Douglas (1966), it could be argued that her body, marked by race, class and disability, was experienced as a contaminating presence in the park and, more potently, in the Rotary Centennial Plaza, the symbolic heart of the revitalized Galt Gardens.

Sentinels from the past, of the present

One of the first indications I had that the downtown might be undergoing a “re-visioning” was the rather sudden appearance of three large scale painted representations of men marked through dress as Aboriginal on the sides of buildings surrounding Galt Gardens. These three murals, which are displayed on two different buildings, one across from the south edge of the park and one across from the west edge of the park, are joined by a fourth mural mounted on the west wall of a recently closed grocery store situated across the street from the eastern edge of the park. This fourth mural is notably different from the other three murals, depicting four young men, all coal miners, in what appears to be an old advertisement for “Galt Coal,” a local coal producer from Lethbridge’s now defunct mining era.

Stencilled in sepia tones on sheets of steel mesh, the four ghostly images constitute what Barthes (1972) calls “materials of myth” (p. 110). For Barthes (1972) myth is not “an object, concept, or . . . idea; it is a mode of signification, a form” (p. 109). Barthes’ (1972) formulation of myth is tripartite, composed of relations between signifier, signified and sign.⁴⁶ In semiotic analysis, a sign can be anything (e.g. a word, an image, a

⁴⁶ Barthes (1972) distinguishes the metalanguage of the myth from the language or representation it relies upon, referring to the former as the relationship between form (signifier), concept (signified) and, the correlation of the two, signification (sign) (p. 117).

sound, a gesture) that holds meaning in a particular culture. Every sign can be broken down into two component parts, a signifier and a signified. The signifier constitutes the actual form of the sign, while the signified is the conception with which it is associated, denotatively in the case of “language,” and connotatively in the second-order discourse of myth. Barthes (1972) gives the example of a bunch of roses given to a lover. The form of the roses (signifier) signifies my passion. However, as Barthes’ (1972) warns, this must not be taken as a simple case of cause and effect, of the roses expressing my passion. Rather, “these roses weighted with passion perfectly and correctly allow themselves to be decomposed into roses and passion: the former and the latter existed before uniting and forming this third object, which is the sign” (p. 113). In other words, the signifier does not merely express the signified but fastens to it to form the sign. Here we have, in its basic form, the first order semiological system, what Barthes’ (1972) calls the “language-object” (p. 115). It is however the second order semiological system, that of myth, that is the focus of Barthes’ (1972) influential essay. According to Barthes (1972), myth is characterised by a metalanguage that relies upon the first order semiological system. In myth, the sign of the first order becomes the signifier in the second. The relationship between the first completed meaning (the sign) and the second level signification of myth is discussed below in relation to the murals that frame Galt Gardens.

Taken individually, each mural is itself a “mode of signification,” and can be analysed as such. For example, Figure 2 depicts Isapo-Muxika (Crowfoot), a nineteenth century Blackfoot chief. Crowfoot is portrayed as sitting in sober contemplation, with his head turned east towards Galt Gardens. Like “the Negro’s salute” (Barthes, 1972, p. 117)

on the cover of Paris Match, the portrait of Crowfoot is already meaningful. As Barthes (1972) notes, “in the meaning, a signification is already built, and could very well be self-sufficient if myth did not take hold of it and did not turn it suddenly into an empty, parasitical form” (p. 117). Although the depiction of the Blackfoot chief is meaningful in and of itself (as the sign in a first order semiological system), myth immediately takes hold, partially dispossessing first level signification for a particular and already commonly assumed story of national settlement in Canada, in which indigenous peoples are remembered and commemorated (in particular ways) at the same time as they are situated firmly in the past. In his discussion of the Paris Match cover Barthes (1972) articulates the relationship between form and concept:

It is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth. The form of myth is not a symbol: the Negro who salutes is not the symbol of the French Empire: he has too much presence, he appears as a rich, fully experienced, spontaneous, innocent, indisputable image. But at the same time this presence is tamed, put at a distance, made almost transparent; it recedes a little, it becomes the accomplice of a concept which comes to it fully armed, French imperialism: once made use of, it becomes artificial. (Barthes, 1972, p. 118)

Similarly, the portrait of Crowfoot is not the symbol of Canada’s past. He too appears as a “rich” and “indisputable image” of a particular person. The native chief is even provided a name, which references a very real historical biography. However, both form and biography are immediately superseded, “almost made transparent,” by “a concept which comes . . . fully armed.” When I look at the large portrait of the elderly native chief I am confronted with more than the image itself; I see what it symbolises, a noble and stoic figure, indisputably *of the past*: a “native heritage.” In this case the concept (mythology) that supersedes the biography and form is consistent with that contained in

representations of indigenous people in the early twentieth century. Silversides (1994) identifies photographic representations of indigenous people at the time as primarily about “a dying race” (p. 57). According to Silversides, an urge developed to “capture a record of the ‘famous’ Indian leaders for posterity, and ‘representative’ Indians for anthropological purposes” (p. 57).

Razack (2002) offers more detail on the Canadian mythology around the settlement of the continent and the West. She contends,

a quintessential feature of white settler mythologies is . . . the disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of the labour of peoples of colour. In North America, it is still the case that European conquest and colonization are often denied, largely through the fantasy that North America was peacefully settled and not colonized. (p. 2)

Upon examining the ghostly portrait of Crowfoot, it in itself does not symbolise a “disavowal of conquest” (Razack, 2002, p. 2). In fact, it might be understood to symbolise precisely the opposite of such a disavowal - a recognition of indigenous peoples in the area. However, read with both Barthes’ (1972) and Razack’s (2002) work in mind, the portrait becomes the “accomplice” of a larger myth that commonly condemns indigenous peoples to anachronistic space and time (McClintock, 1995 in Razack, 2002, p. 2). Blomley (2004) contends that this has been a contemporary feature of the representation of Aboriginal peoples in urban contexts: “[i]f located anywhere, native people are frequently imagined in the past or in nature. In either case, they are placed outside the city” (p.114). Blomley goes on to discuss a number of examples, including that of Vancouver’s Stanley park where, as he puts it, “a native presence, once removed, [was] reinstated on the terms of the dominant society” (p. 121). In Stanley park

the “native presence” is represented through “a model Indian village” complete with totem poles “designed to represent the work of the Haida and Kwakiutl in particular, and the Coast Indians in general” (p. 121). Drawing on the work of Chivallon (2001) and Nelson (2002), Blomley shows how such forms of social remembering actually work as acts of burial, “memorializing at the same time as they forget” (p. 122).

