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Imagineering the community: The vagrant spaces of the malls, enclave estates, the filmic and the televisual

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IMAGINEERING THE COMMUNITY:THE VAGRANT SPACES OF THE MALLS, ENCLAVE ESTATES, THE FILMIC AND THE TELEVISUAL.

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DEDICATION

To Colleen: my inspiration, strength, friend and love.

To Siobhan who gives support without expectation and patience without question

A special dedication to my father, John (Arthur) who died before he could read this – I still miss his calming ways.

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i)   incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher eduction;

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Dennis Wood

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The idea of 'community' is an all pervasive and persuasive notion within society. But it is an elastic concept used by diverse groups and institutions to rally people to a cause or to reassure the public in times of (perceived) calamity. Of late the various forms of the media and certain elements of society have been focussing their attention on the 'breakdown of community' values citing the (perceived) rise in crime, the (supposed) fragmentation of the family and the (hypothetical) loss of respect for authority and authority figures as contributing to an ailing communal sensibility. However, as Anderson (1983) has argued in his discussion on the rise of nationalism, the 'community' is always an imagined entity.

This study investigates this concept of the imagined community and looks at how this notion is manifested (and sold to the public) in the 'real' sites of the contemporary shopping malls and the ever more visible master planned communities. These sites present nostalgic impulses of a community which is in harmony with itself, specifically drawing upon the concept of an idealised 'village' ethos which speaks of a more simple life enhanced by a intimate relationship to a restorative 'natural' world. The study also seeks to discover how communities are represented in the 'imagined' worlds of the pictorial, filmic and televisual texts. It is suggested that these sites/sights also offer versions of a lifstyle which, in essence, sells a concept of a commendable community suggested by the mall owners/operators and the enclave estate entrepreneurs.

To assist in this investigation the Disneyesque concept of 'imagineering' will be remotivated and will be linked to what McCannell (1976) called 'touristic consciousness'. The former suggests that community is found in the conjoining of the perceptual and the conceptual – the real and imagined - or what Soja calls the first and second spaces. The latter informs how the sites/sights for community are seen and read.

Soja suggest that community is found in the third spaces or what Lefebvre calls the 'lived' space. However, it will be argued that there is a fourth space of 'livable' community that is inherently present in the sites/sights under discussion. This fourthspace is what can be called the vagrant space because it is both present as a fleeting spatiality and absented by the conjoining of first and second spaces. It also acts as a Foucauldian heterotopic space which when present in its absence informs notions of a participatory, coherent community, something which is seen as lacking in the 'lived' community. Thus the vagrant space suggests an 'otherness' and 'difference' within the homogeneous sameness and familiarity of the community of the third space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

And finally to all my students, past and present who patiently listened to my tales of the malls, enclaves and the 'community'.

Introduction •

Other(ed) Real-And-Imagined Sites.

This thesis argues that the concept of 'notional community' displayed in specific sites -
the shopping malls and enclave estates - and the virtual sights of the media has become
dominant in contemporary western society. This dominant model is dependent upon the
conjoining of what Edward Soja (1996) calls the 'real-and-imagined' spaces: the
perceived (built) and conceived (imagined) spaces of the public and private environment.
Using this as a starting point this study aims to remake and remotivate Benedict
Anderson's (1983) concept of the (primarily) nationalist nation states of the *imagined*
communities and apply it to the *imagineered communities* rehearsed in the sites above.
The imagined communities, Benedict argues are: 'to be distinguished, not by their
falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (p. 6). However, what is
argued here is that the *imagineered communities* of the sites under discussion draw and
depend upon the style of their *falsity* and *notional* status for their existence.

The 'style' to which Anderson refers is based upon the concept of a unifying language
either spoken or written. He states that for the 'newer nationalisms' which 'changed the
face of the Old World' the 'national print-languages were of central...importance' (p.
67). He suggests that there was 'the necessity of a unifying language' (p. 84) for a variety
of peoples to be brought together under the single banner of 'empire'. He notes that the
'inventive legerdemain' (p. 87) of the secular written word had taken the place of 'visual
representations of the sacred communities' (p. 22) where the 'imagined reality was

overwhelmingly visual and aural' (p. 23). The notion advanced in this thesis is that the written language of, and for, the *imagining* of the *national community* has been replaced in contemporary society by a visual language of, and for, the *imagineering* of a *notional community*. This language of the visual is similar to that of Benedict's sacred communities. But whereas for the communities of Christendom the legerdemain was through the auspices of 'this relief, that window, this sermon, that tale, this morality play...' (p. 23) the language used now is that of the cinematic, televisual and pictorial. Although this mediated language may consist of vernacular variations it is, in the main a widely recognised and understood expression – a type of vox populi. Thus Benedict's idea that 'through...language...pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined and futures dreamed' (p. 154) may be revitalised via the language of the visual.

Thus the style to be addressed here is based upon visual representation. The act of imagining connotes the invoking of mental pictures and, to lift from Berger (1972), these 'ways of seeing" may be used to suggest 'ways of being' in the world. Thus when certain mental images and pictures are transferred to bricks and mortar or celluloid and tape a vision of a social construct – a way of being a 'community' – maybe conjured into view. The visual 'beingness' is further enhanced by the performance of seeing – the act of authorisation through looking – at this being – the act of acknowledgment of having seen. The notion behind the concept of the 'community' is that it always already exists so that it simply needs to be visually represented, to be stimulated scopically – imagineered into view – to be in the world.

'Images', from paintings to postcards, have not only been instrumental in reflecting 'real'

families, neighbourhoods or communities, but have constructed, from specific points of

view, the ideologies which are supposedly inherent in them. Leaving aside for the time

being the large-scale political notions of patriarchy and capitalism, the ideologies

constituted in the visuality of these communities address abstractions of uniformity and

conformity, order and safety, civility and consensus. The ideological strategy of

visualisation describes *coherence* which emanates from the *tableaux* of the site/sight.

This 'feat of social engineering' (MacCannell, 1992, p. 88) by the 'tableaux of

coherence' describes a shared narrative which in turn *re*-presents a fictive reading of a

prelapsarian, Jeffersonian, rural community inscribed in a white, middle-class,

homogeneous, exclusivity of pleasure and plenty. Thus the visual representations,

nostalgically distorted, galvanise 'the construction of a believable symbol of community

where no community exists' (MacCannell, p. 89). For MacCannell the semiotics of the

images proffered for an (ideological) community construction are of major importance.

He states:

> Ideologies that inhabit objects and signs no longer require
> discourse for their perpetuation; they continue to exist by
> virtue of a *pretense of agreement*, a silence, a repression...
> ideologies that are manifest in the physical layout of entire
> communities enjoy the luxury of seeming already to have
> succeeded in total persuasion. (p. 98)

This visuality, the materiality or *perceived space*, is, in the sights and sites, combined

with a 'legibility' of the fictive narrative, an imagineered or *conceived space,* to create

an-Other spatialised entity, or what Soja (1996) calls Thirdspatiality or the Lefebvrian

lived space. This an-Other space is the ideologically homogeneous, illusion of

community that is actively hegemonic in action, but can also offer a heterogeneous site/sight for contestation - a livable Fourthspace.

It is pertinent at this point to address the issue of Lefebvre's 'lived' space and what I call 'livable/liminal' space. If it is possible to put aside Lefebvre's Marxism and focus on the trialectics of space he sought to resolve, then the notion of 'lived' space is read as: 'a simple combination or mixture of the "real" and the "imagined" in varying doses.' (Soja, 1996, p. 10). Of course this is a simplification and one brought about by Lefebvre's own hand as he (like Foucault in his discussion of heterotopias) repeatedly declined in offering a more comprehensive discussion. His focus, and the reason of the mis-reading of lived space by various scholars, was on the centre/periphery dialectic but, as Soja points out Lefebvre would repeatedly write that the: 'Two terms are never enough. *Il y a toujours l'Autre*. There is always the Other' (Soja, p. 31). Although he saw the other space as 'passionate, "hot" and teeming with sensual intimacies' (Soja, p. 30) the third term became fixed as the rigid and immobile 'lived' space. Its fixity bestowed upon it judgments of the inactive or intractable, a past tense of being which denied thoughts of active 'becoming'. It is because of this sense of fixity, which denies assumptions of change, and even *deviation* that I insist on seeing the an-other space as livable/liminal space, volatile and mobile, fleeting and fluid. Thus livable/liminal space has not, and cannot, be passively 'lived' but is both habitable and a *habiliment*. When looked at in this light it is easy to denounce the notion of 'community' (the Lefebvrian dead 'lived' space) and to offer a more heterogeneous and (potentially) transgressive concept of communisphere which is a more encompassing term that insists on the recognition of an-

other(s). The caprices of communisphere opens up a door onto the various pathways to the Foucauldian heterotopia and proposes a more particular appraisal of Soja's real-and-imagined places.

Two other terms which I have 'imported' from Spivak (1990) and adopt (and adapt) here are the 'speaking-for' and the 'speaking-as' positions. The former is the contention of the 'coloniser', the administrators and regulators of the first- and secondspatialities of the communities of sameness. Whereas the latter is an interstitial space for the voices of the peripheralised habitues of the sonorous communisphere. The speaking-for position offers a *pretense of agreement*, which silences and represses all other(ed) voices.

From this position the sites will be interrogated as, what Williamson calls: 'symptom, signpost and map' (cited in Shields, 1992) to enable a critique of the representations of idealised, conjured communities and the allied ideological hegemonic principles. The questions to be posed in the process of this critique are: i) what are the visual and visualised constituents of this *normalised* community; ii) how and why is it constructed?; iii) and what work does it do?; iv) does the notional community actually describe a *poverty* of participation for the community member?; v) and is there a livable space, a fourth space which is apart from but a part of the lived space? The answers to these questions, I affirm, lead to a space for the development of an alternative/oppositional consciousness of community involving ideologies of community engagement based upon the decolonisation of privately owned public spaces of modernity. This decolonisation involves the expansion and extrapolation of the symbolic landscapes of the

heterogeneous, postmodern publics - the markets and the boardwalks; the cappuccino and bistro strips; and the cosmopolitinaneity of community via the media. It also involves a deconstruction of the leisure inflected urban spaces of the community and the spaces of consumption of the malls.

These heterogeneous spaces are *spatialities* similar to, but not the same as, Lefebvre's (1996) 'an-Other' or Soja's (1996) 'Thirdspatiality'. They are not the lived space, but the *livable* 'spaces of reparation; not 'the spaces of representation' (Soja, p. 65) of the individual and the collective constructed out of, but always a part of, the spatial practices and the conceived spatialities. Thus the illusion of community of the sites/sights in question are dependent upon the localised geographic and the conceptual, in other words, the material or the imagineered - the sanctum and the sanctified. But resident in these spaces, in varying degrees of potential application, are spatialities of contestation which the architectures of control, this illusion of community, aim to marginalise and disempower. This thesis aims to plot the conjoining of the three spatialities to discuss how they co-operate to construct the illusion of community (the white lie) whilst at the same time investigating the interstices of the heterogeneous 'spaces of reparation' that stain and colour the sites of contestation and resistance, encounter and conflict.

At one end of this rainbow of regulation, sitting in self-imposed seclusion, lie the reduplicating and refractive malls, privately owned 'public' topographies of control which seek to limit otherness through a type of panoptical 'monoculturisation'. At the other end of the spectrum lie the refracted and reflective filmic and televisual texts, which

allow, and at times even 'celebrate', a visualisation of alternatives to the sanctimonious community. These are texts dealing with the, for want of a better term, *deviance* of the other and the an-Othered spaces. I choose the darkly connotative epithet 'deviance' here because it covers a multitude of 'sins': not only the digression, divergence or departure of individuals and groups from the 'norm' - single parent families, same sex families, street people - but also includes those subordinated by class, race, age, gender and sexual preference. Between these two extremes of the iris of the sites/sights of the malls and the mediated images lie the enclave estates; a specific spatiality that can be opened up to rehearsals of contestation.

This study of the chimerical communities of the walled suburbs, malls, and the media is built upon three hypotheses sustained by the first and second spaces. These three hypotheses are: 1) the power of the scopic regime in the late twentieth century and the importance of visuality and cultural productions in defining a coherent, but nevertheless illusionary, collective identity; 2) the linking of this scopic regime to *touristic consciousness* - the inauthentic 'experience' of community - valuing the 'real' in the representation; and 3) the construction of a sympathetic space, or *ecology*, a *Disney consciousness*, for the site of the imagined and imagineered community - valuing the 'fake' in the hyper-real. These three separate strands - visual culture, pseudo-event and spatial control link together to manipulate the notion of community as being participatory, inclusive and egalitarian.

The first supposition deals with the development of the visual media during the twentieth century which made photography and the filmic the primary cultural means of framing communities. This scopic regime, with its roots in the World Fairs and Exhibitions beginning in the mid-eighteen hundreds, and the panoramas and dioramas that preceded them, has escalated to influence how society is perceived today (see Friedberg, 1994). One of the routes this dissertation will trace is the rise of the scopic society via the cultural formations of visuality: from Bentham's panopticon to the virtual reality of the televisual; from the visitor at the exhibitions to the consumer in the mall; from the explorer of the 'Dark' lands to the tourist of Disneyland. This discussion will assert that the contemporary experience of society is that of an excess of surveillance - a hypervisuality which rests upon the desire to be seen whilst seeing. This is a foundation stone of the monument which is the imagined and imagineered community.

This hypervisuality, the surplus semiotics both of the self and of others in and of society which leads to *surveillance* is the prime site of community awareness and circumscription. Surveillance with its Latin root *vigilare* suggests the meta- of 'seeing' - scrutiny. This in turn suggests a need to be *vigilant* against something or someone *other* than the expected or the norm. The other (that which I am not) rehearses the idea of the 'us' and 'them' which describe the dichotomy of sameness and difference: ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexual preference, disability and, increasingly of late, homelessness. Surveillance and scrutiny produce and reproduce differentialities of bodies and spaces, which allow for the isolations of apartheids, ghettoes and colonies: the territorialities of hegemonic power that expound the efficacy of sameness.

To a certain degree these dichotomies are built upon notions of fear which are promulgated in the media and in the architectural ecologies of the malls and master planned communities which aestheticise this fear. This fear, which had its genesis in the cities, has led to the stereotyping of 'otherness' which in turn has been used as the semiotic antithesis of the family and the community of the contemporary gated 'garden villages'. Jaqueline Burgess (1985) has pinpointed the "four ideological domains' which constitute the demonisation of the other. To paraphrase Burgess, these include; the dilapidated landscape and distressed ecology of the city; the romanticisation and normalisation of the nuclear family through the ideological process of the nostalgic impulse; a pathological image of the deviant/outsider; and a stereotypical view of dystopic street cultures - the first and second spatialities of the perceived and the conceived spaces. To these 'domains' I would like to add the simple binary opposition of the idealised rural and the dysfunctional city, a cornerstone of much of the representational material for the malls, enclave estates and the pictorial, televisual and filmic texts.

In my perusal of the first, second and third spatialities of the topography of the estates I will focus on an archaeology of the garden city movement and then move to discuss more contemporary communities utilising the works of notable authors such as Mike Davis (1990), Ken Dempsey (1990), Herbert J. Gans (1968), James H. Johnson (1974), Suzanne Keller (1968), Lyn Richards (1990), Frank Schaffer (1972) and Sharon Zukin (1995). In parallel I will also look at the 'myths' associated with suburbia drawing upon, among

others, the works of Scott Donaldson (1969), Sarah Ferber et al (1994), and John Fiske et al (1987). Other areas in this section to be noted include certain aspects of the 'family' and the architectural and cultural meanings of the house and home.

The second supposition with which this dissertation deals is the notion of *touristic consciousness* as theorised by Dean MacCannell in The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class (1976) and Empty Meeting Grounds (1992). In the former MacCannell asserts that: "the tourist" is one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general (p. 1). To clarify the position I should paraphrase MacCannell and state that the best sense of modern community emerges in the mind of the tourist. It is through touristic consciousness, I maintain, that a *utopian* representational space (lived space) of community is best displayed and it is also the passport which leads to the tour of livable spaces. One of the major tropes of MacCannell's research and one which, unintentionally, defines the third spatiality, is that 'sightseeing is a ritual performed to the differentiation of society' (p. 13). He goes on to say:

> The differentiations of the modern world have the same
> structure as tourist attractions: elements dislodged from
> their original natural, historical and cultural contexts fit
> together with other such displaced or modernized things
> and people. The differentiations *are* the attractions. (p. 13)

But whereas MacCannell sees the middle classes as 'scavenging' the earth for touristic versions of other differentiated peoples and places, I would suggest that in the 1990s they scavenge sites of community - the malls, enclaves and the media - for touristic *visions* which recite, reflect, and reciprocate the sameness of themselves. These touristic visions call upon MacCannell's 'semiotics of attraction', the perceived and conceived spaces -

symbolic markers, sight and marker involvement, and the back and front areas of 'staged authenticity'. The touristic consciousness of the contemporary individual rehearses a utopian fictive narrative of social identity, a collective *image* of what people should be. Visuality for the contemporary maller and estate dweller, as for the tourist, is of prime importance.

In films such as True Stories, Forest Gump, Scenes from a Mall, and Groundhog Day, or the Australian films Return Home, Emerald City, and of course, Crocodile Dundee there is an examination of people and communities and how, through trials and tribulations, the individual, family and the community are affirmed. Community and/or relationships are rewritten and the outcome is steeped in a nostalgia - a *mystification* - for a re-created 'authentic' community. Or as Baudrillard might put it: 'we need a visible past, a visible continuum, a visible myth of origin to reassure us of our ends.'(in Rodaway, 1994, p. 174). Thus the mystification of the first and second spatialities indulge the contemporary notion of the touristic consciousness of 'utopian' representational space. As MacCannell states, touristic consciousness:

> generates the belief that somewhere, only not right here,
> not right now, perhaps just over there someplace, in another
> country, in another *life-style*, in another social class,
> perhaps, there is *genuine* society. (p. 155)

I suggest then, that the touristic consciousness found in the sites is a *model for* an unobtainable utopian contemporary society of sameness. Touristic consciousness of, and in, first and second spatiality is the *conferred* space. The act of looking for the 'real' in the representation and the tourist sets out to see the site/sight half knowing that what s/he will be confronted with is a simulacra, a hyper-reality of hyper-visibility. As Rodaway

(1994) asserts 'the visual and, importantly, a specific style of visualism, is increasingly seen to dominate the geographical experience and mediate, or condition, the rest of our... experience in that context or place' (p. 169).

At the other end of the equation is the themed site/sights of *Disney consciousness* - the looking at the simulation because it appears more sincere. Disney consciousness is thus a *model of* society. An anti-utopian or dystopic vision couched in a perfected alter ego rife with imperfections. If touristic consciousness alludes to illusion then Disney consciousness describes delusion. If, as has been noted by Habermas, (1985) that the logical outcome of modernity was Auschwitz then the same logical impulse applied to the illusionary communities leads to the gated enclave estates and panoptic malls - 'dystopic' ecologies of control and exclusion - the visual sites of the asymmetries of power relationships. Thus Disney consciousness is the *deferred* space which hegemonically disempowers contestation and discord by advancing a choice which is no choice.

Sharon Zukin suggests that 'Disney World imposes order on unruly, heterogeneous populations' (1995, p. 52) and this is done through mechanisms of control of diversity and the vision. This notion echoes Lefebvre's and Soja's two spaces of Spatial Practice (perceived space) and Representations of Space (conceived space). Added to this Zukin cites *compression* and *condensation* as the main mechanisms of control which operate by 'flattening out experience to an easily digestible narrative and limiting visualisation to a selective sample of symbols' (p. 64). She argues that Disney World 'relies on *facades'*,

both perceived and conceived, to construct the Magic Kingdom, a place, she states, 'you cannot go into' (p. 64). The facades - the look - create the 'experience of the place' (p. 65) (of the lived space) the 'safe, socially homogeneous space' (p. 64), but as indicated in her discussion of New York City's business improvement districts (BIDs), this type of lived space is *dead space* without the 'lively aesthetic elements' of 'murals, signs and "carnival atmospheres"' (p. 65). The dead spaces are the result, she suggests, of "Disneyitis" a 'disease' initiated by the overkill of the visual strategies of perceived and conceived spatialities which offer *lived* spaces and which decontextualise livable/liminal spatial tactics.

In the advertisements and marketing materials for the master planned communities these four mechanism of Disneyitis, first and second spatiality, compression and condensation are in play in the nostalgic impulse of a 'utopianism projected backward toward the past' (p. 56). This is the Magic Kingdom of the Jeffersonian ideal of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', or in the case of the contemporary edict; 'home, holidays and the pursuit of the perfect golf-swing'. But in the interstitial spaces of the conferred and deferred can be found the *preferred* spaces of fourthspace.

In conclusion, the three tropes: the scopic regime; touristic consciousness; and Disney consciousness, will be the framework used to analyse the notional communities in a range of geographical and textual locations. Very little work has been carried out on these mundane sites as a whole although individual analyses have been circulated in the recent past (notably Davis, (1990); Ferber et al, Friedberg, Reekie, (1993); Richards, Shields,

(1992); Smoodin, (1994)). Therefore, by extending the work of the above authors and repositioning other related or unrelated works in relation to the concept of the contemporary suburbanite the rhetoric of the imagined community, the manifestations of exclusion, inclusion and illusionary participation will be interrogated. By using Anderson's imagined communities as an embarkation point, touring through the major aspects of MacCannell's work and finally sightseeing Disney consciousness and Disneyville through Soja's trialectics of spatiality the regime of the eye/I nexus will be opened up. This journey becomes a way of revisiting, and thereby, reinvesting real-and-imagined hegemonic sites/sights with a postmodern, postcolonial sensibility of eclectic and lively livable communities.

Our excursion covers a dynamic and diverse area and utilises aspects of urban theory, semiotics, sociology, textual analysis, family studies and postmodern and postcolonial theory. Works from a range of authors will be cited and remotivated in an effort to formulate a pointed discussion of the topic in hand: the conjuring of community. The sites under investigation are separated into two domains: the material and the virtual, with the material spaces being the master planned communities (mpc) or enclave estates and the shopping malls and the virtual spaces being the televisual and filmic texts and the advertisements pertaining to the material sites.

One final aspect which needs to be addressed here is the notion of *otherness* which is used throughout the thesis. Although this concept is used in a number of ways to illustrate aspects of the 'outsider' in relation to that of the community its main point of reference is

to be read as 'otherness as difference'. Two examples from the text should help to inform

the reader. In the first example taken from one of the televisual texts under discussion,

SeaChange, the main character, Laura, is positioned as an 'other' to the community due

to her status as (ex)city dweller. The binary opposition of city versus contry/seaside town

is invoked here to confirm her as an outsider and thus an 'otherness'. This is further

witnessed, in the text in that she takes up residence in a holiday home which is located on

the periphery of the town/community. In this her standing as community member is

linked to that of the transience of the holiday-maker and thus a non-permanent member of

the town. That she lives on the outskirts of the town further suggests her

outsider/other/difference status.

A second and more obvious example of otherness-as-difference can be seen in the filmic

text Muriel's Wedding discussed in Chapter Eight. Here the physicality of the main

character, Muriel, displays her difference and goes a long way to illustrate her otherness

in relation to the 'communities' (peer group, family, town) she is excluded from. Thus

her over weight body coupled with her deplorable dress sense are an immediate signifyer

of her outsider/difference which in effect others her.

The Imagined Spaces.

The filmic and televisual texts chosen to assist in the discussion were selected for a variety of reasons. For example, Peter Weir's <u>The Truman Show</u> was chosen because it offers a discussion not only about communities, spaces and spatialities but also interrogates the visuality of the filmic and televisual text as well as, by extrapolation the concept of the enclaves and the malls. The film depicts a 'prospective present' – a 'now' set in a near 'future' with this notion being described by the various technologies displayed in the mise-en-scene. Thus the studio where Christoff and his workers produce the TV show are located in a 'facility' which is designed to resemble the moon. This suggests the notion of the moon/TV studio as being the 'eye in the sky' which in turn underscores the idea of the panopticon, surveillance, regulation and social manipulation which is a major theme of the narrative. Also the image of the moon is a wry comment on the underlying theme of the text – the real 'life', from birth to death of Truman himself. During this journey Truman, via the intrusively surveilling cameras matures physically and emotionally confronting personal failure until and being 'reborn' as an individual when he succeeds in escaping from his confinement within the enclave. Baring and Cashford (1991) state that the moon was a 'primal image of the mystery of birth, growth, decay, death and regeneration' (p. 490) so it is fitting that the person who controls Truman's 'life' should do so from this primal site.

Counterbalancing these notions is the text's nostalgic impulse which is presented via the aestheticisation of the mise-en-scene. The town of Seahaven has a certain type of humble

grandeur to it. It is replete with pastel colours, 'groomed' and ordered buildings, picket

fences, beautiful, pristine beaches, and clean, neat and orderly street scenes. This

aestheticisation of the scene makes for what Mary Louise Pratt (1992) in her discussion

of the explorers Burton and Speke and the notion of the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' might

call the 'worthy prize'. She states:

> In reading beauty, order, and grandeur in his landscape,
> Burton constituted it verbally as a worthy prize, and then
> projected onto it a vision of an even more ordered and
> beautiful future. (p. 217)

In The Truman Show beauty and order, in and of the place – in this case via surveillance,

control and enclavisation - lead to an even more beautiful and ordered future. To further

intensify this notion of 'worthiness' and order the aestheticisation of the mise-en-scene is

juxtaposed with the display of the characters who live outside of the Seahaven enclave.

Invariably they are shown predominantly at nighttime in small, claustrophobically dark

rooms. This *noir-ish* element plays subtly against the bright pastels and open spaces of

the imagineered Seahaven. The juxtaposition elevates the efficacy of the enclaving

impulse whilst devaluing those people and places which are (cast) outside of the 'walls'.

In The Truman Show the walls which incarcerate Truman are displayed as being both

solid but fraudulent as well as fake but specific. Therefore for Truman the 'wall' allows

the first- and secondspatialities to rehearse a third, dead space of a faux community.

Truman must transcend the barrier to encompass the fourth space of the livable spatiality.

However, in the filmic text Pleasantville the confining, enclosing partitions are the

televisual text itself and its allied technology the TV set. Whereas the televisual

surveillance of Truman describes an important adjunct to the portrayal a community, in

Pleasantville the third, lived space of the TV show informs the concept of community which in turn animates the first-and second spaces. Thus, for the Pleasantville community the fourthspace of difference and otherness is discovered within the confinement of the thirdspace by changing the concepts behind the first and secondspaces the perceived and conceived spaces of a TV show.

Thus Pleasantville is an exemplary text which deals with concerns of 'otherness' and the 'an-other' (the black and white realm of the Pleasantville mise-en-scene of the TV world and the colourification of the 'otherness' of that world). It pointedly surveys notions of community, inclusion and exclusion and also posits the concepts of space and spatiality through the use of oppositions. One of its major themes concerns the notion of the homogeneity and insularity of the community of Pleasantville and that the vagrant space is a beneficial aspect to the community for its connection. Finally it confronts the issues of sameness and difference in a very marked manner via the notion of segregation.

Muriel's Wedding was selected for basically the same reasons as Pleasantville in that it deals with the spaces and spatialities of inclusion/exclusion, otherness, sameness and difference. Two other points that influenced selection were that the text extends the notion of vagrant space to incorporate a view of the suburbia/city nexus. The idea that Muriel by moving between the suburban Porpoise Spit and the urban centre(s) whilst conjuring for herself another identity suggests the fakery and poverty inherent in community participation. Muriel as Mariel confronts notions of the lived, dead spaces of thirdspace brought about by the perceived and conceived spaces of the first and

secondspaces. In her journey to find herself – her place within the communisphere of 'livable' community - Muriel takes on the mantle of the vagrant space to empower her to reject the conjured community of her father, family and 'peers'. Muriel's Wedding is a type of pedagogic piece which alerts the viewer to the 'dangers' of otherness and difference. The second reason why this text was chosen is that it is firmly entrenched within a visually distinct Australian context.

Comedramas: engaging the enclaves

The comedrama as a genre offers a perusal of 'isolated' communities which are inflected with a nostalgic – almost 50s – impulse. These villages or townships tend to be hierarchical in rehearsal with the community members comprising the 'professional' person, such as a Doctor, lawyer, policeman or 'squire' – the latter of which are quite often (self effacingly) figures of fun - and the lower end of the social spectrum, who in turn are portrayed as unsophisticated but street-wise. The community in the comedramas aims therefore to describe a more balanced and heterogeneous gathering than would seemingly appear in a contemporary enclave estate. The heterogeneity of these communities also allows for a more concerted discussion about the vagrant space and the effects whether positive or negative upon the ensemble.

The advertisements: souvenir of the sights

Because of their similarity in representation any number of real estate advertisement could have been offered. As it was advertisements for the most 'discernible' type of sites were chosen regardless of the position in the topography or the marketplace. The visuality of the representations of the sites/sights portray a picture post card perceivability which lends itself to an accessible reading of the issues behind and pertaining to the enclave estates. On display in the advertisements are the perceived and conceived spaces of the master planned and built environment. What is absented however, is the vagrant space – the liminal space where, to quote from Pleasantville: so many things are so much better: like Silly...or Sexy...or Dangerous...or Wild...or Brief.

Embarcation: charting the chapters

The rationale for the structure of the discussion is a simple one. Borrowing from the title of Edward Soja's (1996) book <u>Thirdspatiality: Journeys to LA and other real-and-imagined spaces</u> the latter part of the title will be remotivated and used as signpost and map for the journey through the discussion. Thus the first section offers a chart for the route the tour will take. Chapter 1 maps out the terrain focussing on the concepts of the scopic regime, touristic and Disney consciousness, and different aspects of 'community'. The lay of the land, as it were, will be discussed using the notion of *visualisation* as being of primary importance in the deliberation about community and the 'poverty of participation'.

The second chapter in this section embarks upon a visit to past real-and-imagined sites of 'community'. In this chapter how the way 'real' sites have been imagined and how 'imagined' sites have been made 'real' is addressed. This is done via an archaeology of the urban and suburban which draws upon, among others, the Garden City movement, Haussmann's Paris project and Disney's Worlds and Lands.

The final chapter in this section introduces the concepts of the *communisphere* and *vagrant space*. Drawing upon travelling theory and the nomad and the theories of writers such as Deleuze and Guattari (1987), de Certeau (1984), Hartley (1992), Hetherington (1997) and Clifford (1986) the Foucauldian concept of the heterotopia will be used as a signpost and a departure point in an effort to discover 'community' in the real-and-imagined sites of the journey.

A side trip to the Sea(Change) – part two

This section of the trip visits the first of the televisual virtual communities to be analysed. This programme belongs to the genre that I call the comedrama. As the name suggests this genre blending/bending text is a combination of the comedy and drama programmes with elements of the soap opera - which according to Fiske, (1987) involve: 'serial form which resists narrative closure, multiple characters and plots, emphasis on dialogue, problem solving and intimate conversation, male characters who are "sensitive men", female characters who are often professional, the home, or some other place which functions as a home, as the setting for the show - being included. This combination of

genres allows for a more encompassing look at the notion of community which is the foundation of this type of text. Using the Australian production SeaChange, as well as a variety of similar texts as a Baedekker this side trip wanders through these imagin(eer)ed 'virtual *utopias*' seeking out aspects of 'community', the 'communisphere' and the 'vagrant space'. The comedramas as a genre have proved to have a popularity of remarkable longevity with texts such as, The Darling Buds of May, Heartbeat and SeaChange being the most notable. Thus this important port of call is needed in an effort to further illuminate the lack of engagement - what I call the poverty of participation - found in the 'real community' spaces of the malls and enclaves.

As a follow on from the contemporary communities of the comedramas chapter 5 looks at the American sitcom M*A*S*H. Whereas SeaChange and the other texts looked at communities which are isolated and segregated spatially M*A*S*H extends this notion by having the community isolated in time – specifically the 1950s. The community in this sitcom is a mobile army hospital unit operating in Korea during that country's 'civil' war. Thus the notion of otherness and difference are deeply embedded in the text with the display of both being seen in the indigenous characters which play a peripheral role in the story lines. However, otherness and difference is also a major trope of the M*A*S*H community itself with all the characters rehearsing various notions of a 'deviance from the norm', not the least of which are the major characters of Klinger, 'Radar', 'Hawkeye' and 'Hotlips'. Because of its isolation in time and space and the obvious depiction of otherness and difference embedded within the regimented and restricting 'normalcy' of

the military community the M*A*S*H camp itself can be read as an exemplary fourthspace which allows for the advent of a vagrant spatiality.

The 'imagined' spaces – part three.

The next stage in the journey begins in part three and follows on from the major discussion of the previous section/interlude but uses the filmic text as a point of departure. By using the filmic text a more 'complete' reading of the participatorially impoverished aspects of community can be obtained from a single text. These community 'lack of engagement' perspectives which are interpellated by the vagrant spaces within the text and of the characters themselves inform the notion of the communisphere which is inherent in the narrative. It is also argued in this section that the filmic texts under discussion – The Truman Show, Pleasantville and Muriel's Wedding – are pedagogic in their presentation in that they allow a sight/site to be seen as a warning of what a dysfunctional community is like, or what it can lead to. But it also demonstrates the how important the notion of difference is to the making of a commendable community. As a means to access the tropes of the impoverishment of community participation within the texts the first chapter in this section focuses on The Truman Show

The film The Truman Show deals with the notions of the 'homogeneity of the contemporary community' of the enclaves and its antithesis the vagrant space. The textual master planned community (both as a 'place' and as a text) of Seahaven is intensely 'scripted' with the regimes of the nostalgic impulse of the imagineered

community inscribed upon the buildings and spaces of the site. The postmodern self-reflexivity of 'the show within the show' within the film further displays and makes comment upon the scripted nature. These tropes suggest the conjured aspects of communities. The textual idea of the mpc as scripted community allows for a rehearsal via the character of Truman of the vagrant space as both important to the community as a whole and to the individual community member. It can be seen that it is the falsity of the community as people and place within this text which 'others' him and which seeks to deny and/or control the aspects of the *communisphere* displayed in the Truman character. This signalling of the otherness of difference of Truman leads to the eventual failure and downfall of the conjured community of Seahaven. Thus the falsity of difference may seem 'better' but it is eventually judged as being less than the 'best'. Truman's stab at freedom cuts at the heart of the faux community and reveals the poverty of participation found in this (and by extrapolation any) conjured community.

In chapter 7 the 'spectacle' of the televisual conjured community is visited and during this sojourn issues about the negative aspect to a community as a collective when 'otherness' invades or is allowed to enter are considered. This is a reversal of the notion witnessed in the previous chapter - one that sought to remove the vagrant space by pursuing the conjured and imagineered homogeneity of faux community. In Pleasantville heterogeneity and the vagrant space are openly displayed with otherness being both celebrated and condemned. In the end the heterogeneity of otherness and difference hold sway and the confining aspects of the dead thirdspace are replaced by a livable fourthspace.

If Chapter 7 is about the collective and otherness than the filmic text <u>Muriel's Wedding,</u> as discussed in Chapter 8, 'sets its sights' on the individual and otherness. In this though it is no less *instructional* than either <u>The Truman Show</u> or <u>Pleasantville</u> with the characters of Muriel and Rhonda paying a high price for their combined actions as a vagrant other in their pursuit of the vagrant space of the communisphere. In this text the family as representative of community is the focus and if, as in <u>The Truman Show</u> the community 'actors' actively conspire to describe an illusory community, then a similar situation can be found in Muriel's family. Both the Seahaven community and the Heslop family are 'ruled' by an autocratic character: in the former it is the father figure of the existentialist-looking Christof whilst in contrast in the latter it is witnessed in the more mundane appearance of the father and husband, Bill. Both of these characters are seen to be 'creators' of their community with Bill being not only the head of the Heslop household but also is positioned as being the 'father figure' to the Porpoise Spit community via his role as shire councillor. However the two texts differ in that whereas Christof is prominent as controller and ultimate decision maker over the fate of Truman, Bill Heslop is a secondary player to the vagrancy of Muriel in her quest for the communisphere. In both texts the end result is the same with the protagonists leaving their respective conjured communities in a quest for the communisphere but the approach of each narrative differs in emphasis.

The 'real' spaces – part four.

In the final section, part four, the first stopover on the excursion is the *simultopia* or 'real' space of the Australian enclave estates and investigates the notion of the visual as 'souvenir' via the real estate advertisements. In this chapter the notions of community made in the discussion in part one are revisited in an effort to bring the 'real' of the *simultopias* and the *virtutopias* of the 'imagined' spaces together. Thus in this one site the real and imagined and the real as imagineered come together. In this chapter the first- and secondspaces of community – the perceived and the conceived – are brought together with notions of lifestage and lifestyle as displayed in the real estate advertisements to reveal the notion of community found in the enclave estates. This chapter remotivates 'ways of seeing' (Berger, 1972) the characteristics of the master planned communities which reveals the conjured aspects of the enclavised residents.

The journey through the simultopias continues in the penultimate chapter with a guided tour of the mall. The guides for this section of the journey are, in the main, Anne Friedberg (1993), Bernard Rudofsky (1969) Ian Starsmore (1975) and Rob Shields (1992) with Rod Giblett (1985), Lauren Langman (1992) and Krishan Kumar (1987, 1991) assisting with the various sightseeing activities. With their assistance this chapter looks at the mall as a site/sight for the conjoining of aspects discussed throughout this thesis. These include the concepts of the flaneur, utopia, the televisual and the filmic, the other and difference, touristic and Disney consciousness, the public and private sphere,

community, communisphere and the vagrant space of the fourthspace. As the title of this chapter states – its all in the mall.

Part five – outro.

In this section is offered a discussion on how the simultopias of the enclaves and malls might be opened up to the fourthspace of the 'livable' community. Some of the ideas to come under scrutiny are already being put into practice via what is known as New Urbanism. Other suggestions note that a new way of seeing is required if these spaces are to be remade from their position as dead. 'lived' spaces of participatorially impoverished communities. Thus this chapter can be seen as an entry into a much needed and more wide ranging discussion concerning the notions of community and space.

Chapter One •

Touring Disneyville

This book is about the search for something which, from one point of view, does not exist. Looked at another way, it is something so obvious that its existence is usually taken for granted'. So begins John Hartley's book The Politics of Pictures (1992, p.1) Between its pages Hartley pursues the public and the public domain, and finds it, in various guises, in its *visualizations* in the media. Why pictures? he asks, and answers that pictorialization as utilised by the media, is used, 'in short to dramatize and teach' (p.6). My quest is for a similarly elusive, imaged model: the community, and I, in part, use a similar type of resource, the 'picture', whether film or advertisement, still or sitcom as a synecdochal 'souvenir' or touristic Baedeker, for and of, a journey through the real-and-imagined spaces of community. To paraphrase Hartley, these pictures refer to the *imagineering* of the community as an assembly of people via its reinvention as pictures which serve the same purpose. But the imagineering process here is not restricted to the graphic. More concrete edifices can be used as 'pictorial places' for, and of, the eye.

Thus the home, suburban enclave estates and shopping malls offer scopic sites and *sights* of imagined and imagineered families and communities. These mundane and everyday sites (which I choose to call *Disneyville* because of their close relationship both physically and socially to the original model, Disneyland) are invested with properties of control and manipulation which narrativises the familial and the communal. They are constructed for a complete segregation of the dichotomies of leisure and work, preferring

the former to the latter, and constructing a utopic inclusive illusion of community which addresses, but seeks to mask, a poverty of participation.

The concept behind Disneyville, like its original model the theme park (and Disneyland in particular), is that of creating an isolated, autonomous, conjured utopian space. That these near utopian images of pretences of family, neighbourhood and community are seldom enacted in the sites, but are universally accepted as being natural and the 'norm', speaks volumes about how effective the narratives are. But the families, neighbour(hood)s and communities rehearsed in the sites are not 'natural' being neither essential, spontaneous nor artless. Nor are they the 'norm' being that they are a 'model' in blueprint only, a titular template for an affected analogy of an anecdotal anachronism. These imagined and imagineered communities might be thought of as the 'natural child' – the resultant bastard of the coupling of the perceptual and the conceptual – the illegitimate progeny of an inauthentic embrace of the real-and-imagined. The community is therefore a creation of the site (the geography) and the sight (the 'natal' narratives of the edenic, pre-industrial, rural village). These narratives rehearse Baudrillard's (1988) notion of the 'simulation': 'the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal' (cited in Cheal, 1991, p.148). Paul Rodaway (1994) suggests of the hyper-real that:

> It is an experience constituted of established images and themes, grounded in an accepted cultural tradition, and located within an economy of buying and selling. The hyper-real experience is presented to the individual as a product, a commodity that can be bought and consumed. (p. 178)

The 'established images and themes' are the narratives of nostalgia which work upon the geographies of the perceived and conceptual to help sell the product that is 'community'. Rodaway goes on to state:

> The individual, or consumer, learns to desire particular products (assisted by advertising) and providers of hyper-real geographies seek to satisfy and sustain these desires.(p. 178)

Thus the nostalgic impulse for the 'norm' which is utopic in form is crafted from desires derived from the imagineers of the consensual and connected 'community'; the developers, architects, advertisers, mall managers, film directors and script-writers. I will assert that this false foundation of the notion of community in contemporary times rehearses a dis-unity; a fragmentary and exclusionary structure. Rodaway attests to this when he comments that:

> In this sense, hyper-real geographies lack depth – for the consumer – and are virtual in subsisting at the level of an image, theme or gesture.(p. 178)

This brings us to the scopic regime.