As noted above, the depiction of Crowfoot signifies the past. Not only is the stencilled image based on a photograph taken well over a century ago, its anachronistic quality is increased by the ghostly effect produced by the perforated steel canvas. I suggest in this case the portrait of Crowfoot signifies as an image of “colonial contemplation” (Blomely, 2004, p. 121); the pre-modern native chief looms over Galt Gardens like a ghost from a distant time/place, signifying a particular (dominant) version of a highly contested national history.

Of the four murals that frame Galt Gardens, only one, that which is displayed across from the east edge of the park, depicts something other than a portrait of a native chief. While part of the same series, this mural depicts four men, apparently White, standing in front of what is presumably a local coal mine. Again, although the image of the four miners is already meaningful, it “recedes a little” (Barthes, 1972, p. 118) in service of a national “white settler” mythology (Razack, 2002). In contrast to the representations of the elderly native men, the White miners appear as young and vital. Moreover, the inclusion of text (“Galt Coal, For Sale Here”) situates these men as

industrious harbingers of progress (and Capitalism).⁴⁷ Like the image of Crowfoot, that of the miners signifies the past. Significantly, however, the miners also signify the future. Canada's dominant national mythology includes those who industriously settled the West; it is White settlers, and miners like the four depicted on the east-side of Galt Gardens who "principally developed the land" (Razack, 2002, p.2) and according to the mythology, made this country what it is today.⁴⁸

Taken individually, each of these representations signifies in certain ways. It is almost as though they each quietly guard a version of Canadian mythology in which both the native and the settler contributed to the making of a nation, the settler by working, the native by disappearing. Significantly, these ghostly presences are somewhat insular, depicted on separate canvases and positioned on different sides of the park.⁴⁹ While there seems to be a relationship between the settlers and natives, that relationship is depoliticised. What is signified is consistent with a dominant national mythology that denies European conquest and colonisation in favour of peaceful settlement (Razack, 2002, p. 2).

In his book *How Modernity Forgets*, Paul Connerton (2009) theorises a reciprocal relationship between memorials and forgetting:

⁴⁷ In his book *How Modernity forgets*, Paul Connerton (2009) notes the mnemonic importance of place names. When place names are "semantically transparent," says Connerton, they act as "the mnemonics of a moral geography conjuring up exemplary behaviour" (p. 10). The name "Galt Gardens" pays homage to the Galt family, specifically Elliot Galt, the original manager of the North-Western Coal and Navigation Company, which employed the young miners depicted in the mural.

⁴⁸ Interestingly, real miners (who were often poor and socially marginalized) were settled mainly in the north end of Lethbridge, an area seen as less desirable. Descendants of miners have complained that their legacy is largely forgotten.

⁴⁹ Portraits of Aboriginal men in seated positions border the south and west side of the park while the miners are on the the east.

The threat of forgetting begets memorials and the construction of memorials begets forgetting. If giving monumental shape to what we remember is to discard the obligation to remember, that is because memorials permit only some things to be remembered and, by exclusion, cause others to be forgotten. Memorials conceal the past as much as they cause us to remember it. (p. 29)

I am suggesting that, as part of the revitalization of Galt Gardens, the four murals work together as the local expression of a national mythology that both commemorates and disavows, in rather predictable ways. When read next to each other, and as material expressions of the ideas that bind the space of the park, the murals seem to speak directly to what the other is not. The Native is past, tradition, and passive (sitting). The settler, the miner, is the future, progress and active. Moreover, like the war memorials discussed by Connerton (2009, p. 29), the configuration of the murals conceals as much as it causes us to remember. (What is conspicuously missing in the representations is the “actual” historical relationship between the Native chiefs, the Miners and the unnamed and unpictured good, White middle classed citizens of Lethbridge).

This chapter has consisted of an exploration of some of the spatial practices that coincided with the most recent revitalization of Galt Gardens. I found that the park’s revitalization (as it is represented through particular material forms) tended to encourage short term, recreational “crowd practice” (Shields, 1999, p. 163). More specifically, I found that recent material “improvements,” such as the replacement of park benches and the addition of the Rotary Centennial Plaza, distinguish between “positive” and “negative” users/uses of Galt Gardens. Even newly introduced public washrooms are only accessible during “regular business hours” and special events, when private security guards are on duty. In the latter half of the chapter I used Barthes (1972) to discuss four

recently-erected murals that have come to frame the space of the park. Considered as “materials of myth” (Barthes, 1972, p. 98), I argued that these murals commemorate/reproduce a depoliticised version of local history, one that relies heavily on certain forgettings.

Turning, once again, to discursive representations of Galt Gardens, the following (and final) chapter of this thesis will continue to investigate the intersection of race and space by analysing a letter to the editor published the *Lethbridge Herald* in January, 2009.

Chapter Seven: Racialized Space

In this final chapter of the thesis I continue a discussion on the relationship between race and space. As an urban space, Galt Gardens is intimately connected with the discursive construction of Lethbridge's "downtown" more generally. To illustrate this, I begin with an analysis of a letter to the editor found in the January 5, 2009 edition of the *Lethbridge Herald*. The "encounter" described in the letter does not take place in Galt Gardens, but in "the downtown," a social space that intersects with the park. The letter demonstrates some of the ways in which the downtown, a place closely connected to Galt Gardens, is discursively (re)produced, and how this (re)production intersects with that of racialized subjects.

The letter in question, entitled "Encounter boosts sense of community," has an "author." A real human being chose the words that constitute this brief commentary on the "sense of community" in the downtown. However, whatever the personal motivations or intentions of the "author," they are not the concern of the following analysis. I do not aim to "get behind" the text in order to access some underlying reality. The point is not the author's prior motivation, whether racist or not, but how her words construct her, the people she encounters, and the downtown in particular and meaningful ways. As Barthes (1977) notes, "in the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled*, nothing *deciphered*; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level, but there is nothing beneath" (p. 147). The text is interpreted as an exercise in the construction of subjects and objects in an urban world.

In her letter to the editor (see Appendix A), Gail Metson purports to describe an

“encounter” between her and her “partner” and “two aboriginal men.” Metson writes that, although initially hesitant, her and her partner “chose” to listen to these two men who were “intent on speaking with them.” Gail describes her choice as “engage or ignore.” The letter goes on to describe the ensuing encounter, and ends with a moral message: “when we lay down our guard, we discover the depth of our humanity.” In the following analysis I analyse this piece of discourse, and attempt to show how an apparently innocuous text reinforces the very boundaries it appears to transgress. Specifically, I contend that the letter employs racial discourses that function to make it intelligible in particular ways, and that this text would in fact be unintelligible if it were not for a reliance on particular racial discourses. That is to say, I contend that the intelligibility of Gail’s story, and its moral message, are contingent on the readers’ knowledge that the encounter she describes is one between White and Aboriginal subjects in which each bears particular characteristics.

The opening sentence of Gail’s letter reads: “A recent encounter in downtown Lethbridge brought me joy and a deeper understanding of community.” Here, an object of discourse is introduced, downtown Lethbridge, along with the more abstract objects, “joy” and “community.” However, the second sentence of the letter (and the racial discourses it relies upon) is crucial to an understanding of this text as a whole. Here the subjects involved in the “encounter” are introduced in very particular ways: “on a sunny day before Christmas, my partner and I were downtown when we saw two aboriginal men come quickly from the side, intent on speaking with us. How to respond: ignore or engage.” Significantly, the subjects are introduced as racialized and gendered subjects.

While both of these categories inform the text, it is the “aboriginal” label that is indispensable for a reading of the letter. This text would be read much differently if “aboriginal men” was replaced with “White women” (who would likely simply be referred to as “women”). The fact that these subjects are described as Aboriginal is not a minor detail, but relies upon prominent racial discourses and shared representations of what it means to be an Aboriginal man in an urban context, and specifically in downtown Lethbridge. I argue that this seemingly minor “descriptive” detail refers to a discourse of racialized difference that makes the statement intelligible, natural, and logical to many of the newspaper’s readers.

The two Aboriginal men are not represented as simply strolling up to Gail and her partner. Rather, the initial encounter is constructed in a very specific way. According to Gail, the two men came “quickly and from the side.” The language employed here creates an atmosphere of tension and danger; it is an aggressive language not unlike that used to describe war or combat, conjuring up mental images of a surprise assault or ambush. In the same sentence the men are attributed intent, they approach with the intent of speaking with Gail and her partner. This wording implies an “intent” not necessarily welcome to its object. Already, only a few lines into the letter, I read from this description that the two men pose some kind of potential threat. Clearly this is not a social situation Gail and her partner want to be in. If not a physical threat, these two Aboriginal men are at the very least a nuisance, as can be read from what Gail describes as her choice - to “ignore or engage.”

Significantly, Gail identifies that, although surprised by this encounter, it is

ultimately her and her partner with the power to choose. It is entirely their decision, and not that of the two Aboriginal men, who are represented as somewhat *out of place*. Thus, the interaction is sanctioned by the good will and charity of Gail and her partner, a couple who could have just as easily chosen to ignore these strange men who surprised them that sunny afternoon. It is the two Aboriginal men who are granted permission, suggesting that they are subjects for whom entitlement to speech or voice cannot be assumed, and indeed is assumed neither by Gail nor by the men. (Indeed, the two Aboriginal men are represented as two “out of place” figures trying to force themselves into place).

One of the two Aboriginal men produced a piece of ammolite, which Gail impulsively (and, as we later find out, falsely) assumed he was attempting to sell. In the letter Gail explicitly describes the relief she felt when it was discovered that this man was not peddling stones. Here we have the construction of anomaly, an aberration from the norm. For this “sense of relief” to make sense to the reader it must be assumed that under “normal” circumstances the subject in question would be primarily interested in selling. It also suggests that any communication of an “intent in selling” would be anxiety producing for any “normal reader.” Finally, it suggests that there is something peculiar about this particular Aboriginal man. He is produced as different, as a kind of anomaly. Gail even informs us that he had a “twinkle in his eye.” But what does that twinkle tell the reader about this Aboriginal man? In Gail’s reportage it seems to be there to tell us that he is not like the *others*, he is not threatening.⁵⁰

Gail includes in her telling of the event that during the “encounter” a local

⁵⁰ The meaning of “the twinkle in his eye” is discussed further below.

storeowner “poked her head out of the door and asked if there was a problem.” Gail and her partner were quick to assure the concerned store owner that there was no problem. Nothing else is said about this incident, and nothing else *needs* to be. The onlooker’s concern only becomes intelligible if it is attached to particular racial discourses. What is it about this particular situation that would lead a storeowner to perceive a problem? That this is not explicated in the text suggests that there is, in fact, an obvious and perceivable problem. Further, it suggests that the problem is so obvious that it need not be explained or even explicitly identified for it to be understood. If there were no obvious problem, the storeowner’s question would not seem a natural one; it would not fit into the story, at least not without an explanation. The storeowner’s question does not seem out of line if the reader already assumes this “encounter” to be problematic in some way. But, what is the problem? I suggest that in the context of Gail’s account, the inclusion of the shopkeeper’s question communicates quite a lot. It tells us that there was something about this situation that made it appear problematic to an onlooker. Because the shopkeeper poked her head out from inside the store, what was “a problem” must not have to do with the content of the exchange, but with the particular configuration/appearance/form of the exchange. And, further, because all we know about the configuration of the exchange is that it is between Gail, her partner and “two aboriginal men,” it is, to the reader, these features of the exchange that must signify the “problem” to onlookers. Thus, the reader is directed away from a problem of class (it is not made clear whether or not the Aboriginal men were believed to be homeless or not) to one of race. More specifically, there is an implicit construction of Whiteness as vulnerability.