John Berger (1972) in his book Ways of Seeing states: Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can see. (p. 7) He goes on to add:

> But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the world...The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe...Yet this seeing which comes before words, and can never be quite covered by them, is not a question of mechanically reacting to stimuli...We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach. (pp 7, 8)

Thus, as Berger might maintain 'sight' as the primary sense is harnessed to the 'drive' to see which is brought about by the *desire* to place ourselves spatially within 'our world'. Berger notes this:

> Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen. The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are a part of the visible world. (p. 9)

Thus the visual and the (reciprocal) visuality of the gaze is a strong determiner of the way we construct the notion of the reality of the world which surrounds us. 'Our vision is continually active' Berger suggests. It is 'continually active, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.'(p. 9). These *things* which we gather around us can be thought of as 'mediated images'. They are mediated in that they are narrativised. Berger seeks to explain this: 'Often dialogue is an attempt...to explain how, either metaphorically or literally, 'you see things', an attempt to discover how 'he sees things'.'(p. 9). Thus words like the sites/sights are the visuals shared – they speak the sites/sights and describe the *images* seen, and as Berger says, 'all images are man-made.'(p. 9).

Hence, it can be argued that beginning with the age of the 'perspective' of the Italian and Northern Renaissance Art movements of the 15 and 16 centuries we live in the age of the gaze. This predominance of the eye has escalated since the mid-nineteenth century with western society becoming an increasingly scopic and technologically visual society, evermore structured by the regime of sight. The exhibitions and expositions of Paris (1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900) London (1851), and Chicago (1893); the dioramas, panoramas and phantasmagorias; the Mutoscope and Zoetrope, the photograph and the

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moving picture conspired to privilege sight over the other senses. To call on Rodaway

again he suggests that:

> [S]ight allows us to orient ourselves in the environment
> and, through its combined properties of synthesis and
> detachment, gives an overall view of a world.(p. 118)

But he also adds:

> We use our sense of sight both to receive information and,
> either directly or indirectly through some other sense organ,
> present ourselves as visible to others. There is therefore
> perception and a presence, a gathering of a world and a
> participating in that world. Sight...gives us access to a
> geography and through our visibility we have a
> geographical presence. (p. 118)

So 'we' become scopic and spatial by seeing and being seen.

The Scopic and the Spatial

Anne Friedberg (1993) in   Window Shopping_ talks about the nineteenth century

apparatuses which opened up the 'field of the visible' (p.31) and quotes Jean-Louis

Comoli: 'The second half of the nineteenth century lives in a sort of *frenzy of the visible'*

(p.15)(her italics). But this frenzy leads to a bodiless scopophilia of billboards, neon

signs, the ubiquitous television, the plethora of multiplexes and the v.c.r. and video

games that have further escalated this incorporeal scopophilia leading inevitably to the

advent of virtual reality which 'absents' the body while promoting the spectacle. The

politics of these pictures could almost claim that the 'real' is Baudrillard's 'hyperreal':

the imagined, or in most cases the *imagineered.* As Guy Debord (cited in Friedberg,

p.15) states:

In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an *immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.* (her emphasis)

These notions of the spectacle and the representation returns us to Hartley (1992) who asserts that pictures and the media:

> (have)...tended to become ever more pictorial, with whole media declining in popularity when something apparently more visual comes along (print giving ground to cinema and TV), while within the press, those books and periodicals with large circulations are, without exception, the heavily illustrated ones.(p. 6)

But this scopophilia is not restricted to the media. The eye, sight, seeing– the scopic regime – has invaded other areas of the everyday not least of which is being seen.

Surveillance is a keyword in most large western cities with videos 'eyeing' city streets and shopping malls, cameras and monitors checking visitors at the front door and law enforcement officers video taping errant drivers on the streets and highways (the latter example turning up as a TV programme: Police, Camera, Action!). Even in the family home 'surveillance' is at work. The kitchen, once a privatised and excluded space of work and one which was removed from the ken of kin and situated out of the sight of strangers, is now envisaged as a site/sight of panoptical production, surveilling the 'irregular' family rooms of the house as well as the extramural and thus potentially unruly space of the garden. Kim Dovey (1994) in Dreams on Display avers:

> The surveillance function from the kitchen has been an important criterion in determining the spatial layout of the

informal areas. This panoptic function is enhanced by sunken family and games areas. *There are no sunken Kitchens.*(p. 139)(my italics)

This conjoining of scopophilia and space is an example of Foucault's notion of 'policing'. As he states:

> At the outset, the notion of police applied only to the set of regulations that were to assure the tranquillity of a city [or home, neighbourhood]...that would manage to penetrate, to stimulate, to regulate, and to render almost automatic all the mechanisms of society [community]. (Rabinow, 1984, p.p.241, 242)

And these sets of regulations were, and still are, enforced through the self-policing mechanism of 'being seen'.

Apart from the house there are two more sites/sights, related to seeing which utilise scopic regimes of policing and these are the shopping mall and the theme park. Both, as will be argued later, offer excitements to the eye and both are spatially dislocated regions of different ways of seeing and being seen which address issues of the visibility of sameness and difference within the spaces of nostalgia and spectacle, prospect and plenitude and are rehearsed in controlled, imagineered, conjured 'community' spaces.

Coupled with the emphasis on the eye in the twentieth century, is the significance of mobility. The conjoining of the eye to the mobile is succinctly witnessed in Baudelaire's nineteenth century *flaneur*, the mobile spectator surrounded by the mobile, who, to paraphrase the writer himself, is the paradoxical 'prince' at 'home away from home' in the streets. Friedberg quotes his definition:

> To the perfect spectator, the impassioned observer, it is an immense joy to make his domicile amongst numbers, amidst fluctuation and movement, amidst *the fugitive and the infinite*. (p. 29)(my italics)

The 'fugitive and the infinite' infer notions of nostalgia and an unobtainable utopia with nostalgia as the infinite seemingly stretching through time to continuously clutch at our consciousness, while the utopian ideals are forever fugitive, always failing to fulfil. The 'fugitive and infinite' also suggests a type of mutability, an impoverishment of connectedness, a poverty of participation. The flaneur is a *witness to* and not a *oneness with* society.

The act of flanerie is closely linked to the *virtual* mobility of the dioramas and panoramas of the nineteenth century, and the experience of spectatorship in contemporary cinema and TV. *Specific* flanerie was rehearsed at the expositions and in the museums and is more recently, the dominant action of the visitor to the malls and theme parks. The mobile eye here is surrounded and surveyed by other mobile eyes. In Lifestyle Shopping (Rob Shields (ed), 1992), Lauren Langman has this to say about the experience of the shopper in the mall:

> With the intrusion of television into the socialization process, the relation of self to Other has taken on a new quality, what I would call the *Other of the Imaginary*. In the age of television, we learn to see others as if our eye were a camera...Taking the role of the Other is now to imagine that we are being seen via camera by the larger audience of home viewers. Television...predisposes later mall-based seeing and being seen as central for modern subjectivity. (pp. 56, 57)

Langman links the "Other of the Imaginary' with a conjured community, the 'large audience' which watches us. We in turn become members of this 'community'; we watch the watchers who are watching us. Baudelaire's flaneur, 'the observer prince' who 'rejoices in his incognito' (Friedberg, p. 29) is now the 'observed pauper', made notorious by his noticability within a conjured community of the conjoined spectator/spectacle. Dean MacCannell (1976) addresses this notion in The Tourist. In it he cites an extract from Mark Twain's Innocents Abroad and states:

> (this) is a case of sightseeing where the sight seen is a
> sightseer. The sight, its marker and its seer are the same, or,
> if they are not exactly the same, two tourists can take turns
> being all three.(p. 130)

Thus Langman's 'Other of the Imaginary' is MacCannell's contemporary 'Tourist', and 'we', the suburbanite, are *both: a self-imagined identity* – the contemporary 'flaneur', tourist, homeowner, tv watcher, movie goer; the possessor of the touristic consciousness of conceived spaces – in an *other imagineered community* – the mall, Disneyland, enclave estate, televisual or filmic text; the rehearsal of the dystopic Disney consciousness of the perceived spaces.

So the abstraction of the flaneur into the traveller, tourist or the vagrant presumes the concept of a consciousness which is analogous to the contemporary TV watching, mall roaming suburbanite; the prototypical Cook's tourist for whom 'roaming' was 'packaged' and who travelled to see and be seen. Thus the Grand Tour had as much to do with the journey as being seen to have journeyed. Nowadays, it seems, everyday life 'experience' is 'packaged' and to quote MacCannell: 'Let's face it, we are all tourists!' (p. 9).

The shopping malls are, in many ways, hyper-real 'tours' of the world. The foodhall offers 'authentic' exotic cuisine from the curry to the kebab; boutique stores present Parisian 'haute couture' or Oriental fixtures and fittings; specialist stores sell American or Japanese high-tech. Similarly the televisual transgresses borders and juxtaposes utopic and dystopic spatialities, presenting visualised spaces of a drama set in New York or a documentary about Moscow; a football match in Milan which precedes a soapie set in Sydney. In films, space is relocated. In the multiplex cinemas Australian, French and American films vie for the viewer's dollar and the 'tourist's' eye. In the enclave estates architecture is a type of Baedeker for the world; the Mediterranean villa sits beside the American modern. And theme parks abound offering 'rides' which take the guests to 'deepest, darkest Africa' or the 'exotic, but dangerous, East'. However, this concept of the eye as a lens on the 'packaged' world infers a disconnectedness, a removal of reciprocity, a poverty of participation with others. As MacCannell mentions 'the sightseer does not...*see* San Francisco' (p. 111) but only the *symbolic marker* of it. Similarly in the imagineered sites of community – the malls and movies, the suburbs and sitcoms – it is the marker of a conjured community which is brought into existence by the owners, developers and advertisers in the hope that it will be 'meaningfully experienced' (p. 112) by the viewer. Their ally in this 'sacralisation' is the camera, which works to involve the viewer with the site. Thus the marker as, MacCannell points out, is more important than the site itself.

Baudelaire berated the act of photography and the camera as 'fixing' the fluidity of the flaneur whereas the tourist welcomed it, seeing it as a way of improving the act of looking and preserving their memories of the sites/sights they had 'experienced'. The photograph as souvenir became an important part of *touristic consciousness*. MacCannell sees the mechanical reproduction of the sight as being a component of site/sight *sacralization*. He points out that mechanical reproduction along with the naming, framing and elevation, enshrinement and social reproduction phases lead to the sight becoming a meaningful 'experience' imbued with the *authentic*. This authenticating concept conveys meaning and value to the theme parks, malls, enclave estates, display homes and related and other media texts and is dependent upon imagineering and visualisation, two major 'markers' of the touristic consciousness experience. MacCannell's markers and Hartley's pictorialisations converge at this point creating, to paraphrase Lefebvre, an-Other thing. This is the essence of Soja's Thirdspatiality. The first space of the perceived, the material, meets the second space of the conceived, the virtual, to create a *lived space*. But this concept positioned in its past tense infers an inanimate or stagnant space. It fixes and closes the spatiality as it suppresses notions of the validity of what I call the 'vagabond', or vagrant, fourthspace of the livable/liminal by offering an inordinately vapid space of vacuity: the 'empty meeting grounds' of postmodern touristic consciousness.

So whilst MacCannell and Hartley describe the first and second spaces they are coerced to see the *touristic* and *mediated* communities as being intrinsically participatory. However, I consider them to be the colonising spaces, which are participatorily

impoverished. So what needs to be addressed is not the fixed spaces of the first and second space (the spaces of touristic and Disney consciousness) and the 'lived', but the interstitial spaces of the consciousness of *vagrancy*; the flaneurial, nomadic, erratic spaces of the 'speaking-as' position.

'Practicing' participation and apartheid

In part this perusal of the poverty of participation of the 'pictured' community takes its impetus from the synthesis of the rhetoric of the sites with the visuality of community in the media representations – the material with the virtual – which speak of the orchestrations of the authentic and which describe *practices* of inclusion and exclusion, participation and apartheid. The nexus of physical place and social space describes a 'naturalised' relationship of site and situation. The mediated terms of 'home' and 'neighbourhood' denote a physical place as well as offering connotations of distinct types of spatial interaction, behaviour and 'feelings' which are supposed to lead to consensual sensibilities for and about community. These sensibilities are placed centre-stage with the itinerant participants of communisphere relegated to the position of audience.

We can address these notions by using Erving Goffman's front-back dichotomy (see MacCannell, 1976). The latter is thought of as a private and 'backstage' arena and the former as public or 'onstage' experience. The organisation and *furniture* of these material sites rehearse notions of classification, control and containment while the virtual places promoted in newspapers, television and film display a tendency to diminish difference

and absent asymmetrical absolutes. Thus what initially appear to be open communities, or even 'separate but equal' (see Angotti, 1993) neighbourhoods, are in fact, segregated spaces of privilege or privation. The actual architectural firstspace and the virtual social space of second space replicate Foucault's 'dividing practices' (cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982) which rehearse the poverty of participation.

So in a time of social, spatial and temporal change: of the disappearance and re-arrangement of global boundaries and borders; of dispersed and fragmented familial foundations; of technological communications systems and cyber-realities the questions of who and what constitute a community and whose interests are being served by this creation need to be addressed. If the 'postmodern' moment witnesses the exposure of the 'back-stage'; the lifting of the curtain and the removal of the 'rostrum', then why is there a perceived and persistent need for a rehearsal of the 'theatre' which is the modernist institution of community? To take the analogy further: in an age of 'improvisation' why is there a need for a scripted, manipulated mis-en-scene of the home, hearth and happiness? In the mediated community individual issues of gender, race, age and status are effaced and replaced by a model 'utopian' unity built upon a nostalgic 'morphic memory' of the preindustrial, prelapsarian, rural village. Are then the mediated images rehearsed in the everyday sites of the mall, the housing estates and television and film merely the auditions for this type of scripted community which is 'normalised' to disavow the disparities of the disempowered?

In each case the mediated images, pictures and tableaux which describe the communities in the three sites above work to hide the deficiencies, ambiguities and asymmetries inherent in them. These defects are however able to be discerned by what Hartley (1992) calls *forensics*. In his eyes the forensic investigation transforms pictures into 'politics', mute witnesses into storytellers. They are *evidence* which when placed under the microscope of interrogation offer details to disclose the deception and reveal the reason. In the search for the clues to 'community': 'pictures are more real than the people and events they seem to be images and reflections of' (p. 30). So the material evidence for this investigation of the 'community' is made *visual* in the 'representations of space' via the various media of advertisements, television and films and *specific* in the 'spatial practices' in the 'streets' of the shopping malls and the enclave estates. To extend Hartley's metaphor of courtroom practice, the adversarial argumentation I use addresses diverse discussions of architecture, urban sociology, semiotics, consumerism and tourism. I call 'witnesses' for the prosecution from the real estate pages of the newspapers, and these will be augmented by contemporary texts from films and television. The 'case' is that: the paradox of participation inherent in the first and second spatialities of these sites help to produce and reproduce a range of effects which describe a fourth spatiality, not the 'espace vecu' or lived space of community but the livable/liminal space of the communisphere.

Confronting Communities: Community as Fourth Spatiality

The epithet 'community', like that of the 'public', is greatly mis-used in contemporary society. The latter is used to allude to a 'unity' which is illusionary in both actuality and assembly. It is a moderated matrix, elusive and ephemeral but emphatically reiterated, politically and culturally, via the media constructed 'public domain'. Similarly the concept of community is a powerful and familiar site and one which usually designates, or signifies, a group by affiliation or geographical location. It is used to describe small, intimate associations of similar-minded peoples; extended groupings such as one- or two-street neighbourhoods; large housing estates of ten or twenty thousand people; or intranational, national or international 'publics'. On television, in films, newspapers and magazines, photographic or written presentations rehearse characteristics or stereotypes, common-sense or consensual 'sites/sights' of age, race, gender and status which are then addressed as 'communities'. But these depictions of difference are not simply *re*-presentations. They enact principles of inclusion and exclusion, hierarchies and distinctions which are 'naturalised' and 'normalised' without being noted or named. The single pictorial representation in the media transcends the illustration of an individual to encompass an affiliated, imaginary collective which describes powerful elements of social and 'public' life: family, neighbourhood, state or nation. In the media the polarised extremes of *a* family and *the* nation are conflated into 'community' which can be *imagined* as in the case of a homeowner, a shopper in the mall, or a 'citizen', or *imagineered* as the suburbanite, the consumer or the 'public'. The notion of the

'community' is mythologised as well as manipulated, supposed whilst stage-managed, chimerical but constructed. It is inclusive but demands exclusions, comprehensive but segregationary, catholic but cleaved. It infers a richness in relationship, an intensity of shared interest, but enacts a destitution in association, a poverty of participation.

The contemporary, postmodern 'experience of community', both mediated and experiential, seem to consist of confusing contradictions. This experience is a paradox: a paragon of places at once reassuringly familiar and yet desirously distant. The community is as familiar as family and as fantastic as fantasy. It is ephemeral, elastic and emphatically ever-present. It is a place of security, charm and contentment, but it is also the place of chance, change and contestation. Community touches everyday life constantly by its durability but its borders are but briefly broached. In the representations of space, its electronically mediated form, it is local, national, transnational: now-here but 'nowhere'. In the experiential spatial practice it is everywhere and 'elsewhere'. It is a conflictless world mediated in the image of the middle-classes for the masses. It is devoid of deformity, disability, persecution and poverty. It is 'spoken' about by politicians, priests and philanthropists, 'constructed' in newspapers, on television and in films and 'sold' in manifestos or malls. Images of it are pictorially performative and pedagogic; even in its darkest filmic or journalistic incarnation it aims to 'educate' by offering examples of dysfunctional alternatives and fragmented futures. Touristic consciousness abstractions of it are nostalgic and nascent; the 'edenic' past is the midwife of a 'utopian' future. Experience of it is a consumerist cornucopia - window-shopping for lifestyle and leisure. The 'mediated community' is, above all, pervasively persuasive and politically

active in its rehearsal of a 'normalised' ideal which masks a near dystopic present. But these properties are, in the main, concealed and made cryptic by the intervention of Disney consciousness – the 'fake' as the 'real'.

In a balanced analysis the mediated community is a site of contradiction and 'camouflage'. At best, in times of adversity or celebration, it briefly brings together disparate groups in acknowledgment of a 'common' threat or shared success. At worst it is divisive, trading in fear and panic to segregate and ghettoise sections of the populace. In times of great tragedy or triumph the nation is invariably invoked as a united community. The 'public' or 'citizens' (both elastic political and media terms) are portrayed as sharing in the moments of deep despair, redoubtable remorse, parochial pride or emphatic ecstasy. Global events such as the Olympic Games inspire fervent passions even in the ex-pat scattered around the world. While national tragedies such as the Port Arthur massacre, the Dunblane schoolyard slaughter or the Thredbo disaster lead to a media frenzy of a collective bout of breast-beating and community commiseration.

The example of the reaction to the death of Princess Diana and the spectacle that flowed from it is a reminder of how a community can imagine 'itself' into being. Prompted by the visuality of itself in the media the 'public' flocked to the site/sight of mourning because the media displayed these *sights* as being the communal places for the *display* of mourning. Thus people were 'moved' by, and to go to, the site because of the *sight* of the sight. The touristic consciousness here saw the media sacralise and sanctify the site via the conjoining of the perceived (physical) and the conceived (imag(e)i-nation) and its

mediated visuality to authenticate it as a momentary 'monument'. The reaction by the heterogeneous communisphere was regulated (policed) to confer a homogeneity to a (conjured) community. Concomitant to this is the broadcasting of Diana's brother's speech. By allowing the spectators to enter the back stage, as it were, of both the ceremony and the private life of the 'family' the notion of a comm(on)unity of a conjured mediated community was enhanced. Thus community was forged by the act of 'getting in with the natives' via visualisation. To borrow from Benedict Anderson (1983), this community was imagined because regardless of actual inequalities they were '*conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship*' (p. 7)(my italics).

The announcement of the selection of Sydney as the Host City for the year 2000 Olympic Games is another such example of how a community (city, state, nation) is imagined into being. The morning of Juan Antonio Samaranch's declaration: "And the winner is...Sydney' The Sydney Morning Herald ran the story of how 'we' had won. As the 'local' paper this was quite acceptable but the following day The Australian on its front page was equally enthusiastic and nationalistic: "We did it!" The Heralds parochial 'we' becomes the public 'us'. Similarly an event such as the threat to public funding of the antipodean ABC, and Radio National in particular, saw the interpellation of the listeners as a community and the call for a united, disgruntled voice of dissent. One on-air 'celebrity' Philip Adams (who often, ironically, states that he has only one listener, Gladys) organised a public debate in each of the Australian capital cities. These 'rallies' (for want of a better word) witnessed a mixed bag of concerned citizens comprising angry

academics, garrulous grandmothers, erudite ethnics, tongue-tied teens and many points in between.