“I was not prepared for the man’s next question: ‘what do you think about natives?’ For a split second I searched for the right response but before I knew it, I was saying I believed in respect and peaceful co-existence among all people, no matter what their background or differences.” The automatic response that flowed from Gail’s lips suggests a kind of authenticity. As if it came, not from the calculating mind, but from someplace more genuine, more real. She said these words despite herself. This theme of spontaneous and essential benevolence is repeated when Gail’s hand “automatically reached out” and touched the man. Once again, the reader gets the sense that the compulsion that causes Gail to act out in kindness is so pure that it happens even without her consent. However, both of these acts unmistakably, and significantly, belong to Gail. She is represented as the purveyor of kindness and goodwill. It is her automatic act of benevolence (the answer to the question) that results in a connection, an “unmistakable softening and . . . warmth” between herself and her partner and the Aboriginal men. Thus, we have the production of Gail as a benevolent, and essentially “good” subject.

Gail’s response to the man’s question is interesting, not only in its apparent authenticity, but also in the way it shifts the account from a “race” story to a “human” one. Gail is asked about her thoughts on natives, but her answer references not “between natives and whites” but the much more neutral “between all people.” By shifting the discourse towards a “human story”, Gail’s response avoids the specificity of this “problematic” encounter. The problem, as most starkly represented in the storeowner’s concern, was a configuration problem, a racial problem. It can also be understood as a colonial problem. As Razack (2000) contends, “the city belongs to the settlers . . . and the

sullyng of civilized society through the presence of the racial Other in white space gives rise to a careful management of boundaries within urban space” (p. 97). In this letter, the urban space is identified as downtown Lethbridge, and the “management of boundaries” is produced, most clearly, in the storeowner’s concern. However, I argue that this management of boundaries must also be brought to the reading of the text by the reader. In order for this letter to make sense *we* must know what’s going on here; *we* must recognise the problem.

Towards the end of the letter Gail speculates on the Aboriginal man’s message to her and her partner: “I think his message. . . was that his culture is old and important and as beautiful as the many-coloured ammolite.” Notice the attention to culture; *his* culture is produced as different, valuable, historic, and perhaps most significantly, as different from ours, as *other*. The language used here is quite significant, and deserves some attention. Particularly interesting is Gail’s comparing of the Aboriginal man’s assumed culture to the “many coloured ammolite.” Though brief, this section of the letter manages to produce the possibility of reading in a stereotypical conception of Aboriginal culture, as something important, but only insofar as it is a kind of historical and natural artefact from a distant epoch. In the text Aboriginal culture is compared to ammolite, the ancient and luminescent remains of a species long extinct. Indeed, much can be learned from these beautiful relics of the past, but they are nonetheless *of the past*.⁵¹ They are fossilised, preserved as colourful and valuable, but at the same time static and lifeless, gemstones. The man’s assumed culture is produced as valuable in its being a natural

⁵¹ Gail’s comparison of ammolite and Aboriginal culture relates back to the discussion of the Crowfoot in Chapter Six. In both cases Aboriginal culture is produced as noble, natural and important, but also *of the past*.

artefact from a distant moment in history, a moment now fossilised in his body.

The attention to culture once again allows a discursive diversion away from the more political and relevant problem of race. What is at once an ostensibly positive statement regarding the value of Aboriginal culture is at the same time a diversion from the problem that lies at the heart of this text. It is not cultural differences that caused the storeowner to perceive a problem, for this “old and important” culture is only assumed from the man’s more perceivable racial characteristics. This text avoids the explicit naming of the problem that, I argue, allows its meaningfulness. This does not mean, however, that the problem is not made clear in other, far more subtle but equally pervasive ways, even if as “significant absences.”

So far, my argument has assumed that the described encounter is between two White people (Gail and her partner) and two Aboriginal men. Indeed, the two men who approached Gail and her partner are identified as Aboriginal. Gail and her partner, on the other hand, are not racially identified, at least not explicitly. So, how do we know that they are White? “Without language, classificatory systems, and methods of creating metaphor and association,” says Wright (2000), “we would be ill-equipped to make any sense of the world around us, much less communicate it effectively to another” (p. 32). This letter communicates Gail’s, her partner’s, and *our* Whiteness in a number of ways. The first is by non-designation; while non-White is known by being designated as such, white is known by a lack of (and a lack of a *need* for) designation.

First, as discussed above, we *know* Gail and her partner are White from the storeowner’s perceiving of a problem, a problem that seems to be one of form, of

racialized bodies and their transgressive configuration. What is more, for this downtown encounter to be intelligible, this problem must be seen by more than just the owner of the store; *we* too must recognise this problematic configuration that is emphasised by the storeowners concern. Second, *we* know because *we* are called upon to take up the role as the letter's protagonist. *We* are expected to identify with the White person who, while on a casual stroll with a friend, is unexpectedly approached in the downtown by dark bodies. *We*, like Gail and her friend, must know well that famous downtown dilemma: "ignore or engage." *We* must empathise with her "sense of relief" when she discovers that the Aboriginal men are not out to solicit money, for surely *we* have been in this situation and know this is not usually the case. *We*, like Gail, know these men are different. Finally, *we* must admire Gail's charitable choice to "engage," to grant these men the opportunity (rather than afford them the right) to speak with her and her partner, if only for a moment. Perhaps most admirable to *us* are Gail's spontaneous "acts of humanity," her reaching out to the Aboriginal man who had initially caused such anxiety, her proclamation of belief in "respect and peaceful co-existence among all people, no matter what their background or differences." Thus, in order to "read" this letter successfully, we must produce ourselves (as readers) as White.