If the ABC's community was made visible via adversity then the parochial sporting rivalry between Western Australian football team supporters and their interstate opponents is similarly aroused. This extreme 'us and them' attitude promulgated in the media, stems from the inclusion of the West Coast Eagles football team into the, then, very parochial Victorian Football League in the early 80s. The tyranny of the geographical distance between the two states, defined by the red-earthed desert, has long been the apparatus to insinuate notions of the inherent values and flaws of the two entities. Victoria, and its capital, Melbourne, has been portrayed in their media as culturally competent, complex and complete. Perth and Western Australia, however, are seen as, at best, the poor cousin, and at worst the inept, insolent isolationist or the upstart bent on insurrection. Exclusion was the order of the day from both sides of the rabbit fence but with inclusion and participation in the national competition the provincial attitudes of the imagined West Australian political essence took the form of the media imagineered Eagles supporter: the bescarfed, rosette-bedecked, blue and gold colloquial community.

One of the features shared by the various examples of the 'communities' illustrated above is how they are depicted which returns us to scopophilia and the regimes of visuality. The imagined communities of the media correspond with how some sociologists (notably Simmel, 1950; Bell, 1976) perceive the twentieth-century world. To them modernisation

is the site of the visual aspect, the empire of the eye. The notion of an empire suggests hierarchical arrangements. Therefore the act of depicting propounds a concomitant act of selection, the activity of exclusion and inclusion based on authorship and the audience. It infers a reliance on the visuality of the construction and on the ability of the reader to interpret this visuality in a socially inflected manner. The representation and reception work together to rehearse social difference and this social difference has a potentially transformative power. As Fyfe and Law state in Picturing Power (1988): 'A depiction is never just an illustration..[it marks]..the point where a process of production gives way to a range of effects' (p. 1). And it is these effects which can lead to the analysis of a media imagineered community via questioning the visuality of the depiction and revealing the constructedness of the imagined 'community'.

By combining the modernist's 'empire of the eye' with Fyfe and Laws' remarks on the power of the illustration we can analyse the first and second spatialities, the visutopian suburban enclave estate and its counterpart, the ubiquitous shopping mall. We can also look at the filmic and televisual texts in an effort to comprehend how and why the notion of the utopian, pre-industrial rural model of community is so dominant in the specious community aspects of these sites/sights. The basis for the formation of these imagin(eer)ed communities can be found in the theme parks of the most famous imagineer of them all, Walt Disney, and the inter-related 'experience of tourism' set forward by MacCannell. There is noted a subtle, but nonetheless boundless, influence that Disney's theme parks and the concept of the tourist have worked upon the estates

and the malls and this is also directly associated with the notional *experience* of televisual and filmic 'touristic' spectatorship.

Disney Consciousness, Disneyland, Disneyville

Although the giant expositions of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries were invariably the precursors of the now ubiquitous theme park it was the thirteenth of July, 1955 which witnessed the arrival of the first large scale permanent 'simulacraland'. Disneyland, 'the place that was also a TV show' (Marling, 1994) was Disney's utopic vision, where to paraphrase Lauren Langman (cited in Shields, 1992) the present is good, the past is better, but the two together are best. This notion of the conjoining of the 'then' with the 'now' came to fruition in the multi-temporal, multi-spatial, monotypic, model community sprawling around 'Main Street'. As Karal Anne Marling puts it in her essay, Disneyland, 1955:

> Main Street was capable of shrinking the past, stripping away the nasty facts of yesterday…and exalting instead the positive values that recollection had burnished into a golden luster.[sic] Main Street was a plaything, a dream at naptime, a TV sitcom better than reality had ever been.(p. 114)

And she goes on to say how it shared an overwhelming similarity with suburbia: 'the sense of uniformity, order, community and safety…it stood in obvious contrast to the American city from which the suburbanite had fled' (p. 114). Now forty years later Disneyland and Main Street are back in the designing and imagineering a dream business with the release of homesites in 'Celebration', a 3.2 billion-dollar new town being built

for families in Florida. As reported in <u>The West Australian Habitat</u> section (23/8/96) Disneyland is now DisneyTown, a 'family-oriented community of the future – so much in the future that it looks like 1940s small-town America'.

In the Disney example, Disneyland, the place, and Disneyland the text, were, and to a certain extent still are, 'America'. As Marling states: 'Main Street USA affirmed that the good life – utopia – was American and middle-class: neat, tidy, entrepreneurial..(it)..was a set for a movie that would be made only in the mind of the visitor' (pp. 116-121). The first and second spaces of the imagineered place brought into being an imagined community; neat, tidy, American and middle-class.

This notion of inclusion by imagining and being imagineered, as presented by Disney, is succinctly witnessed in EuroDisneyland, Paris, and its eastern counterpart, Tokyo Disneyland. The former which is seen as, 'The land where wishes come true' is almost an identical reproduction of the original model. It consists primarily of the Disneyesque visions: Adventureland, Fantasyland, Frontierland, Discoveryland and of course the simulacra of small town America, Main Street USA. Iconic idealisation and stylisations of the imagineered America abound within these sites. A brochure for EuroDisneyland lists these as:

> The 'Mark Twain' chugs the Mississippi; Indiana Jones and the Temple of Peril [Doom?]; Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show; Billy Bob's Country Western Saloon; Rock 'n' Roll America. And, of course, Mickey is there 'to welcome you like a long lost friend'

The simulacra of the fictive textual references, the virtutopias of the literary, filmic and

televisual, in fact, what have become the media authenticated popular images, replace an

original or even 'reality' with a hyper-reality. Rodaway (1994) turns to Baudrillard to

advance this discussion:

> [T]he hyper-real experience replaces the possibility of a test
> against an original by offering itself as the standard,
> reinforcing its self-referentiality which dismisses the need
> for any reference to an original (other than itself).(p. 178)

The EuroDisneyland brochure finishes with a 'paean' to contemporary America, which

somewhat paradoxically, disconcertingly is situated in the distinctly 'non-American' city

of Paris:

> There's Festival Disney, the Boulevard of the American
> Dream, lined with Eateries, Drinkeries and Shopperamas
> like you've never seen. This place is the US of A!

Here then is where 'Haute' (Parisian) culture meets hamburger heaven with the American

Dream being intimately related to leisured consumerism and where the 'guest' at

EuroDisneyland, Paris can participate in *the Dream* by purchasing it. Similarly in the

Tokyo Disneyland, another model of the original 'America' is sold to the (mainly

Japanese) guests (Yoshimoto, p. 192).

> Nearly a carbon copy of the 'original' Disneyland in
> Anaheim, Tokyo Disneyland gives the visitors the
> "authentic" American flavour…along with MacDonalds
> and Kentucky Fried Chicken. (p.190)

But Yoshimoto points out, the Japanese guests are not purchasing the American Dream

but the 'dream of the Americans' – postmodern consumerism:

> In postmodern Japan, everything is commodified, including
> the sense of nationhood. America is, therefore, just another
> brand name, like Chanel, Armani, and so on. (p. 194)

Yoshimoto argues that in fact the Japanese use Tokyo Disneyland (and the phenomena of

the 'foreign villages', of *ikoku-mura*) as a way of 'visualising' Japan and 'Japaneseness'

via a totalising incorporation of other visualisations, simulacra and commodities of, and

from, other places. It points to the recognition of difference inherent in sameness and is a

major aspect of Disney consciousness – the display of otherness infers the authenticity of

the 'original' – it 'contains' (in both senses of the word) differences to validate sameness.

Thus the dystopic juxtaposition of the multivalent visualisations creates an illusion of

monocultural unity which instils authenticity on the prototype. In Disney's world this

exemplar is the homogenous Main Street, USA.

Yoshimoto cites the example of the West Edmonton Mall as another model of how

sameness promotes its homogeneity by incorporating and displaying the heterogeneity of

difference and then emphasises:

> (Yet) this implausible, seemingly random, collection of
> images has been assembled with an explicit purpose: to
> support the mall's claim to contain the entire world within
> its walls.(p. 194)

The random collection of images are the 'monuments' to deviation and variation

displayed to show the fragmented places of the 'them' to an assemblage of a united 'us'.

But this incorporation speaks of a poverty of participation. Like MacCannell's tourist, the

Japanese guest at the *ikoku-mura* or Tokyo Disneyland is left bereft of an 'authentic

experience'. They are offered a staged authenticity, a front-stage area masquerading as a

back-stage area. Contrary to Yoshimoto's thesis I suggest that the 'selective hybridity of Japanese culture' (p. 197) dramatises the impoverishment of participation of the individual in the communal notion of Japan. The imagineered and mediated sites of 'Europe' and 'America', which Yoshimoto insists create an invisible Japanese empire, invoke notions of placelessness – like the passenger/tourist on a five-star cruise ship in the middle of the ocean, or an economy class tourist in an aircraft flying over various countries. It is a feeling of being in a heterotopic liminal zone, of being betwixt and between; a citizen of nowhere but everywhere. As Foucault has suggested: 'the boat is a heterotopia par excellence; a place without a place' (Soja, 1996, p. 162) but connected to all places and spaces, and it can be argued the 'passenger' is living the livable space of a type of vagrancy – the fourthspatiality of 'be-coming'.

It has been argued above that the image of the mediated communities describe visions of family, synthesis and the self sufficiency of an edenic rural community, but in the actualisation they are fragmented, synthetic and dependent. The mediated community is an imagineered community which offers a melange of asymmetrical power relations (gender, race, age and class), consumerist fantasies (commodities as panacea for societal problems), imagined inadequacies (the cultural cringe and keeping up with the Jones') and artificial superficial relationships (neighbouring, leisure or hobby pursuits, lobby group membership). On the one hand, they espouse equality and egalitarian ethics whilst, on the other, supporting friction and factionalism between diverse social and racial groups. The mediated community seeks to camouflage the poverty of participation of these groups. Chameleonesque, in times of change, the outward appearance may alter,

incorporating silenced images of ethnic or racial minorities, whilst its intrinsic structure, that of the W.A.S.P., empowered, middle class voice remains intact. In this is seen the twin notions of what are the 'speaking-for' and the 'speaking-as' positions. It is foreshadowed that the latter has the loudest voice and the former is more often than not shouted down until it is silenced or mumbles to itself. Thus certain sectors of the communisphere, the homeless and bag people, teenagers and the elderly remain outside of community, immutable because they are mute.

The 'moving' medium: community and the cinema

In any discussion of the filmic or televisual text the foremost and obvious fact is that both audience and text are a commodity. The cinematic text is made and marketed to get 'bums-on-seats'. Similarly, in the example of television, this bums-on-seats notion, the popularity of the text, is used to sell the viewer to the advertisers. This economic imperative works to create an 'imaged' individual, the imagined viewing collective, which is in turn imagineered into a 'community'. The Disneyesque concept behind this community is consensus which is founded upon the universality of shared 'histories', 'hypotheses' and 'hopes'. All of these are gathered under the umbrella term of 'mass entertainment'. Thus the imagined viewing community is most likely pictured as a homogenised unit, invariably the white, anglo-saxon, middle-class male. But this consensus belies the notion of the exclusionary and segregatory specifics of gender, race, age and disability. It is not therefore who the actual individual viewer is, but the perception of the collective 'community' of the viewers.

The conjoining of an imagined community and the exigency of engagement are best-illustrated in the cinematic and televisual 'experience'. Unlike their counterpart the photograph (in the brochure or real estate pages), they offer an illusion of the 'public space of participation' – the act of viewing is itself offered as participation in community. The neighbourhood is the network and the text a familiar 'home'. The audience is invited to 'share' in this space, whether it is displayed as the ancient city streets of Rome, the western frontier town, of the contemporary city-scape. The actors engage and interact with each other *and* the mise-en-scene creating a 'place' which is both a reality and a fantasy, mundane and mythical, real-and-imagin(eer)ed. The mise-en-scene is an important component acting as an architecture of the familiar, fantastical or fearful.

For example, the Manhattan skyline is instantly recognisable to a large number of people in Western society even if these people have not had direct experience of it. Through the filmic apparatus they are *familiar* with the various public spaces of the city. *Virtually witnessing* it rehearses an awareness and appreciation of the sights, sounds and people in these places ensuring a vicarious participation with them and the environment. This virtual witnessing by the spectator/audience is reliant upon the concept of *virtual mobility*, a type of 'touristic moment' which had its genesis in the spaces of the dioramas and panoramas of London and Paris at the turn of the century. Not unlike the cinema, these exhibitions 'relied on physical immobility as well as the painterly illusion of virtual presence' (Friedberg, p. 184) with the spectator 'inserted' into the 'text', But the filmic

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offers an extra dimension, the experience of presentness or Barthes' *being-there* – the virtual livable/liminal space of Fourthspatiality.

But films and television offer another community - the textual community. These communities can be either supportive of the consensus, or offer a vision of alternative, usually dysfunctional, dystopic and disastrous communities. In recent years 'supportive' 'feelgood' films, most notably Forrest Gump (1991) have presented a world view of the need for inclusive communities, even if this entails the reworking and repackaging of 'history' and the reinscription of the boundaries for the marginalised. These offer the utopian of the touristic consciousness; the ideological illusions of community which offer reassurance to the individual. The 'dystopic' 'dysfunctional' films are in opposition to the feelgood films, hypothesising 'histories', examining and embracing the excluded and creating catastrophic communities. Highly popular films such as Blade Runner (1981) are pedagogic in their perusal of the peripheral other. Didactically diagnostic they rehearse extreme examples of the results of what may happen if 'things fall apart: the centre cannot hold'. These are the worlds of Disney consciousness. The sites/sights of the fake and the simulacra of Yeats' 'rough beast'. The old centre is decentralised and recentred calling upon spatial practices and representations of space to exclude and marginalise.

Located between the feelgoodness of the consummate community and the fretful failure of the community of this 'rough beast' lie the mid-ground of the 'everyday'. Films such as Scenes from a Mall (1991), Muriel's Wedding (1993) and, more recently, Mall Rats

(1995) look at the postmodern experience of the fragmentary and ephemeral nature of families and the communisphere and the livable/liminal spaces of Fourthspatiality.

The most subtle, but overpowering motif of individual dysfunction and societal marginalisation of the antagonists – the other – found throughout these texts is witnessed in the 'un-fixedness' of livable space. The antagonists are not spatially located or grounded but are transients fixed by the first and second spatialities in a liminal space of contestation and dispute. For example in <u>Forest Gump</u> the girlfriend is nomadically drifting through life and across America rejecting middle-class morals and ethics. In <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> Muriel and Rhonda reject suburban place and familial space, sexual propriety and societal morality in a quest for self-fulfilment and selfhood. So, in one guise or another all of the characters in the texts above are, to paraphrase Gilles Barbey (1993), 'Bohemians and Gypsies' celebrating 'nomadism' but all the while 'grieving for a lost home' the liberating Fourthspatiality of *communisphere*. Barbey states:

> In popular literature of domestic chronicles, mobility and alienship are condemned universally. The example of a stable and sober homebound life is valued as a religious morale (pp. 109, 110).

To reject this 'religious moral' of fixedness, to avow the 'vagrant space' and mobility recalls Yeats' falconer and the falcon which is 'turning and turning in an ever-widening gyre'. And, or course the punishment for this 'spinning away' in the filmic text is either destitution, disease, deformity or death. But this image also underscores and describes the poverty to be found in participating in the 'morale'. In the examples touched on above the

ideological and hegemonic centres of the governmental and the corporate or familial community, is despotic, debased and dysfunctional and corrupts by incorporation.

If films offer a (usually) concentrated and one-off examination of various communities, then television advances an ongoing discourse in the form of the soapie and the sitcom. From Leave it to Beaver via M*A*S*H and The Cosby Show to The Simpsons the fluctuations and form of the family as representing and representative of the community has been the 'message' of the sitcom. Whether the touristic consciousness of the salve or the Disney one of the salute, either comforting or confrontational, these texts are, and have been, extremely popular pedagogic 'programmes' (in all senses of the word). Similarly the primetime soapies such as Neighbours, Home and Away, Beverly Hills 90210 and Melrose Place offer on-going interrogations of the 'modernist universals underlying the old divisions between insiders and outsiders' (Shields, 1992, p. 109). These concepts of included and excluded are reworked in darker, more sinister serialised texts such as Twin Peaks, The X-Files, American Gothic and more recently Dark Skies. In these texts the postmodern sensibilities of fear and panic in the community is at the forefront and the other is within the walls, most often masquerading as a powerful community member.

If the films and televisual texts are vicarious and 'poverty-stricken' forms of community participation then the burgeoning enclaves estates or master planned communities of suburbia would seem to offer a more connected, concerned and cooperative version. The advertising and promotional material for these sites would convince the prospective

purchaser of these notions. The owners and marketing companies go to great lengths to reiterate the 'community' aspects of their enclosed estates and a cursory examination of the weekend real estate pages of the newspaper will reveal examples of communities and what the owners and marketers suggest makes them a successful and comprehensive community. One advertisement from The West Australian (22/3/97) reveals it as having: the close beach, close parks, close shops, close schools, close sporting and recreational facilities. Another advert quotes nominated 'home-owners' Paul and Jill A.: 'It's a nice area, a rural type feel with lots of green around and it's close to the beach'. Meanwhile the copy for The Crest offers almost the ultimate in the 'close to' argument: 'It's close to everything, *close to perfect* and in the middle of an established neighbourhood'. The 'mature community' of Beaumaris singles out the ubiquitous 'landscaped parks, gardens, lakes and miles of safe walkways and cycleways' and adds the 'reassurance' of the 'regimented':

> (the) fully established family community, strong on values
> through its own unique Home Owners Association. This,
> together with sensible building guidelines and protective
> covenants ensure your family investment is protected.

Obviously here a 'mature' and presumably caring community is about guidelines and covenants. But at this stage the final word is held by Ellenbrook Estate. They offer:

> three broad categories of homesite...(I)n the interests of
> creating a healthier, more dynamic and much more
> interesting community.

The 'broad categories' mentioned are, basically, Cottage (small), Traditional (larger, family sized) and 'elevated Dress Circle' ('impressive executive'). The hierarchical structuring of the three domestic models implies a certain elitism within the confines of

the wall. It describes a poverty of participation and also offers a model for aspirations and desires to the 'cottage' dwellers while reassuring the 'dress circle' of their elevated status. All these examples are witnesses to the conjoining of the perceived with the conceived spatialities and touristic and Disney consciousnesses which construct an-Other manifestation of the illusion of the conjured community.

A secondary impulse of this an-Othering is that which Lyn Richards (1990) calls the: 'kindly process of social selection' which initiates an act of self-exclusion by 'those who would not want to be there, or would not make it' (p. 50). The 'kindly process' of the advertisements is Janus-faced, smiling upon those inside the enclave and scowling a warning to the excluded. To the insider the advertisements are instructive in how to participate in this 'close' community - be visible, be collective, be 'central', be 'us'. To the excluded the message is equally clear: be invisible, be singular, be peripheral, be 'them'. This dichotomy is problematic in that to be a public 'us' insists upon the notion that the enclavite desires a certain 'social environment' which according to Richards is erroneous. In her book Nobody's Home (1990) she states:

> Like the developers, we worked for a long time on the assumption that people were choosing Green Views primarily for the social and physical environment it offered – and we were wrong...Most people, men and women, had come for the house. Just like suburbanites of two decades earlier in the United States, 'mainly they came "for a house and not a social environment".(pp. 11, 12)

If the main desire of the enclavite is to have a house, then this infers a desire for separation and withdrawal from the 'public' life into the private sphere. By withdrawing into the seclusion of the inner sanctum the householder is refuting the developers and

marketers supposition of successful community as a shared and public one. The mediated community becomes the meagre one emptied of communal conviviality and concern: a pseudo-public and participatorially poverty-stricken lived space of the *delusion* of community.

Poverty of Place: To Have and Have Not

The term poverty is usually associated with financial status. Governments, social agencies and charity groups alike draw arbitrary boundaries for society marked by income or possessions. An imaginary 'frontier' denoting destitution and distress is drawn to identify and segregate who are excluded whilst acknowledging by omission who to incorporate and include. 'Escalating' crime rates and teenage vandalism, racism and homelessness, corporate corruption and 'public perversity' are reiterated in headlines and editorials but these illustrations of the meagreness of modern society are not indicative of a less perceptible poverty, of and in, the 'approved' and 'sanctioned' contemporary family, community or the nation. Whilst the former notion of 'poverty' may be an 'official' and consensual directive which points to the obvious 'have-nots' in society these theoretical borders are veiled in the media(ted) representations of the latter, the so-called 'haves'. The depictions displayed in the newspapers and magazines, television and films offer a paradoxical, Janus-face which admits to and even promulgates certain disruptive social issues attributed to the 'outsider' whilst elsewhere, in the text, equally important questions of powerlessness and peripheral censure experienced by the 'insider'

are shrouded or denied. These petitions reiterate the delusions of community - the poverty of place, parity and practice which belie notions of home, homogeneity and habit.

So while the absence of the familial and communal qualities and elements in the 'outsider', the marginalised, are made obvious (family fragmentation, community dysfunction), similar deficiencies (spatial and generational segregation, community disconnection) in the 'insider', or core, remain unrecognised. These deficiencies are 'glossed' in the media representations, which continue to display, and *market*, the 'traditional' family of two adults plus children whilst ignoring the demographic reality of more varied households including singles, sole-parent families, childless couples, gay and lesbian partnerships, group households and the aging population. In the more concrete examples of 'community', the malls and the suburbs, the poverty of participation is effaced by affectation. The outward displays of lifestyle and leisure *automatically* lead to similitude and sympathy and, ultimately, fulfilment. This is participation by purchase, community by consumption.