According to the letter, both parties benefit from the downtown encounter: "He wished us a Merry Christmas and went on his way, smiling. We went on our way, filled." Indeed, on one level the letter constitutes a Christmas story about shared humanity: "So it happens; when we lay down our guard, we discover the depth of our humanity." But, as I have argued, this text also communicates much more. Discourses, far from being simply

descriptive, work to produce and categorise the world in which we live (Foucault, 1995). This letter relies upon pre-constructed categories and shared meanings in order to communicate a message of acceptance. More specifically, the text uses these shared meanings to (re)produce particular racialized subjects, including the subjectivity of the reader. While apparently subversive of racialized discourse, Gail's letter actually reproduces its categories *de facto*.

Intentions aside, Gail's letter relies on racial discourses (and therefore perpetuates these discourses) that produce Aboriginals as *other*. This letter makes sense only if *we* know or can imagine what it's like to be approached by uninvited Aboriginals in the downtown. Moreover, *we* must understand, perhaps even expect, the downtown storeowner's demonstration of concern. The problem of race that the text ostensibly denies is central for the transmission of the text's central moral message. I suggest that this letter is written to emphasise the "obviousness" of the problem in order to question it by contrasting it to a "real human encounter." The letter employs a specific rhetorical strategy; the storekeeper's response is mentioned significantly in order to set up the reader for a fall. If *we* are able to naturally recognise the problem, *we* are also able to understand the extraordinary, and apparently undeserved, benevolence demonstrated by the letter's White protagonists. Moreover, the "twinkle" in the Aboriginal man's eye suggests a binary distinction between the embodied Aboriginal individual as perceived and some underlying authentic human subject - a subject cleansed of Aboriginality at a deeper level than both perception and culture. In short, Gail's letter subverts racism, but only by at once acknowledging and then denying it, in favour of the "human."

Part of the capacity to understand Gail's letter comes from a particular understanding of the space in which her story takes place. Working at the intersection of race and space, the letter re-produces the problematic and racialized character of Lethbridge's downtown. Whether or not the encounter took place specifically in Galt Gardens is unimportant; downtown is a social space that includes the park, and from which the park cannot be meaningfully separated. Indeed, interviewees often incorporated representations of Galt Gardens with representations of the larger downtown, suggesting the interconnectedness of the two spaces.

Racial categories are largely absent from the newspaper representations I analysed. While class is commonly evoked with talk of "the city's homeless," there is relatively little said about race. One exception is an op-ed piece published less than a year after the opening of the Rotary Centennial Plaza. As is reported by the article, "[a] First Nations graduate student at the University of Lethbridge was told by a Lethbridge resident that the Rotary Centennial Plaza water feature in downtown Galt Gardens should be kept for 'whites only'" (Silk, 2009). Silk's op-ed piece is one of a very few acknowledgements of the fact that Lethbridge remains a racially segregated city fraught with postcolonial tensions, and that Galt Gardens, in particular, is a highly racialized space. "It is no secret," says Silk, "that racism is an issue in Lethbridge, especially against First Nations people."

As discussed above, Galt Gardens has long been mythologized as a problematic and racialized space. Dan, a member of the Lethbridge Rotary Club, talks about the park before the phase two revitalization: "I would say most people . . . had a negative view of

the park, you know, it was overrun⁵² by homeless people or natives or whatever you want to say” (p. 8).⁵³ Significantly, Dan does not construct the park as a place he viewed as “overrun by homeless people or natives,” but as a place that “most people” viewed in this way. This discursive strategy (which has been alluded to above) enables the speaker to distance himself from the racist and politically incorrect views of “most people” while still identifying the racialized and contentious nature of Galt Gardens. Later in our conversation, Dan reports receiving numerous phone calls from residents unhappy about the proposal to redevelop Galt Gardens:

I had lots of people phone me . . . that would complain and say, you know, “you’re making a bath tub for the natives,” or “you’re wasting the tax payers money,” or “it’s a stupid idea, you know it’s always been a haven for negative use,” and I would say a significant amount of it was, you know, racist, maybe not burn your house down, but I mean it was racist in an anti-native regard.

Along with racist accounts were identifications of racism in Lethbridge. As Steven, a member of the Lethbridge Regional Police Service, notes, “the perception of a lot of the First Nations folk is that they are drunks and that they’re downtown, but people aren’t seeing the real true thing. There is a racist attitude in this community, that’s for sure.” Steven also points out the visibility of First Nations people: “we deal with a good number of drunken White people downtown that people don’t somehow see.”

In Chapter Four I touched on the link made by interview informants between Galt Gardens and nearby Indian reserves. By attributing the need for security to mitigate against “our” close proximity to Indian reserves, Tracy produced these highly racialized

⁵² Note the “invasion” metaphor used here.

⁵³ Here, the phrase “or whatever you want to say” signals a certain discomfort expressed by a number of interviewees when making racist statements.

spaces, as well as the people with which they are associated, as problematic and dangerous. Like Tracy's comments, as well as the murals discussed in Chapter Six, Gail's letter to the editor works at the intersection of race and space, (re)producing "the downtown" as a thoroughly racialized space.

Conclusion

Towards the beginning of my research on Galt Gardens I came across an essay by Sharon Zukin (2002) entitled “What’s Space Got to Do With it?” In this short piece Zukin critically responds to an essay published by the American sociologist Herb Gans (2002). Zukin advocates for a critical analysis of social space, one that incorporates the work of social theorists such as David Harvey and Michel Foucault. In the concluding paragraph of her essay, Zukin makes, what has been for me, a re-assuring remark: “you don’t have to live in an ‘alpha city’ to do a major analysis. Every building, street, and neighborhood is simultaneously a cultural space and a part of a matrix of power” (p. 347). Following the lead of a number of spatial researchers (Low, 2000; Mitchell, 1995; Gur, 2002; Conlon, 2004; Fraser, 2007), the present work is, in terms of its empirical focus, micro in scale. Instead of analysing national or global space, I focus on the production of Galt Gardens, a small public park in Lethbridge, Alberta. A city with less than 90,000 people, Lethbridge is a far cry from the metropolises of Paris and New York, but, as Zukin contends, this does not make its spaces, and the processes implicated in the production of its spaces, less worthy of critical social analysis, nor unconnected to the politics of space in global centres.

As McCann (1999) notes, “Lefebvre’s constant attention to the everyday practices of life makes his work applicable to discussions of urban public spaces - the spaces of cities, such as streets, parking lots, shopping malls, and parks, in which large numbers of day-to-day activities are performed” (p. 167). In the opening chapter I established my ontological and epistemological position on space. Drawing primarily on the work of

Lefebvre (1991), Shields (1991) and Foucault (1995) I argued for and conducted a socio-cultural study of space. Contributing to the recent “spatial turn” in the social sciences, this research rejected the view that space is merely social setting (Car et al., 1993, p. 3).

Fundamentally inseparable from place, space is, according to Lefebvre (1991), the product of a threefold dialectic of spatial practice, representations of space and representational space. While each of these three elements may be identified and analysed separately, they always exist in relation to one another. This point is emphasised by Shields (1999), who notes, “[e]ach aspect of this three-part dialectic is in a relationship with the other two. Altogether they make up ‘space’”(p. 161). Representations of space, the element most discussed in the preceding analysis, refers to space as it is conceptualised and articulated, especially by city planners, architects and other professionals. Following Harvey (1989), I expand this definition to include “all signs and significations, codes and knowledge, that allow . . . material practices to be talked about and understood” (p. 218).

For this thesis, I analysed *Lethbridge Herald* articles and interview transcripts (produced from interviews conducted with officials involved in the revitalization of Galt Gardens, proximal business owners, police officers and representatives from the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre) in order to explore “conceptual depictions” (Shields, 1999, p. 163) of space. Making use of a method often associated with grounded theory and Foucauldian influenced discourse analysis I analysed representations of Galt Gardens and, to a lesser extent, Lethbridge’s downtown.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Because this research is itself a representation of space, it can be considered as a *representation of representations of space*. By referring to my research as itself a particular representation I acknowledge my purposeful position in relation to my object(s)/subject(s) of knowledge.

Newspaper articles and interview transcripts were taken up as meaningful articulations that form the objects and subjects of which they spoke. More than independent descriptions or opinions, these texts were considered as constitutive (Foucault, 1995) representations which were themselves part of a larger dialectical process that produces space (Lefebvre, 1991, Shields, 1991).

In both interview transcripts and newspaper articles a distinction was made between “positive” and “negative” users. Although Galt Gardens was represented as “open to everyone,” only particular kinds of people, specifically “families,” “kids”/“children” and “elderly people”/“seniors,” got articulated as belonging in the park. Further analysis suggested that such inclusionary representations coincided with, and were indeed contingent upon, exclusionary discourses. These exclusionary discourses produced certain people, most notably homeless people, as other-than “public,” other-than people. Moreover, homeless residents were portrayed as aggressors or invaders who deprive those represented as “vulnerable” (i.e. “families,” and “children”) of their rightful enjoyment of the park.

Continuing my investigation, I analysed newspaper articles and interview transcripts for representations of park use. Here, I found that a revitalized Galt Gardens was largely produced as a space for leisure, recreation and consumption, and not for what have come to be considered the private (“primal”) activities of the home (Waldron, 1991). Although the park continues to be defined as a public place (in terms of property), its revitalization coincided with discursive constructions that, for the most part, emplaced “middle class” users/uses and displaced homeless users/uses. Significantly, however,

representatives from the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre (LSRC) expressed a counter-discourse, emphasising the importance of Galt Gardens for the well-being and freedom of homeless people in the city.

Spatial practice, the second element of Lefebvre's (1991) threefold dialectic, involves "the production and reproduction of specific places and spatial 'ensembles' appropriate to the social formation" (p. 162). As Rogers (2002) notes, "this is the materialized, socially-produced space that exists empirically" (p. 29). In this research spatial practice was considered through participant observations as well as through an analysis of the material culture of Galt Gardens. In the initial stages of my research I conducted a number of participant observations in Galt Gardens, the purpose of which was to produce an account of the "place ballets" (Shields, 1991, p. 52) that help constitute the space. Guiding these observations was an interest in social interactions between people (including between myself and others) as well as interactions between people and their material environment. I identified two primary groups of park users which I referred to as *regular users* and *casual users*. These two groups differed, not only in their uses of the park, but also in their apparent demographics. Typically First Nations, usually homeless, and often disabled, regular users tended to congregate for relatively long periods of time at tables and benches in the south-west quadrant of the park. In contrast, casual users, typically White and middle class, tended to avoid the pergola area, preferring the plaza in the park's south-east quadrant.

According to Shields (1999), *spatial practice* includes "building typology, urban morphology and the creation of zones and regions for specific purposes" (p. 162). As part

of my research I explored the materiality of Galt Gardens, focusing specifically on the material developments framed as part of the park's most recent revitalization. Interestingly, in terms of "sittable" space, the park's revitalization was characterised by seemingly contradictory practices. While public benches were being removed across the street from the park, the park itself saw an increase in "sittable" space. Although benches were replaced at various locations throughout the park, the only area to receive new seating was the south-east quadrant. Along with the Rotary Centennial Plaza's built-in seating, a number of new tables were installed to accommodate the area's recent popularity. In this section of my analysis I showed how "distinction[s] between 'positive' and 'negative' users/uses of space [are]. . .revealed in the built environment" (Kingfisher, 2007, p. 206). For example, the latest benches to be introduced into Galt Gardens are significantly narrower than their predecessors. I argued that the design of these benches works to enforce a boundary between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" users/uses by making extended stays uncomfortable, and sleeping virtually impossible. Like the new benches, the Rotary Centennial Plaza was also found to encourage short term, recreational use.