The mass-mediated communities under investigation depend upon the pseudo-participation of the consumer for their 'power' and persuasive presence. Their defective and imperfect authority is hidden by the naturalised and normalised construction of the presentation or representation. The semiotic images in, for example, the real estate advertisement for the dormitory suburb dissembles the fragmentary and transient nature of the contemporary family and neighbourhood and denies the presence of the outsider: the aged, the teenager, the disabled, etc, via a hegemonic touristic consciousness of

'nostalgic impulse'. Similarly, in the enclave estate itself is found the Disneyville of boundary walls, roving security guards and multiple surveillance systems. These speak of a 'sanctuary' that has its genesis in the pre-lapsarian village or pastoral neighbourhoods but depends upon the ever-vigilant observation of the otherness of the outsider. In the malls this notion of security is rehearsed in the 'timelessness/timefulness' matrix: the conjoining of the images of a selected past with the icons of a fabulous eclectic future found in the juxtaposition of the 'Olde Worlde Booke Shoppe' with the 'virtual realities' of the video arcade; the American 'fifties diner' alongside the 'authentic' Thai restaurant. This notion of the 'everywhen and everywhere' elseness is the ultimate safe and secure tourist experience with the spatial and temporal traveller touring through a world of homogenised 'heterogeneity' where the 'climate' is controlled and the natives are 'neighbours'. The total consumption package of the mall offers experiences of danger (the virtual reality games in the video arcade) and refuge (the 'time-out' areas amid trees and shrubs), the exotic (Asian restaurants and 'import stores') and the familiar (national chain-stores and supermarkets), status (designer name boutiques) and commonality (K-Mart). It is all in the mall and any defects or inadequacies are left beyond the car-park.

It has been stated that in the privately-owned, 'public-spaces' of the sites under investigation 'community' is rehearsed through the *eye* and experienced through the pseudo-participation in the *sampling* of pictures, images, tableau and entertainment of the various expressions of the mass media. The contemporary notion of community is dependent upon seeing 'there' as 'being-there'. The touristic and Disney consciousness of this is tied up with the 'us and them' mentality, the 'ours is best' ideology. Thus the

communities displayed in the movies offer a chance to experience safely alternatives past, present and future whilst confirming the infallibility of *our* society. The darkened theatre, the sharing with other audience members in a purpose built space and the dominance of the visuality heighten the communal and participatory nature of the experience. In the malls, visuals and audience, spectacle and spectator are one and the same. The communal and participatory experience is in being both recipient and purveyor of the look: seeing-there, being-seen-there and seeing oneself being-seen-there. As in the cinema experience, in 'our' mall alternatives are offered, tried on, accepted or rejected. In the enclave estates, however, it is strictly being-seen-there which accounts for the communal and participatory experience. 'Others' picture us entering the estate gates, parking our cars in the driveway and 'participating' in the leisure activities which are a feature of the 'community space'. The alternatives to 'our' community the inhabitants of communisphere are excluded but lie uncomfortably close and their reminders are re-enacted nightly on the news and in the home delivered newspapers. Community, in this instance relies not upon notions of 'ours' but upon not-being-*there*, outside of the walls, in *their* territory.

In the chapter to follow this notion of imagining the 'us' of community is looked at more incisively via how communities have been and still are 'imagineered' for the community members of the various master planned communities. It also looks at how the 'other' as 'them' has been used to place an 'us' within the community space with this othering drawing upon notions of deviance and difference. In this discussion various aspects of the

'utopia' of community will be addressed which leads to the concept of the 'garden city' which is at the heart of the contemporary community of the enclave estates.

Chapter Two •

Historic Community: The 'Lived' and 'Livable' Spaces

The developers of the new synthetic suburbs are concerned with the promotion of an identity, and an 'identifiable community' in contrast to an anonymous 'subdivision'. This 'space as place' is a powerful, primary sales tool. Similarly the shopping mall operators invest a lot of effort in the construction of the image of the mall as a de facto 'community' centre (see Kowinski, 1982). Although both groups use the term to allude to an entity with similar syntagmatic structure, the paradigmatic constituents vary somewhat in their display. Thus a definition of the configuration of the community in each of the sites is hard to ascertain. This, however, is not as surprising as might be first thought. In Definitions of Community (1955) G. A. Hillery identified 94 different definitions of community and Kriegler (1980) notes the elasticity of the term has rendered it almost totally meaningless.

But this notion of community which is bandied about by suburban developers, urban gentrifiers, shopping mall managers and globalisation advocates seems unshakeable and rests upon three concepts: a type of *nostalgia* which is rehearsed in a Disneyesque, 'imagineered' myth of home, hearth and happy times and enacted on the front porch, bordered by a white picket fence; the notion of a *utopian* location of a secure and safe place of plenty, accessible to all; and finally, the McDonaldising monocultural homogeneity of the inclusive global village.

With these concepts in mind, the question can be posed are the media constructed communities fabricated upon a xenophobic identity whose foundations are a nostalgic, eurocentric vision? Do these imagined entities uphold notions of 'class' and the core/periphery discourse of 'we/them, us and other'? And is this discourse translated to the physical properties of the sites themselves via scopic strategies which exclude outsiders and 'control' the insiders through the aesthetics of place? If these questions are answered in the affirmative then there can be traced in the sites/sights a marked conjoining of Soja's (1996) first and second spatialities. These, then, lead to a collective either/or/and touristic and Disney consciousness which construct a Janus-faced 'lived' spatiality which, in turn, describes a homogeneity of sameness in an attempt to incorporate the livable space of difference and to marginalise forms of *otherness*. To illustrate and act as a model of this homogeneous/heterogeneous nexus I suggest the simple examples of the billboard, the graffitied wall and the pedagogic colouring book.

The billboards, which haunt street corners and plague the pavements, are the sanctioned spaces of the visuality of consumerism. They can be seen as an ocular replication of the colonising impulse of monoculturalism, globalisation and commodity fetishism. More often than not they are, by virtue of their size, inordinately obtrusive and unremittingly ugly but local governments and transnational corporations promote their ubiquity and continuity. They are visual representations of the first- and secondspatialities, which rehearse a third (lived?) spatiality of the illusion of the community in consumer society. They semiotically speak for a unity even when speaking of difference. Thus youth subcultures, ethnic or indigenous peoples and the aged, can be petitioned, but are

ultimately 'incorporated' and consolidated into an aggregate via the artifice of consumer society. Difference is diffused and disenfranchised in the display of 'people as product' where the heterogeneous *community* is made palatable and inevitably sub(con)sumed. It works via the pedagogic three 'r's' principle in that it reflects and recites difference while expressing an imagineered *reciprocal* mutuality of 'community' relations.

Graffiti, on the other hand, is the site/sight of contestation and otherness to this imperative. Although no less ubiquitous in its visuality it is the marker of the discontinuous, fragmentary, resistive aspects inherent in the hegemonic homogenous impulse. It comes from the fourthspatial, *livable* spaces of the periphery and seeks to appropriate the public spaces of control and order by disrupting notions of the utopian aspects of the perceived and conceived spatialities of the core. It changes the notion of a uniform third spatiality of the leisured consumer society by the othering-of-livable-spaces: inserting the margins into the core. It therefore admits to different voices which are speaking back to, but from within, the centre and which cannot be contained or eradicated. Grafitti, of whatever type, may not be political in intention but it is somewhat Machiavellian in performance and enacts a type of engagement in the livable/liminal space. It thumbs its nose at the sanctioned notions of art and consumerism by taking it to the streets. It is a declaration of an *an-other* of community, the *communisphere* of the hysterical (see Barthes, Camera Lucida, 1981), and it expresses an active, eclectic and potentially subversive *conscious* fourthspace whether of anomie and alienation or animation and celebration.

The final example, that of the colouring book, leads to a more illuminating expose of the livable/liminal space. In the formative years of the modern, westernised individual, both in the home and at school, s/he are taught to work diligently at colouring between, and up to the prescribed lines of the pictures. To transgress this, to wilfully cross the borders and margins of the image is seen as an act of disobedience and the child is summarily chastised. If, over a period of time, the child persists in transgressing then the notion of a type of deviance is noted and social and psychological corrective measures may be brought to bear. But this type of deviance could be seen as a resistive act, equated with realisation of the livable space of liminality. This ignoring and crossing of the boundaries is a type of *becoming*, a recognition of a speaking-as position. It is a fleeting moment of the choice of an act of *vagrancy*, an instance of being unfettered and unfixed; to be outside, but within the community.

As will be noted elsewhere in this investigation, culturally the word community carries with it highly charged emotional connotations and consequences. Most of these, however, are equated with nostalgic ideas of shared feelings of family, fealty and fulfilment. These imagined models consist of antiquated, (re)constructed 'memories' of a mythical past of extended family, the united neighbourhood and the edenic village, which are, somehow, seen as lacking, blocked, subverted, or threatened in the present. In reply to these contemporary negative associations, fantasies of (imagined) community are repeatedly invoked as authentic, stable, valuable and valued. The pedagogic producers of popular or promotional texts base the retrievable Golden Age and a retreat to the pastoral as homecoming on a process of myth-making. Inevitably this is dependent on a form of

myth-evaluation by the consumer. The conjoining of the two, this mythologising process, presents a future - a continuity of a connected and, thus, desirable past of happy families and close-knit neighbours - in a present of multiple, fragmentary moments of discontinuity - of street-kids, anonymous tenants and security/surveillance cameras.

The discontinuous moments are the anxieties, fears and frustrations of contemporary society. These can involve, on the macro-level, political disenchantment, social unrest or moral turmoil, or, on the micro-level, divorce, unemployment or alienation. Whatever the cause, the discontinuities are predicated upon the sense of the loss of 'an identity' which is witness to what is called, in governmental, academic and media circles, 'the crisis of family and community'. This united identity, whether of the self, the family or the nation, is manifest in the past but may seem unattainable in the present. The notion of the valuable and valued identity found in the nostalgic (re)vision is promoted in an endless stream of media-produced texts. The 'spaces of community', the town square, the broad boulevard and the green park, once part of the modernist mandate of Baron Haussmann's Paris project (see Kasinitz, 1995; Lefebvre, 1996) or Frederick Law Olmstead's vision of the public space of class and ethnic incorporation (see Gans, 1968; Zukin, 1995), are no longer the 'safety valve' of society. These public spaces have been hijacked and imagineered by public relations people and advertising agencies. Stripped of their currency as egalitarian meeting grounds and mediated by reference to an idealised past, they have been privatised, institutionalised, circumscribed and 'enclavised' and then removed and situated at the core of the synthetic suburb. These sanctioned spaces are

then promulgated as the new locations of the self, family and community. Or the mythic illusion of self, family and community.

In the bulk of the literature related to 'communities' the term is often replaced by the more spatially fixed 'local society' or even, locality. Hillery (1955) insists that:

> 'most students... [of community studies]... are in basic agreement that community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional common ties' (p.?).

In this statement we have a basis for the fundamentals of a general description of community; location and interaction. Herbert J. Gans (1968) in his book People and Plans offers further spatial insights into community as: 'the idea of an aggregate of people who occupy a common and bounded territory in which they establish and participate in shared institutions' (p. 133). The concept of an 'unconditional' geographical location is transformed into one of ownership and confinement by the notion of 'bounded territory'. The former speaks of Tonnies (1974) *gemeinschaft*, the romantic Golden Age complete with notions of continuity, whilst the latter alludes to a *gesellschaft*, of the limited, impersonal 'fragmented' discontinuity.

City planners of the 'New Towns' of post-war England also perceived the conjoining of the spatial and social, the palpable firstspatiality and the virtual secondspace, as invaluable in the creation of community. Frank Schaffer (1970) in his book The New Town Story, an examination of the establishment of synthetic towns throughout the United Kingdom, states:

> A 'community life' depends on *identity of interest and desire* to take part with others in enjoying that interest, whether it be sport, drama, pottery, social work, or the other hundred and one things people enjoy doing together.(p. 72)(my italics)

This is the first hint of the concept of touristic consciousness and its relation to a lived spatiality - the importance of the nexus of leisure and site involvement via the homogenising 'monumental' markers of community: clubs, organisations and associations. Jane Jacobs (1962), however, offered an alternative view in <u>The Death and Life of Great American Cities.</u> In this study she spoke of the necessity of the vitality of the heterogeneous, eclectic, livable space of street life in what I call the communisphere. She sees the street as being the site of diversity and that it is this heterotopological quality and its Aleph-like (see Soja, 1996) nature to which people react. In a nutshell she avers that the more busy the streets, the more interaction; the more interaction, the more people feel a part of the group; the more they feel as one, the more they put down 'roots'; the deeper and stronger the roots, the longer they stay; the longer they stay, the more they interact. In this description is found the reciprocal reflection and recital of Borges' fictional 'all worlds in one place'- a total community of the past, present and future. Thus, in Jacobs' eyes, community is built by literally 'taking it to the streets' where social life and physical environment mean longevity which in turn creates an all encompassing communisphere of contact, cognisance and concession which results in cohesive livable/liminal space.

But this is not the Baudelaire's or Benjamin's flaneurial space of the city. It has been transcended to incorporate a mobility no longer restricted to the metropolis but which

enjoys an-othered spaces of the freeways and highways, fields and commons. This mobility crosses and recrosses the spaces of the core and periphery in an act of truancy, or more succinctly, *vagrancy*. This latter term, suggests both a *non-collective* (as opposed to the more adamantly singular, individual agency) as well as a *marginalised* mobility which is at the same time visible (via its intrusive and deviant image) and invisible (through its ubiquity in contemporary spaces). Its non-collectivity and peripheralisation commands the speaking-as position and allows for the 'choice' of when and how to speak. Nominally silenced its voice is loudest when it usurps the authority of the speaking-for position. Thus vagrancy is the liminal space of *be-coming*. This is a major component of the decolonising of the moments of modernity of the lived space, to a type of post-colonial, postmodern livable space.

On the other hand, the conjoining of the first and second spatialities of visuality and virtuality in Schaffer's (1970) 'clubs, organisations and associations' describe an affiliatorial community, an homogeneous comm(on)unity of a lived spatiality of meagre and parochial (limited) consensus. This is the essence of *perceived* liberal and benevolent Disney consciousness which sustains a utopian vision of synthesis via *codified* spaces of first- and secondspatialities. This is the antithesis of the vagrancy of 'taking it to the streets' and rehearses the notions of the speaking-for fixity via the division and pulverisation (see Lefebvre, 1991), delineation and policing (see Sack, 1986) and the 'purification' (see Sibley, 1988) of space (and of those within this space).

But 'taking it to the streets' might, like the utopian idea of Disney's Main Street, USA be a misleading deceit. As has been noted earlier but which demands reiteration here, Lyn Richards (1990) in her study of the 'making of an Australian suburb', Nobody's Home, stated:

> Like the developers, we worked for a long time on the assumption that people were choosing Green Views primarily for the social and physical environment it offered - and we were wrong. Following critics of the effects of the suburban environment on women, we expected women and men to be seeking and seeing different features. We were wrong about that too. Most people, women and men, had come for the house. Just like suburbanites of two decades earlier in the United States, 'mainly they came "*for a house and not a social environment*"'.(pp.11-12)(my italics)

Here the understanding of the domination of firstspatiality, the house, over the second, the virtual spatiality, as being the preferred rationale of lived - not livable - space is re-enacted. The house (not the *home*), as an aspect of touristic consciousness, is the site/sight marker of communality for the individual. The first- and secondspaces of the house demand site involvement by the owner in the construction of a livable space of the home to create the illusion of neighbourhood and community.

If Richard's findings are correct, then the developers and their agents, the advertisers, seem to be investing an inordinate amount of money (and effort) in promoting an ineffectual component. To underscore this Scherer (1972) offers the following:

> A synthetic community is an attempt to build and develop a community consciously and deliberately...simply placing people side by side is no guarantee that they will share anything in common.(p. 120)

Scherer suggests an 'emptiness' of the spatiality of lived space. The implied homogeneity of the 'consciously and deliberately' constructed, *conjured* community describes a poverty of participation and an illusion of community dependent upon the privileged firstspatiality. The spatiality of manufactured affiliatorial domains of doorsteps is devoid of a communality of purpose and interest.

A similar notion is suggested by F. M. L. Thompson in his 'social history of Victorian Britain', The Rise of Respectable Society (1988). In this work he looks at, principally, the importance and construction of the various institutions of modern society, the perceived and conceived spatialities, which include the family, marriage, homes and houses, and leisure and play. The conclusion that can be drawn from his wide-ranging discussion is that firstspatiality was once seen as the dominant visual site/sight of community. As he points out:

> So important were country houses to social and political position, indeed, that membership of the ruling class can be measured through ownership of country houses of specified size. The same principle can be applied through all layers of society, grading people through the size of house occupied. House structure, therefore, can be seen as a form of social structure; and the home, *the type of life lived in the house*, can be seen as the means by which the structure was translated into different types of social behaviour. (pp.152-153)(my italics)

Thompson suggests that the material, perceived, firstspatiality then prescribes social behaviour and, I offer, that here also is found the correlation of touristic and Disney consciousness in that the house is a codified and cognised space, invested with values. It is a rule-governed space which describes the *monument* of 'family' which make up the

pseudo-community of a lived space of correct - controlled and surveilled - behaviour. It is

the concept of the house as site marker for a utopian ideational community built upon the

re-presentation of the simulation of community apprehended in the original which is, to

paraphrase Zukin (1995), the Magic Kingdom at the centre of the notional community,

but one 'you cannot go into' (p. 64). The house is a cross between the 'public' and the

'private', a conjoining which describes a simulacra, the illusion of home, family and

community and the poverty of participation in all three. The house and community,

therefore, are seen as colonising spaces of modernity and for enlightenment. The lived

spaces of the material and mental spaces of first- and secondspatialities reflect and recite

an immovable, but problematic concept of (ersatz) reciprocal comm(on)unity. In the

following sections I will map the journey of modernity from Haussmann's Paris project

via the garden city movement and the contemporary enclave estates to the final

destination of the real-and-imagined livable/liminal spaces of postmodernity and the

postcolonial.

From enlightenment to enclave.

What Habermas (1970) calls the 'project of modernity' which emerged during the

Enlightenment was nowhere better exemplified, in spatial arrangements and architecture,

than in the work of Baron Von Haussmann's modernising project – the reconfiguration of

Paris. The structure behind the project was driven by fear; the fear the emergent

bourgeoisie had of the 'proletariat'. Although this is not the place for a protracted

discussion of the rise of the bourgeoisie in Paris of the nineteenth century, other authors

have traced this well-worn path for the reader (see Harvey, 1985; Duncan & Ley, 1993;

Lefebvre, 1996.), it is, however, pertinent for the point at hand to establish the scene.

The Paris of the mid-eighteen hundreds saw the bourgeoisie firmly entrenched within its

core and the houses of the aristocracy transformed by them into 'workshops and shops…

tenements, stores, depots and warehouses… [where]…firms replace parks and gardens'

(Lefebvre, p. 75). In this is witnessed the capitalist impulse of the rearrangement and the

rising importance of spatiality. As Derek Gregory points out (see Duncan & Ley, 1993,

p.279):

> Parisian property was more and more appreciated as a pure
> financial asset, as a form of fictitious capital whose
> exchange value, integrated into the general circulation of
> capital, entirely dominates use value. (p. 279).

What Gregory is suggesting is that the rearrangement of the first- and secondspatialities,

property and fictitious capital, dominates the use value of lived space. The elevation of

exchange value over use value via spatial practice and representations of space

impoverished the spaces of representation. This re-evaluation of the lived space of Paris

initiated the Foucauldian notion of the asymmetries of power and also allowed for the

interstices and counterspaces of a liminal fourthspatiality of otherness and contestation.

These notions were installed, in the 1840s, by an unprecedented migration of peasants to

Paris' borders. Adolphe Blanqui, of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, wrote

in 1848, 'too often seduced by the temporary elevation of wages, the field workers have

been rushing to the cities' (see Donzelot, 1979, p. 70). The fears of the 'progressive' bourgeoisie were made visible in the communes where: 'Former craftsmen and new proletariats penetrate right up to the heart of the city' (Lefebvre, p. 75) living in the heterotopologies of slums, tenements, hovels and 'caves' (Donzelot, p. 41). The fear and panic of the new ruling class, by June 1848, gave rise to 'a class strategy' which was elaborated in the reorganisation of the 'centre', and the dispersal of the masses to the periphery.

Haussmann's 'modern conception of community' (Gregory, p. 280) was an attempt to re-establish:

> the moral order which has been gravely disturbed by the consequences of the revolutionary movement that took effect at the beginning of the year. (Donzelot, 1979, p. 70)

The moral order was to be re-written via the spatial and architectural re-arrangement of the public spaces banishing the field worker and the artisan from the city centre, and indeed the city itself. Haussmann's first- and secondspatial vision for social control and the re-ordering of the classes was dependent upon 'inversion': narrow to broad; serpentine to straight; heterogeneity to homogenous. By controlling the material, topographical space the virtual, conceived space can be manipulated to invest it as a space of social amelioration for the mainly middle class, the 'popular' classes being absented to the margins. This is an aspect of the Disney ecology, where, for instance, the Disneyland of Los Angeles is surrounded by the heterotopologies of the carnivalesque simulacra of Walt's original and the ganglands and badlands of *erratic* space, the antithesis to Disney's fantastical apotheosised first- and secondspatialities. The major

effect of Disney consciousness in these sites (Paris and Disneyland) is that there is no room for the vagrant or vagrancy. As Lefebvre points out:

> Haussmann replaces winding but lively streets by long avenues, sordid but animated 'quartiers' by bourgeois ones. If he forces through boulevards and plans open spaces, it is not for the beauty of the views. It is to 'comb Paris with machine guns'. The famous Baron makes no secret of it. (p. 76)

This picture of a heterogeneous and vibrant (if some times sordid) community of the pre-Haussmann imperative is reminiscent of Jacobs' (1962) model of the vitality of the street in the creation of a *livable* community. As mentioned earlier Jacobs praises the diversity found in street-life neighbourhoods, and applauds the longevity and livable nature of these communities. But as the badlands of erratic space removes Jacobs' vision, and camps upon the edges of these 'Disneylands' so a similar scenario is rehearsed under Haussmann's hand in Paris. As Harvey states:

> Hausman[n] tried...to sell a new and more modern conception of community in which power of money was celebrated as spectacle and display on the *grands boulevards*, in the *grand magasins*, in the cafes and at the races, and above all in the spectacular 'celebrations of the commodity fetish', the *expositions universelles*. (Harvey in Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 280)

The 'new and more modern conception' of a lived space of the first- and secondspatialities of capitalism, epitomised in Disneyland is the nexus of touristic consciousness site markers and involvement, and the Disney consciousness of the fantastical simulated site/sight.

The relationship between Haussmann's Paris of the project of modernity and the contemporary sites of the enclave estate can be found in Harvey's 'account of the divided city that make up the geographies of everyday life':

> Paris experienced a dramatic shift...to an extroverted, public and collectivized style of urbanism under the Second Empire...Public investments were organized around private gain, and public spaces appropriated for private use; exteriors became interiors for the bourgeoisie, while panoramas, dioramas and photography brought the exterior into the interior. The boulevards, lit by gas lights, dazzling shop window dis-plays, and cafes open to the street (an innovation of the Second Empire), became corridors of homage to the power of money and commodities, *play spaces for the bourgeoisie.*(Harvey in Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 282)(my emphasis)

The playspaces of Disneyland echo the manipulation of the material spatiality in Hausmann's project which advances a rational lived space. The inclusive homogeneity of Enlightenment space represents symmetry and harmony for those who could partake while excluding, marginalising and othering the rest. The project situated a poverty of participation, built on the asymmetries of power relations that rehearse the illusion of 'community'. This Enlightenment spatiality articulates the delusion of community of Disney consciousness.

Nowhere is the link between the rationale of the Enlightenment and the contemporary suburb more apparent in an architectural - geographical model than in the 'garden city' movement espoused by Ebenezer Howard (1898) in To-Morrow:A Peaceful Path to Real Reform and Raymond Unwin's (1912) Nothing Gained by Overcrowding! (cited in Freestone, 1989, p.1). The premiss of Howard's thesis was the combination of traditional

- the rural and the agrarian - and the Enlightenment principles in the 'garden village-city-suburb' - a concept which is still a major part of planning policy as witnessed in the Western Australian government initiative of 1997 called, ironically, Livable Neighbourhoods. This is a creation in portmanteau of a 'more harmonious combination of city and country, of dwelling house and garden' (Freestone, p.10). These ideal communities were seen as a more democratic and ordered way to a 'new civilisation' (p. 10) and included amongst other virtues: civic centres as the focus of community life; open spaces including provision for a 'green belt'; and the close proximity of the open country. One of the major changes to the accepted reasoning was the introversion of the geography of the industrial town. As has been mentioned above, the Paris project, as with many other industrial centres in Europe, forced the workers to the periphery while the industries occupied the centre. The garden city, however, foreswore this notion situating the open spaces and the workers at the hub and relegating the factories to the margins.

Although Howard's concept had altruistic and benevolent motives he was seen as a radical and a utopian dreamer, albeit neither impractical nor a firebrand. His downfall was in his 'Master-Key' (Freestone, p. 14):

> To build home-towns for slum cities; to plant gardens for crowded courts; to construct beautiful water-ways in flooded valleys; to establish a scientific system of land tenure...;to found pensions with liberty for our aged poor...;to banish despair...;to silence the harsh voice of anger, and to awaken the soft notes of brotherliness and goodwill; to place in strong hands implements of peace and construction, so that implements of war and destruction may drop uselessly down (pp. 14, 15).

The utopian aspects of Howard's concept explicitly express a harmonious and homogeneous lived spatiality dependent upon the manipulation of the first and second spatialities. It is obvious that Howard wished to eradicate the spaces of *truancy, deviancy* and *vagrancy* while paradoxically suggesting that the mixing of heterogeneous spaces and social aspects would lead to a more 'livable' space. But he forgot that a livable space must be invested with a liminality, a becoming, if not then this space becomes a fixed, - dead - lived space as in the example of an early garden city experiment at Letchworth in 1903. This assay into the first and second spatial creation of community social space came to be seen as 'a model environment not a model society' (Ward, 1992, p.4), an empty, inert and stagnant lived space. Even though, since the garden city's inception, the various experiments have, in essence failed, the conjoining of the notion of the 'natural' (conceived space) with the manufactured (perceived space) and the concomitant eradication of the spaces of vagrancy can still be found in the promotional material for the contemporary enclaves, and the assumption of the creation of contented communities via 'brotherliness and goodwill' can be found in the support for the synthetic suburb.

Raymond Unwin (1912), on the other hand, seemed to have a more realistic grasp of what the community of the garden city was to be like. His emphasis was predominantly upon one "characteristic feature': 'the single family house..[which]..was considered a superior housing form for sanitary, *moral and aesthetic reasons'* (p. 39)(my emphasis). This view of the social and moral implications of the stable family/beautiful home nexus echoes the view of the nineteenth-century reformers, hygienists and philanthropists of England and France. But the major point of contention was not the tangible space, which

could be contrived for a specific end, but the perception of the inhabitants of this space as

antagonistic and antithetical. As Donzelot (1979) points out: 'the problem, then, was that

of the family's transformation rather than its preservation' (Donzelot, p. 53), and the

utility for this transformation was the notion of 'social housing' and the family home.

Here is a further example of the manipulation and conjoining of the primary and

secondary spatialities to activate a certain type of lived space. Donzelot offers the

example of the caves of Lille:

> In their struggle against the insanitariness and immorality
> of these hovels and caves, the hygienists were also
> struggling against a conception of the dwelling as refuge, a
> place of defence and autonomy. For them it was a question
> of...making housing ... no longer a 'military' space, of
> ridding it of everything that made for secret alliances and
> dubious combinations. (p. 41)

In the philanthropists eyes the combination of the aesthetically pleasing first space and

the morally sound second space defines a visual and virtual lived space of control and

consensual comm(on)unity of 'fixed' (situated, repaired) citizenry. However, the liminal

space marginalised and peripheral to the controlled lived spaces of the central city - the

bourgeois ghetto - is a livable site/sight of mobile otherness and transient contestation, a

'vagrant' space of potential disruption and tumult.

The lesson the communards of the liminal spaces gave to the government had been learnt

at a cost and corrective measures were to be put it into practice. Thus:

> The strategy for familializing the popular strata in the
> second half of the nineteenth century rested mainly on the
> woman...[and]..the main instrument she received was
> "social" housing. (Donzelot, p. 40)

The concept behind this strategy was one of surveillance which was placed firmly in the hands of the wife and mother. The interior structure of the gendered home was explicitly formulated for this purpose and the contemporary show home, as female panopticon, is an exemplar of this model. An example of this is the 'rise' and relocation of the kitchen. Once a 'back-stage' space solely allocated for production, the kitchen has slowly wandered up the passageways and halls to come to occupy a prominent panoptical position of surveillance of both the interior and the exterior spaces of the house. The notion of social housing of the mid-eighteen hundreds and the responsibility of the woman as regulating agent as wife and mother saw the home as being:

> in the transition from a schema that was tied to production and social life to a conception based on separation and surveillance. If the husband preferred the outside, the lights of the cabaret, and the children the street, with its spectacles and its promiscuity, this would be the fault of the wife and mother. (pp. 44, 45)

Here is witnessed not only the formulation of the idea of the nuclear family as an object of panoptical incarceration for altruistic motives, but also the eradication of the spaces of vagrancy by the separation of the domestic (private) from the community (public) which helped formulate this regulated nuclear family. Shorter (1975) looks at the imagining of the 'privileged emotional climate' (p. 205) that survived by being protected via privacy and isolation through surveillance and vigilance. By extrapolation, Howard and Unwin's garden city, since its inception, extended this notion of surveillance to include the neighbour and the community in general. The stay-at-home wife and mother could act as a policing apparatus, ensuring that the standards of the community were upheld, and ever vigilant in guaranteeing community cohesion. A Foucauldian example of this early form

of *neighbourhood watch* is witnessed in his reading of the Familistere of Jean-Baptiste Godin at Guise in 1859. In the discussion of a closed community which is similar in architecture to a contemporary enclave estate, Foucault states:

> The architecture of Godin was clearly intended for the freedom of the people..(y)et no one could enter or leave the place without being seen by everyone - an aspect of the architecture that could be totally oppressive. But it could only be oppressive if people were prepared to use their own presence in order to watch over others. (Rabinow, 1984, p. 246).

The controlling aspect of the panoptical Godin of the mid-eighteen hundreds found its counterpart in the woman as familial and neighbourhood moral watchdog in the general notion of the garden suburb as the exemplar of moralistic behaviour. This notion was re-iterated by government officials, planners and social observers of the time. The N.S.W. Town Planning Association, in a booklet published in 1918, invited people to the Rock's area to see:

> ...not the chaotic buildings, and the higgledy-piggledy streets so much, as the appearance of the dwellers in darkness! Look into their faces, and you will see degeneracy stamped in every line. Man is a product of his environment; and like begets like - or worse! (Freestone, p. 84)

The decrepit firstspatiality leads to a deformed second spatiality that rehearses a morally and physically deviant or degenerate third- or lived space. Unfortunately little is said or even known about how these spaces were lived by the communities (see Shorter, 1975); how much participation and cohesion was formulated in these 'hovels'; how much this space was *valued* and *livable*. Even Engels (1958) dwelt more upon the first- and secondspatialities than the community of this communisphere and most of his work is

now recognised as being 'overdrawn' and 'second hand' for polemical reasons (see Pounds, 1989). Engels, it can be said was more of a flaneur of these spaces, or even, more accurately a *tourist* relying as he did on a form of Baedeker for his information. His 'tours' were in the mould of MacCannell's (1992) concept of 'sightseeing and the moral order'. Touristic consciousness in this case invokes the binary opposition of 'us' and 'them' which in turn places them via first- and secondspatialities in a morally deficient, transgressive, vagrant spatiality of deprecated (un)livable/liminal space. The individual differences described in these deficient spaces when filtered through the mechanism of the us/them binary opposition outlines a sameness of otherness which can easily be absented from the sameness of an 'us'. This works to make for the safety (and surety) of the sameness of *We-dom* (see Hartley, 1992), whilst successfully offering, as threat, the heterogeneity of *They-dom*.

In the same year as the quote above, 1918, a Town Planner named Thomas Price offered this observation which brings together the perceived and conceived spatialities in a construction of a lived space of deviance, the othering-of-an-other-space:

> There is no possible doubt that it is the mean environment
> that produces the miserable body, the dwarfed mind and the
> atrophied soul. It is impossible to raise a fine race with high
> ideals within the miserable surroundings of the large cities
> of to-day.(p. 84)

These two examples above are just a sample of the many which helped to instigate a concerted effort toward social reform via the unrealised, but nevertheless persistent garden city project. The dividends from this movement, although never precisely explained, had certain underlying hypotheses. Two of these, as discussed by Freestone

(1989), allude to the twin notions of fear and exclusion, already witnessed as the impetus

for Haussmann's sweeping changes. Freestone states:

> ...the garden city stood for *reproduction of a virile race of white Australians*. The dangers of 'race decay' in unhealthy conditions and the 'better human machines' associated with garden city environments were regarded...as aspects of the eugenic side of civil life...Such views reflected wider community support for a White Australia, although the garden city ideal also took on racist overtones in other countries such as Germany.(p. 84)

Foucault's idea of the productive body and othering meets here where the manipulation

of the spatial practice and the representations of space result in the utopian spaces of the

homogeneous 'human machines'. This notion led to the second of the dividends which

concerned *moral health*. It was often stated, by various town-planners, but notably J. D.

Fitzgerald (1914) (see Freestone, 1989), that 'moral degeneration' and 'disintegration of

character' would be vanquished in the 'planned, sylvan environment' of the garden city

(Freestone, p. 84). He offered that the social ills of crime, drink and *sundry deviations*

including allegiance to the 'isms' - Bolshevism and IWWism - would be obliterated.

Starting with the 'conservation of child life' only to be found in the open spaces of the

materiality of the 'model suburb' the moral rectitude would filter throughout the

community and would instil *social stability* - desired utopian spaces bereft of deviance,

eclecticism, heterogeneity and vagrancy. This sort of thinking has a long history with its

most vocal proponents being Edwin Chadwick and the 'sanitary movement' of the

nineteenth-century. According to one Sydney expert:

> Slums created a class who regarded *warring* upon society as the acme of their existence...[and every garden suburb]...was a 'pill-box' in the path of anarchy.(p. 85)

The government of the time and subsequent elected representatives also saw the benefits of social ordering and control via the garden city model. In 1919 a government spokesman stated that the government:

> ...has a duty to perform in seeing to it that, in our rural as well as urban life, we do not repeat those conditions of living and human habitations that in other countries, have proved to be a prolific source of industrial insurgence, social discontent, and destructive revolutions.(Freestone, p. 199)

Although fear of the 'morally degenerate', latent insurrectionist was the prime issue in the early decades of the twentieth century, motivated no doubt by the Russian Revolution and the First World War, the interest in the nexus of social reform and the garden city waned. This was probably due to the intervention of Lord Reith who imposed restrictions on the entrepreneurs waiting in the wings to capitalise on the garden city ideal. When he was Director General of the B.B.C. Reith saw public broadcasting as a method for social engineering through educational and instructive programming. He disliked commercial television seeing it as morally disrupting. Similarly as Minister of Works and Buildings he held the paternalistic view that the garden city ideal should in some way be the foundation of community development and enlightenment socially, and more importantly, morally. He saw the entrepreneurs as a corrupting force and applied stringent restrictions upon them and their plans virtually forcing them out of the market. But the tide was to turn in England and it was the entrepreneurs of the 1950s and 60s who were to seize the opportunity and transform, and manufacture, a variation of the garden

suburb, but their customers were not the deserving, marginalised slum or ghetto dwellers of the Howardian ideal, but the financially upwardly mobile middle-classes.

In England, the home of the garden city movement, as well as in Australia its orphaned second home, the movement from social, sustaining, sensibility to capitalist, consumer consciousness became apparent. One of the most significant and earliest garden suburb models in England was the Hampstead Garden Suburb in London which was brought about by the association of private enterprise with government sanction. This pioneering project was supposed to be:

> A model community which would *'be good for those who see and those who dwell therein'*, boast the full spectrum of social classes, help alleviate housing problems, and preserve near-by open country from the 'ranks of closely-built gardenless boxes' (Freestone, 1989 p. 25)(my emphasis)

The visuality in, and of, these spaces admits to the formation of a type of touristic consciousness, the building of monuments to the betterment of a society. Monuments, whether statues or monoliths, houses or housing estates speak of the continuities of the sylvan past into a projected ideal future. They are also the metonym for, and of, community, being the epigraphs, epitaphs and epiphanies of the commonsense of consensual comm(on)unity. Through touristic consciousness the individual 'becomes' citizen and community member and the monuments are the ongoing reminders of this shared responsibility. The concept of the illusion of community as a shared knowledge (see Anderson, 1983; Hartley, 1992 and McKee, 1997) is illuminated here. But the fixed, lived, apathetic spaces of the monument are not always successful.

Thus the grandiose monument of Hampstead in its original altruistic form was never

realised. The social reforms inferred were dropped by the developers and Hampstead

became 'a rather elite enclave' (Freestone, p. 25). Similarly, in Australia a movement of

the nineteen-twenties which started with philanthropic, if somewhat self-serving motives,

for and of social reform, was quickly corrupted by the aspiring land barons and

entrepreneurial developers, a situation which has seen little change today. As the

entrepreneur-turned-builder entered the garden city front door, egalitarian housing

notions departed via the back verandah. John Gawler (1963) described the preferred

target for the new suburbs as 'professional people, who want, and can afford to pay for, a

superior type of detached small house' (Freestone, 1989, p. 198). This was an early

explication of exclusion and inclusion via financial resources which was to be the

mainstay of enclavisation to the present day. Albert Victor Jennings, even today one of

the major real estate agents and builders, was quick to enter the scene. Starting with two

estates in the early thirties, Hillcrest Estate and Beauville Estate, his recipe for the garden

suburb and his personal success was as follows:

> We put a tree in front of every house, and made all the
> nature strips, concrete paths, and concrete drives into each
> house...we put little low brick fences in front of each new
> house and they were all brick houses to minimise the
> maintenance...and the land at the back of each house was so
> deep, instead of having very large blocks we...put tennis
> courts in.(Freestone, p. 199)

... or bowling greens and, in contemporary times, a golf course. If Jennings' patronising

tone is a forerunner to the Australian entrepreneurs of the seventies and eighties, there is

no denying that he, like them, had identified his market and worked the policies of

planning to his advantage. His house-and-land package deals coupled with 'desirable' subdivision and domestic designs were to become the model for many of the planned communities of the future decades. Thus the house was removed as a tool for social reform and became more of a space of social control. The woman in the home was linked to the notions of health, happiness and stability. The house became more of a gendered space, totally regarded as the feminine area of privatised natal nurturing and acquiescence to patriarchal dominion. She was thus isolated in this space and removed from the masculine public spaces of work. In a warped logic the female space of the house and the surrounding environs of gardens and parks were seen as leisured spaces of relaxation equated with the natur(al)e. The housework of the daily chores, the work of the woman as wife and mother, was deemed as less than work, or even, non-work. With these notions the house was transformed into the secondspatiality of the conceived 'home', a package of successful suburban living. Thus the livable/liminal spaces, - the spaces of potential be-coming especially for women – the public streets and sidewalks of the urban spaces were reconstituted and redescribed for the presence of the male, while her presence was absented to the privatised home, gardens and parks. The city spaces became the speaking-for position about the female, while her speaking-as voice was silenced behind the brick-clad walls and fibro-fencing.

One of the distinctive features of the suburban way of life in Australia has been the archetypal Australian as a 'self contained' suburbanite with 'good accommodation, a nice garden, a back yard, vegetables in *his* plot...fowls in *his* shed [and] a fence against intrusion' (p. 43)(my italics). If the home was the focus of certain controls and demands

upon the family the garden was seen by Unwin and others as a liberating mechanism and the site of value for 'social and health reasons as well as its symbolic value as a statement of community-mindedness' (p. 19). It was also seen as a necessary and fulfilling part of the family home. As the Prime Minister of the time, Billy Hughes stated: a house without a garden is just a house; it is not a home (p. 93). This notion was reiterated by an unnamed British writer after a visit to Australia in 1905: 'A garden in front of the cottage and a plot of ground behind it belong as a matter of course to the Australian workman's dwelling' (p. 42). In the garden city ethos the individual garden attached to the house was relegated in importance to that of the green belt, which was seen as a barrier against the encroachment of the city, and to the leisured parks and *natural* countryside. The notion of nature as the 'people's playground' (see Bunce, 1994) was a mainstay of Howard's and Unwin's thinking. This ideal has carried forward into the contemporary estates where it has been dramatised into watercourses and waterfalls, rivers with fountains or ornate marinas, and lakes with island havens for 'wildlife'. Or it has been leisured by golf courses, tennis courts, 'natural' walks, with promontories and secluded 'havens', or pony and horse riding tracks. The enclave estates have taken touristic and Disney consciousness and crafted them into new moments of lived space. Using nature they have tried to breathe life into rigid, fixed space, but this cultural C.P.R. cannot resurrect the dead, lived spaces of sameness - only the livable/liminal spaces of the heterotopias of difference can make this possible.