My analysis of the four murals that frame Galt Gardens differed from that of other spatial practices in its use of Barthes (1972) and semiotics. Here, I focused less on the distinction between "negative" and "positive" users/uses, and more on the symbolic meaning of the murals, which were conceptualised as "materials of myth" (Barthes, 1972, p. 98) that frame the park in particular ways. Specifically, I found that, taken together, these murals worked as a local expression of a larger "white settler" (Razack, 2002)

mythology that commemorates at the same time as it forgets. Other examples of the intersection between race and space are found in the discursive link forged between a need for security in Galt Gardens and nearby Indian reserves, as well as a letter to the editor that relies on an assumed racialized understanding of downtown Lethbridge to communicate a “humanising” moral message. Although this thesis has only scratched the surface of an investigation into the relationship between race and space, it has nonetheless established that such a relationship exists, and that its consideration is salient in understanding the production of urban spaces such as downtown Lethbridge and Galt Gardens.

In concluding this research, it is important to acknowledge some of its limitations. This thesis is itself a (partial) representation that analyses *particular* texts and practices in order to explore Galt Gardens as a spatialisation. In other words, it has by no means attended to all possible representations and practices that work in the production of the space. While some of these absences are simply outside the scope of the research, the lack of marginalised voices in my analysis deserves further attention.

Given that my thesis is framed by a literature (Mitchell, 1995; Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006; Zukin, 1995; Kawash, 1998) interested in contested urban spaces, it would have been interesting to hear from those identified in newspaper articles and interview transcripts as “negative park users” (i.e. homeless users of the park). Indeed, while I had originally planned to include transcripts produced from interviews with homeless people in my analysis, producing such transcripts proved to be more difficult than I thought. This difficulty is most clearly illustrated in Chapter Three, where I provide

an account of my meeting with Susan, a First Nations homeless woman who regularly spent time in Galt Gardens. As I have reflected on my research practices, it has become clear that some of the difficulties I had associated with interviewing regular users were partially an effect of my positionality in relation to the field - that is, as a member of a group racialized, classed and gendered as dominant. Indeed, my own preconceptions about what constituted usable or legitimate representations led me to overlook particular kinds of interviews as data.

The difficult decision to abandon the interviewing of “regular users” like Susan arguably resulted in a less balanced and nuanced account of the production of Galt Gardens. Moreover, my exclusion of the accounts of marginalised park users has (*in fact*, though not *in intention*) contributed to a structural silencing of dissonant voices. I am cautious, however, not to conflate inclusion in a study with giving voice to a larger group. The question of whether and how someone positioned the way I am in society (i.e., as a White, privileged, man) might be able to provide marginalised users of the park with a voice is extremely complicated (see Spivak, 1988) and, while interesting in its own right, goes beyond the scope of this study.

It is important to note that even interviews that were abandoned are valuable sources of data, especially in terms of lessons for future research. For example, the fact that “regular users” tended not to show up for scheduled interviews suggests that this method of investigation is insufficient on its own. Future research might mitigate the silencing of dissonant voices by relying more heavily on participant observation methods. Unlike my experience with “regular users,” interviews conducted with professionals were

relatively straightforward, in part because these interviewees were empowered to speak of place in terms (language) and under the conditions (making an appointment) familiar to me.

Taking Lefebvre (1991) as a theoretical starting point, this thesis has employed multiple methods in order to explore a few of the “moments” involved in the social production of the revitalization of Galt Gardens. Considered as property, Galt Gardens remains a public space “open to everyone.” However, as established above, space is not merely property, but a complex production that is, according to Lefebvre, at once represented, practiced and lived. Through an analysis of newspaper articles, interview transcripts, field notes, photographs and material culture, I have attempted to provide a multidimensional exploration of the Phase Two revitalization of Galt Gardens.

As Razack (2002) notes, “[t]o question how spaces come to be, and to trace what they produce as well as what produces them, is to unsettle familiar everyday notions” (p. 7). In my analysis I found that a revitalized Galt Gardens was produced, both discursively and materially, as a space for a narrowly defined “public,” one that excludes the city’s most impoverished residents, which, according to Waldron (1991), are the very people who need it the most. Thus, despite the fact that Galt Gardens continues to be a “public space,” its revitalization is also marked by a particular kind of “privatisation,” one that deprives certain people no longer considered to be part of the “public.” While homeless people are legally allowed in Galt Gardens, they are simultaneously excluded from the space through various discursive and material constructions.

I conclude this thesis with a consideration of Lefebvre's (1991) final moment of spatial production, "representational space." In contrast to the bird's-eye view characteristic of modern abstract space, representational space is the lived space of bodily experience. Not only the "space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'," representational space is also the space of "those who describe and aspire to do more than describe" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). Thus, although representational space tends "towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs," it can also be found in the works of some "artists, photographers, filmmakers, and poets . . . that, through their uses of symbolism, construct counter-discourses and thus open up the possibility to think differently about space" (McCann, 1999, p. 172). It is within this representational space that the possibility of resistance resides. This thesis might itself be considered representational space, or at least an invitation to its possibility. Although itself an abstraction, this research critically examines Galt Gardens as a complex social formation, inviting the possibility of further analysis, critique and even resistance. Decidedly non-prescriptive, the present analysis invites a critical re-imagining of Galt Gardens "as it might be" (Shields, 1999, p. 161).