In conclusion Thompson (1988) argues that the 1830s (the year of the first locomotive-operated public train line in the world) was a crossroads of the traditional and the new -

the twin forces of continuity and change. The Reform Act also 'glanced backward with an approving eye' (p. 13) at the 'traditional', valued aspect of society whilst moving forward into the newly fashioned world of transformation. Similarly, in contemporary society, the traditional is being rehearsed, reiterated and repackaged to sell the imagined local, national and transnational community in the face of 'globalisation'. The venerable village of the rural retreat is resurrected and offered as the 'global village' of egalitarian efficacy. Therefore, if the eighteen hundreds witnessed the wonders of the modern epoch, and the late twentieth century is ushering in an age of postmodern mutation then it is necessary to investigate the result of these transformations as exemplified in the enclave estates. The chapter that follows offers a passage into this discussion via the 'visa of vagrancy'.

Chapter Three •

Tempora(ri)ly in Thirdspace: Heterotopias and communisphere, vagrant space and the vagrant.

The style of the imagin(eer)ed enclave estates leaves very little room for the fourthspatial vagrant space. In their stead are sanctioned spaces where a type of 'itinerant' practice may be undertaken. These spaces are the parks, lakes, bush-walks and other 'nature' environments that the enclave owners/planners build into the topography of the space. They are Disneyesque in performance and are mapped onto the environment where they act as the 'sets' for a type of artless *touristic* 'flanerie'. These spaces are highly regulated and are invariably spaces of, and for, surveillance. This panoptic notion instils in the enclavite a self-policing mechanism that leaves little room for acts, or moments, of vagrancy. Here is witnessed the case that the 'cop in the head is more powerful than the cop on the street'. But moments and spaces of, and for, vagrancy do arise, usually at the inclination of the most marginalised group within the enclave – the teenagers.

This group is, in the main, ignored and neglected by the planners/owners in the planning stages of the enclave estate. Although young family groups (with pre- or primary school children) are the preferred models for the new enclave, the planners/owners seem to forget that young children have a tendency to grow into young adults. Thus for the enclaved teenager the slides and swings and other 'play' areas become the heterotopic sites of random, vagrant acts of petty vandalism such as graffiti tagging or the mis-use and destructive abuse of the furniture of these 'sets'. Quite often the parks and

playgrounds are ignored with the younger children preferring to play in the streets or in the watercourses which become polluted with their debris or suffer de-vegetation. The parks and 'nature rambles' are also the sites of heterotopic mis-use. At night the older children gather to roam around these areas and, hidden from the view of the adults gather for illicit sex, drinking and drug taking.

The adult enclavite has even fewer options to inhabit the vagrant moments of fourthspace. Because of the rules and regulations implemented by the owners/planners even the homeowner's backyard is heavily surveilled and policed to ensure no untoward instances or examples of difference can occur. These instances may include the mis-use of the backyard as, for example, a 'storage' area for old furniture, a boat or even an old car that is being renovated. As was noted earlier in this chapter the owners/planners usually stipulate what types of plants may be incorporated into the property with 'indigenous' flora being outlawed. Thus the homeowner has a limited capacity to add difference to the sameness desired by the owners/planners. The space becomes a dead space; a bland 'lived' space of similarity that seeks to deny the difference of the vagrant space. Only within the privatised space of the home itself, behind the walls and away from the eyes of fellow enclavites, may notions of the vagrant space be entertained – but as may be assumed even these are restricted in their performance. The architectural spaces of the enclave estates, like their fellow 'travellers' the malls, work to police, through the first- and secondspatialities the third or lived community space. The fourthspace of the livable difference of the communisphere is absented within the walls and in its stead are the spaces of a comm(on)unity of similarity.

This chapter will describe a way of being able to examine the notions of the poverty of participation in, and of, 'community' which will in turn describe the 'illusionary' aspects of the conjured community when juxtaposed with that of the *communisphere*. One of the means to advance this discussion is to look at, what might be called, the travelling theory of the nomad and to contrast this with the ideational *vagrant* and *vagrant space*.

Deleuze and Guattari (1988), probably the best known theorists of the nomad, mobilise this concept as being an inhabitant of the open spaces of resistance. They see their chosen stereotype as being *communalised* in 'sprawling temporary, shifting shantytowns' (1988, p. 481). To me this is problematic in that the consensual metaphoric space of the nomad is the isotropical desert, a space that, as will be argued, doesn't lend itself easily to notions of the asymmetries of the core and periphery inherent in their notional nomad. The descriptive shifting shantytowns signal scenarios of excrescent exclusion. The image of the desert, the sprawling arid wasteland absents the city to such a degree that it becomes a 'world' unto and of itself. In the desert there is no core or margin but simply, to use MacCannell (1992), empty meeting grounds, a concept which denies the hierarchy of order and inclusion and disavows the important tropes of contemporary urban and suburban society: the accumulating and palimpsestial spaces. The shifting sands of the desert cover the footprints and exorcise the evidence. The notion of the nomad thus addresses a community in and of itself and this communalising of the nomad suggests an *order* which is already in place, replete and isolated. It is against these fixities of the 'communalising and organised' rational collectives of homogeneous and hermetically

sealed continuities that I offer the abstract of a heterogeneous *ordering* of the spaces for

and of vagrancy. This ordering rehearses the notions of discontinuities, dislocations and

defamiliarisations. When it is offered by Tim Cresswell in his essay Imagining the

Nomad (cited in Benko & Strohmayer (ed.), 1997, p. 360) that the metaphorical nomad:

'can serve only to negate the very real differences which exist between the mobile

citizens of the postmodern world and the marginalized inhabitants of other times and

places' (p. 377) then it is this 'flattening out of difference' that has led me to the sight/site

of the vagrant in an effort to remotivate an investigation into an an-other Fourthspatiality.

'Everyone is travelling in the field of 'theory' today' Cresswell states and he adds:

'Mobility is the order of the day. Nomads, migrants, travellers and explorers inhabit a

world where nothing is certain or fixed' (p. 360). The understanding here is that the

fluidity of the wanderer not only transgresses boundaries but actually eradicates them.

Cresswell cites, in the main, Chambers (the *planeur*), Clifford (the traveller), de Certeau

(the flaneur), Deleuze and Guattari (the nomad), and Said (the diasporic migrant) whilst

also invoking the spectres of Mayhew, T. S. Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Hoggart and Williams

to propel the notional nomad (this being Cresswell's chosen epithet of the many offered

him) on their journeys through such disparate spaces as the Gothic cathedrals and the

contemporary airport terminals. These nomadic border-crossings of various spatialities,

however, have a number of failings (the least of which is the term nomad itself) which

can be rectified by the *mapping* of vagrant space and spaces of/for vagrancy. It could be

said that the nomad is the modernist precursor of the postmodern, postcolonial vagrant.

The nomad is often (misleadingly) invoked as a global phenomena of marginalisation

whereas its closest relative, the vagrant, can be seen as a localised invocation of the outcome of the 'mixing' of the spatialities of centre and periphery which offers an another space of fourthspace.

To Cresswell: 'The nomad...is one whose home is on the move, who has no *place* in which meaning and identity can rest' (p. 362) and they are in this instance clearly boundaryless and ultimately mobile. They cannot be situated because there is no site for them. Vagrancy, on the other hand, is momentarily situated becoming fleetingly centred and it is this temporary fixity which describes vagrant space. Cresswell cites the nomad as transgressors of borders but if there is no place for them, then surely, there can be no borders for them to transgress. As Cresswell states: 'there is no place but the place of movement itself' (p. 362). The problematic nomad is territorialised but not located. Nomadic space is forever continuous with the nomad passing through but never lingering long enough to be part of the place. The nomad's view therefore is focussed on distant horizons not immediate possibilities which is, it will be seen, an inherent part of vagrant spaces. Cresswell's journeys with Clifford *et al* through nomadic space acts as a counterpoint in the discussion of vagrant spaces.

The first detour in Cresswell's nomadic peregrinations is initiated by Clifford's travelling metaphor (in Grossberg *et al*, 1992). He quite correctly points out that travel and the traveller are predicated upon the notion of privilege, whether gendered, racial, classed or whatever, and this privileging automatically places the traveller in relation to a space that s/he might inhabit on the journey. The privileged space of the traveller defines a dialectic

of the core and margin and thus inherently speaks of borders and boundaries which in turn articulate a fixity. These borders and boundaries delineate a home and away, a core and other space, and this 'othered' space is brought into view, realised out of the imagination - imagineered - on the travellers return home. Thus, for the traveller, the narrative of the other is made authentic in the spatiality of the legitimised and authenticating 'places' of and within the core. The traveller is not therefore nomadic (and indeed Clifford himself takes a negative view of the term), because s/he is always situated, always already in and of the core. The traveller when travelling is 'delocalised' from their location by their proximity to other spaces and their asseverate affiliation with the core.

It might be said that Cresswell invokes Clifford in an effort to place Said and his notion of the exile and the diasporic migrant. This is a different type of traveller and travelling, somewhat more nomadic but with inherently the same problematic issues. Like Clifford's traveller the exile or the migrant is heading for a (new) home. It is by way of a return to a similar centre to the one which has been relinquished. It is a journey not of delocation but for re-locating. For Said the enforced or self-exile is intrinsically involved with notions of uncompromising and stubborn 'rebelliousness' (Cresswell, p. 361). This rebelliousness it seems, is linked to the unsettling exilic experience of 'where you're from' and 'where you're at' (p. 362). It is a rebelliousness built upon a certain fixity of this place and the other place which, I would argue, is not an aspect of the nomadic moment as defined by an erasure of here and there in an 'only place of now-place'. As will be seen, 'here and there' open up the interstitial spaces of vagrancy, and to paraphrase Cresswell, moving

subjects are partially fixed by where they are. Vagrant space therefore is a space of a *becoming* whereas Said's diasporic space is that of the atrabilious avaunt – a melancholy movement away from one tied space to another of similitude.

Cresswell then turns his attention to de Certeau and his *strategies* and *tactics* (p. 362), but again I find the conjoining of these ideas and the nomad problematic. The tactics Cresswell avers, are the 'furtive movements of the weak' (p. 362) and are 'a heroic act of resistance against the disciplinary machinations of the city' (p. 363). Cresswell notes that de Certeau stresses that tactics 'circulate, come and go, overflow and drift over an imposed terrain' (p. 363) and that it 'has no place to be 'at'' (p. 363). My problem here is that the first and second spaces of the 'imposed terrain' is precisely the only place where one can be at but they need not be a dead, lived thirdspace. To circulate and come and go locates difference in sameness in the thirdspace but it doesn't empower it to *be different* or even to offer the *resistance of difference*. To be in a place is to nominate a space and enact a spatiality. To be Cresswell's modern flaneur (p. 363) is to be a part of a place. It is not to be absent (the flaneur must clearly be present to be able to view the spaces of the flaneurial) but to try to scopically 'place' a presence whilst simultaneously attempting to circumscribe the corporeal. This is de Certeau's 'quasi-invisibility'. The flaneur clearly doesn't resist the spectacle or use the spectacle as resistive but *places* it. Thus it can be seen that the tactics of Cresswell's flaneur/nomad do not empower a resistance but merely offer a difference. This scopically ascribed difference fleetingly observed in the various vagrant spaces is a key factor of the vagrant. De Certeau's nomads who 'do not "obey the laws of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it"' (p. 363) seeks to

remove itself from the everyday, whereas the vagrant is totally embedded in it and uses

liminal spaces of it to address notions of participation and inclusion.

The next step for Cresswell in recovering the nomad is to pursue Deleuze and Guattari on

their journey across the 'desert'. Cresswell states that: 'Deleuze and Guattari use the

nomad as a metaphor for the undisciplined - rioting, revolution, guerrilla warfare - for all

the forces that resist the fortress of the State discipline' (p. 364). Again resistance is to the

fore and the imagery invoked leaves little room for a misunderstanding of the position of

the nomad as 'freedom fighter'. Cresswell regards Deleuze and Guattari as seeing:

'Nomad life [as] an experiment in creativity and becoming' (p. 364) which enables the

nomad to attempt 'to free itself of all roots, bonds and identities' (p. 365). However,

Deleuze and Guattari's nomad is deeply implicated in the city. S/he are entwined within

the core(s) and the margin(s), the 'shifting shantytowns' referred to earlier and not, as

Cresswell might have us think, adrift in the open (and empty) spaces of the distribution of

people between 'points and locations' (p. 364). Therefore the nomad and nomadic space

is, contrary to Cresswell, neither a space of revolution nor marginalisation but simply

isolated, whereas vagrant space is a vector linking in usage 'points and locations'. As is

pointed out by Virilio (1986) and Wark (1994) the vector itself is an important 'virtual

location', not a dead isolated third space, but a livable fourthspatiality. Thus

rebelliousness and resistance are not the paramount issue of vagrant space. Becoming and

livability within the 'community' are its essence and recognition of the individual in the

communisphere its end product.

The virtual locating of the vector might be read in the same way as Borges' (1970) Aleph, it touches and is implicated in and with other spaces making any and every point a possible connection. As McKenzie Wark (1994) says of the media vector: '..(Nor) is there a synoptic vantage point, above or beyond the whole process, for looking on in a detached and studious manner. We are all, always, already - there.' (1994, p. 15). Thus like the vagrant the nomad cannot be outside of the spaces of the cores and margins, in the no-place of smooth space (Benko & Strohmayer, 1997, p.365) that Deleuze and Guattari offer as a detached vantage point without roots or bonds. But unlike the vagrant who is enmeshed in the Aleph, the nomad of Cresswell, Clifford, Said, de Certeau and Deleuze and Guattari is placed in isolation, somehow hermetically sealed in the empty meeting grounds.

In offering the nomad as a site of resistance Cresswell tries to locate this trope as being outside of the ordering of community. He suggests via Clifford *et al* that the only site of resistance is the no-site, but as will be seen there is no no-site. He also suggests that this no-site includes a communality, a collective of *ordered* shantytown dwellers who seem to act with one mind. There is not much room for the individual experience of *ordering,* an an-othered ordering, which describes by being fundamentally a part of it, the core in the margin and the margin in the core. The nomad then might be thought of as being of the 'order of the utopian', whereas the vagrant is enacted in the utopic ordering of spatiality. My notion of utopics here is a remotivation of Louis Marin's 'Utopics' (1984), the spatial play of neutrality between no-place (ou-topia) and good-place (eu-topia). In my re-ordering of Marin's neutral space, however, the an-other space *involved* is not neutral and

is the site where vagrancy describes the 'no-place' of the conjured community, whilst the 'good-place' of the communisphere addresses the notions of the illusion of participation. As Hetherington says, this ordering is that which 'itself [is] continually changing, fixing and unfixing itself' (1997, p. 28). This then is the livable, liminoidal spatiality of fourthspace, the site of the vagrant and vagrancy which is located in the overlapping edges and accumulating and palimpsestial spaces of the communisphere and which address notions of the poverty of participation in community. The vagrant *might* offer sites of resistance but it is never insistently resistive as Cresswell *et al* suggest the nomad is. The utopics of vagrancy are either/or and both as an an-other site of celebration and withdrawal. This is the 'looking-at while being-in', a place both in and out of space, embedded but segregated, which leads to a perpetual renewal of all these spaces (Foucault's the fair and the brothel). To borrow from Turner (see Arantes, 1996) vagrant spaces 'play with what is familiar, de-familiarizing it' (p. 83). The vagrant and vagrant spaces are similar to but inherently different from Cresswell's nomadic no-places because the vagrant is never isolated but always already *involved* in the some-place of the vector. The vagrant then, is inseparable from the spaces of the core and the margins and is *individuated* in inhabiting these spaces. The vagrant can move between the 'open' and 'closed' spaces of the landscape and the sites under scrutiny and by momentarily inhabiting the vagrant spatialities found within them change these other sites. This is the Foucauldian notion I will argue in the following pages.

Foucauldian Frottage

In his discussion 'Of Other Spaces' Foucault (1986) cites the importance of the externality of spaces and that spatiality is the relationship of the proximity of these external sites to others. This notion of what Soja (1996) calls the "situatedness", or what Hartley (1992) might call the 'frottage' of sites is an important aspect when considering 'community', the poverty of participation, and Foucault's heterotopology and the *counter-sites* of the heterotopia. To Foucault the heterotopia are real spaces - although his infuriatingly ambiguous description of them and his less than illuminating examples can at first frustrate the reader - which are at once restrictive and liberating. He suggests that the restrictive technologies and practices of the carceral or disciplinary society is offset by the (sanctioned) acceptable promiscuous spaces, such as the brothel or travelling fair. The brothel and its antithesis the town hall, for instance, can be said to be 'marginalised' but both are located within the core. Thus the 'frottage' between both sites is dependent upon their situatedness within the public sphere of the 'community'. The town hall and the brothel offer representations of two virtual communities - the core and the margin - within the illusion of comm(on)unity. These communities are *conjured* into being, for whatever result, to delineate the core and margin and deny the more encompassing notion of communisphere. The carnival of the fairs and brothels with their usurpations of space infer an an-othering of a spatiality normally set aside as a productive space or a space for production. The notional peripheralising of these sites rehearses the impression of proximity and offers a fleeting visibility to the interconnectedness of the constrained and the carnivalesque. The *disciplinary* town and its *incarcerated* 'community' is buffered against a space of disparation and displacement. As Foucault states, the heterotopia are: all the other sites that can be found within the culture...simultaneously represented,

contested and inverted (1986, p. 24). Bearing in mind Foucault's own reticence to expand on these demographies and his penchant for historical 'carceral' sites I would like to pursue here the notion of the heterotopia in relation to the conjured communities and offer contemporary sites as examples and explanations.

As noted above, one of the most important terms that I utilise in the discussion of heterotopia, community and the communisphere is that of vagrancy. This term is both analytical and descriptive and is brought into operation when looking at specific spaces, *vagrant spatialities*, and also in relation to the 'actors' (whether real or imagined) who might use or inhabit these spaces and spatialities, the *vagrant*. I intend to offer examples of the vagrant and vagrant spatialities found in the sites under investigation and then to discuss their relevance in advancing my contention that the conjured communities offer imagineered 'illusions of community' (Langman, in Shields, 1992, p. 69). It is important, here to reassert that these spaces are not apertures for revolt and revolution, but are spaces for potential discourse about the alternatives to cores and margins, difference and sameness and the poverty of participation in the illusion of community.

In the material sites under discussion there are very few examples of these errant and promiscuous spaces. This is hardly surprising considering that the sites are constructed in such a way, both physically and conceptually, as to absent or at least seek to *order* aberrant spatialities. The designation 'order' is to be read as meaning that which is static, prescriptive, and even monolithic (see Hetherington, 1997) and suggests a process of *ordering*. Ordering as process rehearses the notion that within, and about, these static and

prescriptive arrangements there lie alternatives, however transient they may be. So ordering within the ordered offer spaces of what Hetherington calls 'uncertain consequences' (1997, p. 35). These spaces are therefore the ephemeral examples which are used as fleeting or temporary spaces for what I have called vagrancy, or what might be thought of as spaces which change the meaning and usage of other contiguous and contextual spaces. Thus in the mega-malls, Kowinski's 'cathedrals of consumption', (see Friedberg, 1993) the act of conspicuous consumption is partially deflected by the vagrant spaces such as: unleased boutiques or shops (a rare occurrence!), the smoker's corner (usually located at side entrances and hidden from the view of other mallers), under-ground carparks (sites of potential danger and disruption), the 'time-out areas' where shopped-out shoppers congregate (little islands of rest and refuge, usually sunken and hidden from view by plants, shrubs, atriums, waterfalls and half-walls), or even toilets and recesses (potential places for illicit sex). In the vagrant spaces then, there is a different order brought about by the ordering enacted within these spaces by the actors use, or mis-use, of the space. The given act of conspicuous consumption, the normative of the mall, is fleetingly arrested and in its stead are offered ambivalent, liminoidal (see Turner, 1989) spaces located between the transactional and the relational, the consumerist spaces of the 'lived' and the living spaces of the ludic. Thus the vagrant spaces of the malls are the spaces of withdrawal, quasi-invisibility and transition.