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Figures



Figure 1. Skeleton of sawed-off public bench across the street from Galt Gardens.



Figure 2. New “sleep-proof” bench in Galt Gardens.



Figure 3. Large-scale portrait of Blackfoot Chief Isapo-Muxika (Crowfoot).

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Social Role
Brent	White	Man	Civil Servant
Dan	White	Man	Business Owner/Rotary Representative
Doug	White	Man	Civil Servant
Ellan	White	Woman	Shelter Employee
James	White	Man	Civil Servant
Laura	White	Woman	Business Owner/BRZ member
Logan	White	Man	Police Officer
Paul	First Nations	Man	Shelter Employee/M.U.S.T
Steven	White	Man	Police Officer
Susan	First Nations	Woman	Homeless Park User
Tanya	White	Woman	Police Officer
Todd	First Nations	Man	Shelter Employee/M.U.S.T
Tom	White	Man	BRZ Member
Tracy	White	Woman	Business Owner/BRZ Member
Wendy	White	Woman	Business Owner/BRZ Member

Appendix B: Textual Sources Cited

Author	Title	Type	Date	Publication
Gallent, S.	Water Feature's Dedication on Tap	News Article	June 2, 2008	Lethbridge Herald
Gauthier, G.	Rotary Plaza Bringing Life to Galt Gardens	News Article	July 9, 2008	Lethbridge Herald
Keith, P.	Galt Gardens Fountain Adds Life to Heart of City	News Article	July 27, 2008	Lethbridge Herald
Mabell, D.	Rotarian Darrell's Excited about Galt Gardens Project	News Article	April 22, 2003	Lethbridge Herald
Metson, G.	Encounter Boosts Sense of Community	Letter to the Editor	January 5, 2009	Lethbridge Herald
None Indicated	Final Funding Received for Galt Gardens Project	New Article	June 21, 2007	Lethbridge Herald
None Indicated	Galt Gardens Improvement Long Overdue	News Article	April 23, 2003	Lethbridge Herald
Shurtz, D.	Galt Gardens Plan Coming Before Council	News Article	September 8, 2003	Lethbridge Herald
Shurtz, D.	City Supports Galt Gardens Revitalization	News Article	September 9, 2003	Lethbridge Herald
Shurtz, D.	Bernie and the Rotary Club put Park Plan in Motion	News Article	August 4, 2003	Lethbridge Herald
Silk, P.	Still Work to be Done to Deal with Racism	News Article	March 17, 2009	Lethbridge Herald
		News Article	July, 2008	Lethbridge Herald

Appendix C: Letter to the Editor

Encounter Boosts Sense of Community

Monday, 05 January 2009

A recent encounter in downtown Lethbridge brought me joy and a deeper understanding of community. On a sunny day before Christmas, my partner and I were downtown when we saw two aboriginal men come quickly from the side, intent on speaking with us. How to respond: ignore or engage. Thankfully, we chose to listen. One man opened his hand, revealing a piece of rough-hewn ammolite. He asked us if we liked it. I said, rather non-committally, it was nice and then I asked if he was selling it. "Oh no!" he said, pointing out it was very old and it wasn't for sale. With a sense of relief, I agreed it was very beautiful. I noticed a twinkle in his eye. His next question was odd. He asked if we liked the rodeo. The answer was easy: "No, not really." I was increasingly interested in where this conversation was going. I think he asked us what we thought of politicians, before posing the more specific question, "What did we think about rodeo being named the official sport of Alberta?" I can't remember exactly what I said, but I implied it was not very important. At that point, a woman from the store outside of which we had stopped, poked her head out the door and asked if there was a problem. We assured her there was not. I was not prepared for the man's next question: "What do you think about natives?" For a split second I searched for the right response but before I knew it, I was saying I believed in respect and peaceful co-existence among all people, no matter what their background or differences. At once there was an unmistakable softening and a warmth among us. He touched my arm and said I was a good person. My hand automatically reached out to him as well and we told him he was a good person, too. He wished us a Merry Christmas and went on his way, smiling. We went on our way, filled. When I reflect upon that encounter, I think his message to us was that his culture is old and important and as beautiful as the many-coloured ammolite. The gifts we gave to each other that day will remain with me always. So it happens; when we lay down our guard, we discover the depth of our humanity.

Gail Meston
Lethbridge

Appendix D:

Lyrics to "Civilization," as recorded on September 27, 1947 by the Andrews Sisters

Civilization

Each morning, a missionary advertises neon sign
He tells the native population that civilization is fine
And three educated savages holler from a bamboo tree
That civilization is a thing for me to see

So bongo, bongo, bongo, I don't wanna leave the Congo, oh no no no no no
Bingo, bangle, bungle, I'm so happy in the jungle, I refuse to go
Don't want no bright lights, false teeth, doorbells, landlords, I make it clear
That no matter how they coax him, I'll stay right here

I looked through a magazine the missionary's wife concealed
I see how people who are civilized bung you with automobile
At the movies they have got to pay many coconuts to see
Uncivilized pictures that the newsreel takes of me

So bongo, bongo, bongo, he don't wanna leave the Congo, oh no no no no no
Bingo, bangle, bungle, he's so happy in the jungle, he refuse to go
Don't want no penthouse, bathtub, streetcars, taxis, noise in my ear
So, no matter how they coax him, I'll stay right here

They hurry like savages to get aboard an iron train
And though it's smokey and it's crowded, they're too civilized to complain
When they've got two weeks vacation, they hurry to vacation ground
They swim and they fish, but that's what I do all year round

So bongo, bongo, bongo, I don't wanna leave the Congo, oh no no no no no
Bingo, bangle, bungle, I'm so happy in the jungle, I refuse to go
Don't want no jailhouse, shotgun, fish-hooks, golf clubs, I got my spears
So, no matter how they coax him, I'll stay right here

They have things like the atom bomb, so I think I'll stay where I "ahm"
Civilization, I'll stay right here!