The spaces mentioned above, it is important to note, are not *marginalised* spaces but are in fact deeply entrenched within the fabric of the material *sight* and conceptual *site,* the first and secondspatialities, of the malls. With this in mind I assert that the vagrant spaces

are *vectoral* sites, links between the material and conceptual of the core as well as the material and conceptual of the margins. To paraphrase McKenzie Wark (1994) the thing about the vector is that it *implicates* other sites. Thus vagrant spaces include the core and the margin just as they are in turn entwined with vagrant spaces. They are the 'becoming' or liminoid spaces and I have chosen here to rework Turner's phrase of 'liminoid ritual' in an effort to locate the vagrant within conjured communities. Turner states that: '..liminoid rituals are achieved rather than ascribed' (Turner, p. 33). Thus the liminoid rituals achieved in the vectoral spaces of vagrancy noted above inform the notion of the poverty of participation in and of the conjured communities of the sites. The liminoid space achieves a position to interrogate both core/margin and the conjured community located by them. Turner goes on to say that the liminoid are more 'ludic' and 'do not require the same sorts of obligations' (p. 33). In these statements are witnessed descriptions of the vagrant spaces. The ludic notion here contests the essence of the mall, that of 'serious' shopping. Lauren Langman citing Kroker *et al* (Shields, 1992) suggests the seriousness of mall-based consumption:

> The shopping-mall self seeks substantiation if not salvation in consumption to buy more gratifying subjectivity but finds instead a lonely, voyeuristic, "micro-circuitry of desire, ideology and expenditure for processed bodies drifting through the cyber-space of ultra-capitalism...where what is truly fascinating is expenditure, loss and exhaustion".(p. 68)

Thus the ludic is banished from the sites of serious consumption to the vectored spaces of vagrancy, where the spectacle can play without obligation or making a spectacle of itself. Turner restates Garfinkel's (1967) contention that: 'Liminoid spaces are therefore likely to be created...in breachings of the mundane order' (p. 34). In this can be seen that

vagrant spaces in the malls are effective at breaching the mundaneity of serious mall-based shopping. They are therefore spaces located between the 'sacred and the profane' (Turner applies this phrase to the liminal but I see it as operating very much in the liminoid as well) and enact the profane in the sacred and the sacred within the profane. Spaces for vagrancy are, in an oxymoronic spin, sacredly profane in that they are appropriated to the purpose of unwittingly altering the experience of consumerism, and are profanely sacred in that they are inviolable in their ability, by their proximity, to alter these spaces. Vagrant space in the mall reveals the sameness in difference and the difference in sameness via a vectoring of ambivalence and it also reveals and implicates the core within the margins and the margins within the core which necessarily lead to an understanding of the actor's Aleph-like poverty of participation within the conjured community of the mall. The actor's space/spatiality is encompassed by, and within, the mall but remains separate and hence excluded by the mere act/order of inclusion – the actors are in, but not of the malled space.

If examples of vagrant spatialities are hard to come by in the monolithic malls then the master planned communities (mpc) offer even less to play with. The generic naming of these enclaves alerts the reader to their constructedness and the controlling aesthetics which are imagineered into existence. But within this locality of limitation lies the promiscuous site of the familial house and if the malls are the pre-eminent public sites/sights for the purchasing of participation in the conjured communities, then the home is this same notion enacted in the private sphere. The enclaved house, as will be noted in depth elsewhere, is subject to severe restrictions and covenants which seek to

control and legitimate the homogenising ethic of 'community'. Thus the spaces of, and for, vagrancy are rarely seen in the surveilled streets of the neighbourhoods. But inside the home, in its architecture and furnishings, are found (sometimes in temporary usage) vagrant spaces.

The architecture of the contemporary home invariably has designated spaces for withdrawal and transition. Interior rooms such as the ensuite and the parent's retreat rehearse these notions locating a vagrant space of difference within the family space of sameness. Similarly the pergolaed patio or the front verandah are vagrant, interim spaces, the former an interzone of introduction between the garden and the home, and the latter the linkage space of private and public. This is Turner's (1982) 'situatedness' of mixing the 'sacred with the profane' and the frottage of the profanely sacred/sacredly profane spaces. The insertion of these spaces into the home addresses the notion of the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the 'community' of the family which enables a window to be opened onto the illusion of constructed community as a whole. Like the liminoid spaces in the malls these spaces are also vectoral linking the private to the group, the person to the family, the interior to the exterior. They are also spaces that bind the strictly designated leisured or work spaces of the rest of the house: the games room, music room or activities room and the kitchen, laundry and study, and in the case of the patio, the constructed 'natural' of the garden to the 'civilising' construction of the home. Thus vagrant spaces do not exist as separate entities but work because of these other spaces. They are in the main edge spaces of mixing which permit withdrawal and 'be-coming' that change the spaces that they overlap and knock against.

In the case of the parent's retreat this changes how the bedroom is to be read. Not only is it a place of nocturnal sex and sleep, but now it is also designated as a space for daytime withdrawal and absenting from the family. In contemporary homes the 'mixing edges' of the open-plan style dominates with each room bleeding into each other (for example sometimes the wall between the en-suite and the bedroom is removed) leaving spaces such as the parent's retreat, the verandah, patio and the utility room as heterotopic spaces which 'breach the mundane'. Gone are the hallways, the traditional transitional vectored spaces, and in their stead are half-walls and planter boxes, atriums and performance spaces, the furniture of the mall inserted into familial space the focus of which is the family room. This space is a 'mixing' space of potential carnival but also a controlled space surveilled by the panoptic kitchen. In the family room and most other rooms in the open plan house vagrant moments can arise but because of the visibility of these spaces they are quickly contained.

Leaving the house behind for now and entering the public spaces of the enclave estate the sites for vagrancy are, again, not so easily found. In fact, the vagrant spaces here depend not on architectural construction (although elements of this influence vagrant space) but are mainly concerned with the use, mis-, or non-use of the space. Invariably in the mpc's open parkland is to be found constructed around certain features such as a lake, stream or some other water feature. These features are usually themed along the lines of the enclave motif such as the mediterranean town, rural village - or even in one case in western Australia, a Scottish locale - and incorporate bridges, clock towers, contrived

promontories, an entertainment gazebo or a plaza/amphitheatre. The promotional material for these enclaves stresses that these features are used and are beneficial for the (organic?) construction of the community. However, some recent discussion has shown that these spaces are invariably not used or not used in the way they were intended (in particular see Richards, 1990). Thus in the majority of enclave estates the 'community' do not hold picnics on site (they seem to prefer to go off-site or visit relatives in other places) or hold impromptu concerts (they seem to prefer the real entertainment centres). Invariably these constructed parklands are used as 'fitness' spaces for individuated exercising, jogging or power-walking or are visited and enjoyed by prospective enclavites. In the latter example resides the reason why these areas are never allowed to fall into dis-repair through non- or mis-use. Also they are (mis)used as gathering spaces for the enclaved youth (who have few other constructed spaces proffered for their specific use in the site) and are often spaces for illicit sex, drinking and other forms of 'deviance'. Thus these spaces become vagrant by their non- or mis-use.

In an effort to try to correct this, and to portray to prospective purchasers the efficacy of the space, many enclave owners have instigated annual or biannual 'festivals'. These carnivals, open to community and non-community members alike, rehearse the vagrant space of celebration, which in a Foucauldian heterotopic moment contest and invert the meaning of the enclave estates. The outsiders are allowed in by others rather than the community members themselves and the strict policing of the enclave is broken down thus laying open for inspection the poverty of participation and the 'illusion' of community via the auspices of vagrant spatialities. The vagrant space of celebration then

can make, for the enclavite, the familiar space ambivalent and it is in the carnival of pseudo-celebration that the space becomes vagrant. The unsettling effect of the ludic space changes the meaning of the notion of community and in trying to construct an illusion of community to disavow vagrant space through play and celebration the poverty of participation in the conjured community is revealed.

If, in the malls and mpcs the vagrant spaces of livable spatialities is grudgingly given then in the site of the landscape there is both feast and famine. Although not ostensibly of major concern here the landscape is nevertheless an integral part of the sites under discussion. Thus certain aspects of the three types of ecologies offered for discussion - the panoramic public park, the suburban garden and the 'natural' National Park, bush or bushland - inform the discussion of the sites and vagrant spaces. In the former is witnessed the famine. The constructed nature of the public park works to erase or deny the vagrant spatialities by controlling the display of the flora and fauna, a classic example of which is the regimented dead space of first and secondspatialities, the floral clock. Incongruent first and secondspatialities are repeatedly inserted into the scenery. Thus along with the shops, restaurants, tourist and information stations, there are play-grounds and tennis clubs, lawns and lakes, fountains and floral monuments. 'Photo opportunity' signs proliferate and more signs tell the visitor how to *read* the environment. But even with all this regimentation there are still to be found spaces of vagrancy. These can be located off the beaten track and are, like all true vagrant spaces, spaces of withdrawal, quasi-invisibility, potential danger and liminoid transition. They are also the vectoral spaces between the city and the park, the site of be-coming located between the margin of

the park and the core of the city. The vagrant frottage between the unkempt bushland and the manicured 'mastered' space is the spatiality which changes the meaning of the park momentarily inverting the fixed and ordered and offering a becoming site of unresolved ordering.

An example of the 'fixed and ordered' most frequently found in the manipulated parklands is that of the War Memorial. These edifices to the war dead describe the first- and secondspatialities of remembrance which is enacted within the third fixed space of the memorial and its surrounds. This is an 'official' space for 'community' mourning. But these sites, however, suggest something less about mourning than they do about the conjuring of communities. These and other similar sites imagineer into existence a 'community' by imagining a *departed* community and locating it in a built site of concrete and the consensual imagination. In King's Park, Perth, Western Australia the notion of the single official site of mourning is extrapolated and given a 'communal' twist to it. Throughout the park affixed to trees or strategically placed beside the roads there are plaques and markers which bear the names, rank, age and place of death of the war dead. These markers, by invoking the dead in an 'unofficial' space further work to conjure a community into being.

Throughout the visitors' stay in the park, they are constantly reminded that they are *individually* members of a collective. The 'other space' of distant places such as Chateau Wood, Ypres or the once wooded slopes of Arras and Messines, and of distant times work to conjure an illusion of community in the local and present King's Park. The

ordered space of this park and its sanctioned multiple spaces of remembrance act as a pseudo-vagrant space which, whilst somewhat acknowledging difference, works to invoke sameness. However, in a sublime Foucauldian moment, a 'true' vagrant space not too dissimilar from the markers and plaques to the fallen dead in King's Park is witnessed in the 'unofficial' 'memorial' sites erected at the side of the road at the scene of a fatal accident. These memorials are, in the main, illegal and the various shire councils frown upon them but hesitate to remove them. The small crosses or personal momentoes of the victims, oft replaced flowers or ribbons tied to trees work as signifiers of heterotopias fleetingly changing the space of the road and footpath invoking not a community but a more general notion of the communisphere. A similar 'betwixt and between' heterotopic vagrant space can also be found on the borders of the suburban garden.

If the regimentation of the pastoralist English landscape park leaves little room for vagrancy then the natural National Parks and forests may seem its antithesis. These sometimes large stretches of unkempt space would seem to offer the ultimate example of the vagrant space. But, in fact, because of their distanced separation from the city and suburb, their removal from the built environment, coupled with their sprawling size and their notional image of 'naturalness' they offer little chance for vagrant spaces to be included. The only parts of these spaces which invite a form of vagrancy are to be found at the rest stops, the edge spaces which allow for a 'mixing of the spaces' of the road and the forest which alter both. These edges, whether between bitumen and bush or farmland and forest also offer another type of vagrant space for the diverse number of species which inhabit it and according to Alexander Wilson (1992) 'is the most complex and

textured ecosystem of all' (p. 96). The ambivalent space of the eco-edge offers a type of

eco-vagrancy for the animals but as Wilson points out 'edges are not so much

about..interrelationships as they are about separateness' (p. 96). Thus, in the main, the

spaces of vagrancy found in the National parks are limited by this separateness. Although

they do offer a space for withdrawal this predominantly infers a complete invisibility, a

distinct segregation as opposed to the quasi-invisibility necessary for the vagrant moment

to occur. They are also limiting in that while they may allow for ludic play it is usually

restricted to small groups. The vagrant space of the ludic needs to be witnessed by larger

assemblages than is usually found in the National Parks.

However, there are times when a pseudo-vagrant moment is invoked in these spaces and

that is found at the protest site. This site in itself changes the space by inserting the

private into the public, the closed into the open and the mediated into the meditative. I

classify these sites as pseudo because they are arranged around organised insurgency.

Whilst they may offer *resemblances* of vagrant sites they are not similitudinal. The

protest site is therefore an already always ordered site. The heterotopic sites of vagrancy

are, on the other hand, spaces of utopic ordering and similitude, and as Hetherington

states: 'Similitude is constituted by an unexpected bricolage effect' (1997, p. 9). The

protest site is *defined*, as are the 'actions' of the actors. The vagrant in the spaces of

vagrancy is dependent upon the ambiguous, upon notions of challenging and changing,

the interrelated spaces. The vagrant as bricoleur *improvises*. They transform the other

(lived) spaces around them and incorporate them into an an-othered (new) space, the

fourthspatiality of the livable space. The community of the protest site is a community of

purpose. It imposes its own strictures upon itself and is defined by these self-imposed

strictures. The site therefore is defined by the affiliation to a cause. On the other hand the

conjured communities of the enclaves and malls etc. are imagineered by others. They are

thought into being as a community purely through geographical location and

representation. The vagrant spaces of these communities reveal the legerdemain of the

illusion and the poverty of participation in the construction and continuance of them.

One aspect in the construction of conjured communities which aids and abets in its

manufacture and maintenance is the scripted space of the garden. Although the utility of

the garden will be discussed in depth elsewhere it is pertinent briefly to point out here

how the garden, once a space of livable fourthspatiality, has been changed into the dead,

lived space of third space. Wilson (1992) suggests that the 'garden' is in fact a colonising

space. He points out that:

> The pastoral lawn, for example, not only predominates in
> suburban frontyards, but also stretches across golf courses,
> corporate headquarters, farmyards, school grounds,
> university campuses, sod farms, and highway verges. (p.
> 97)

a list to which I might add the enclave estates and, to a lesser extent, the shopping mall

interiors. The colonising aspect of the garden 'relentlessly enclosed, encoded, patterned

and abstracted nature (Wilson, p.101), a nature once seen as either wild (the forest or

bush) or worthy (the rural field or kitchen garden). The relentless actions that Wilson

alludes to have made for a 'standardized' (p. 106) and regimented landscape which not

only controls the landscape by seeking to eradicate the 'natural' indigenous species of

flora and fauna but also seeks to control communities by imposing strict caveats on the

domestic garden spaces. The controls restrict vagrant spaces and this restriction helps uphold the illusion of community.

Having witnessed how restricting the material sites can be it can be noted how the *virtual* sites offer more space for an investigation of vagrant spaces. Film and television by their very nature are inherently vagrant in, and of themselves. They are ludic spaces, carnivalesque in their presentation and offer a quasi-invisibility. The are the 'mixing' spaces for bricolage and offer a vast array of centres and margins for perusal and they ultimately offer difference in sameness and sameness in difference. The television in particular is Aleph like in its programming frottaging various genres over a twenty four hour period.

In the various texts under discussion here there are to be found a multiplicity of vagrant spaces. In the televisual text M*A*S*H the mess tent is the space for vagrancy *par excellence* as it is the most 'public' of spaces where the core and margins mingle, where the ludic is forever inserting itself and where difference and sameness and difference within sameness are on display. The mess tent also doubles as church, entertainment area, and a space of solace and respite. In one episode it was also used as a sanctuary for a 'soldier' who was AWOL and points to the mixing of the sacred and profane within this space. The mess tent is also the meeting point of the everyday and the military, where control is conflicted with chaos. In just about every episode the mess tent becomes the focal point for 'community' and the illusionary aspects of the participatory nature within this conjured community are held up to the light, inspected and, in the main, found

wanting. This space is inclusionary, all 'ranks' are admitted, but the kindly process of exclusion is seen in action with 'officers' and 'nurses' segregated at their tables. However, one member of the community who rehearses the notion of the communisphere via vagrancy is 'Radar' O'Reilly.

Radar epitomises the vagrant moment. In this character is witnessed the conjoining of rural and the (sub)urban, farm and office, deviant and the everyday, difference and sameness which describes a fourthspace of the communisphere. He is in the interstitial spaces of the civic and citizenry, ultimately embedded in both, and his extended moments of vagrancy allow for a pointed perusal of this textually conjured community. Radar is the eradicator of borders, as much at home in the 'swamp' as he is in the operating theatre or office. Positioned as a type of pre-industrial farm-boy his technologically descriptive epithet ties him to modernity and the city but he is also linked to an an-other 'sublime' space of the 'air' which connects him to the more all-encompassing notion of the communisphere. His nickname suggests this double encoded notion and this is emphasised by the understanding that he has an acute ability to hear the 'choppers', or helicopters, flying in long before they are sighted. This character also has the ability to 'read' minds, a type of thought wave transference, which has him 'repeating' orders before they are given to him. This is an artifice which plays upon the notion of the 'sameness' of science (the radar) and the supernatural (mind reading) which admits to an-other of 'difference' within the character who is displayed as being neither scientific (of the material world) or supernatural (of the spirit). Finally, he is the vector between the

M*A*S*H unit and the outside world and is therefore embedded deeply in the conjured community but connected to the larger 'world' of the communisphere.

If Radar O'Reilly's identity consists of an embodiment of the combination of conflicting but frottaging spaces then in the filmic text <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> the main character Muriel's conflict is writ large upon her body and it is this display which alerts the viewer to her vagrant status. This text, as will be discussed more fully in a later chapter, is an in-depth perusal of the illusion of community, vagrancy and vagrant spaces and it is pertinent here to point to one or two examples to help position the notion of vagrancy.

One of the major issues in the text is that of identity and how different spaces can act upon the formation and confirmation of this identity. Throughout the text Muriel moves from one spatiality to another; from the conjured community spaces of the home and Porpoise Spit to the liberating tropical island and the metropolis, from the sparsely furnished flat to the deluxe apartment, from the bridal boutiques to the beach side motel, from Muriel to Mariel, from Heslop to Van Arkle and back to Heslop. She is constantly choosing vagrant spatialities and equally constantly being reinserted into the conjured community of Porpoise Spit. In this is witnessed her position as being forever located in the interstitial spaces of always, already becoming. The notion of vagrancy on display in the text places the characters of Muriel and her friend Rhonda as being vectors between the deviant – or grotesque - and the everyday.

Both Muriel's and Rhonda's physical characteristics epitomises Bakhtin's (1984) carnivalesque of the 'grotesque' body and even minor characters such as Muriel's 'friend' Tania offer pronounced, if fleeting, glimpses of it. These features work to invert the everyday and restate it *as* the everyday in a more pointed manner. They familiarise by defamiliarising suggesting that differences inherently make up the sameness and that there is a sameness to difference. Thus Muriel's plainness and weight problem and Rhonda's confinement in a wheelchair and her perverse affection for Muriel linked to the unresolved ending operate to locate them in the interstitial spaces of be-coming, the fourthspace of livability which is found in vagrancy and vagrant spaces.

As is noted above the notions of accumulation and the palimpsestial are two terms which can assist in the analysis of the sites under investigation. To begin with it will be recognised that notionally the terms suggest an interconnectedness and interchangeability. Although this is intentional the terms are mainly used as stand-alone designations to suggest spatial visibilities which are used as technologies or instruments of 'community'. These mechanisms resemble Foucauldian 'instruments of government' which 'instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics' (cited in Bennett, 1995, p.23). Foucault's tactics were, as Bennett asserts, aimed at changing the conduct of the 'popular classes' through 'broadly dessimated regimes of self-management'. In the sites of community similar tactics were and are used to coerce the individual into 'acceptable norms and forms of behaviour' (p. 23), re-presenting and making them visible in the spatiality of the 'imagineered community'. Thus the *accumulating* and *palimpsestial* spatialities are pedagogical and colonising, rehearsing

regulation through self-enacting imperatives of a 'kindly process of social selection' (Richards, 1990). These imperatives call to the fore the first and second spatialities of the perceived and conceived, the physical and the conceptual technologies of and in the sites.

Although the terms are negotiable and may be used together at any one time what is also important to bear in mind is that the terms inherently describe temporalities. These notions of the temporal offer a means to suggest the models the spatialities closely resemble. These temporal models exist contemporaneously with the sites, but interestingly enough draw upon prior models which were in fact spatialities. For example, the media site of the filmic or televisual text, an accumulating spatiality, is aligned with the Foucauldian notion of the accumulating temporality (heterochronies) of the museum whose precursors were the cabinets of curiosity (Bennett, 1995), the studiolo (Olmi, 1985), the panoramas and dioramas (Friedberg, 1995) and the expositions (Altick, 1978). The question which arises is where is the fourthspace in the temporal and spatial sites of accumulation and palimpsest? I assert that the conjunction of the spatial and the temporal work to betray the fourthspace of the livable/liminal/interstitial. They offer all times, past and future, and even times within times, but betray the Aleph-like single time of the present.

On the other hand the spatialities offer other promises because they offer a *differential of similarity* or as Spivak might put it *a speaking as* not a *speaking for*. The differential of similarity of fourthspace is to be found in the liminal/interstitial space of absolute differences. The recognition by the individual that they are not similar to the

either/'others' - the different or the self-identical - but are in fact at one and the same time a cognate, contrary, *either/or and also* other. This is the *postcolonial* moment of the syncretic spatiality of fourthspace. The notion of the 'white - not quite' found in the literature about colonial India admits to a liminal space, a 'waxing' space, a spatiality between the white, not quite.

Homi Bhabha (1990) submits that to be Anglicised is not to be English, but he neglects to address that it might offer a space of a fourthing-as-othering: a both *either/or and also* fourthspace which is real-and-imagined, liminal and livable, visible due to its invisiblity. The interstitial positioning offers a space for the indigenous or marginalised to question both the colonial version of marginalisation and their own version of marginality from a fourth space of becoming. This fourthspace is the livable space between the conceptual and the corporal. Its hybridity of betwixtness suggests a place both fixed but fluid, immanent and imminent, bordered but migratory, a passageway between power and disempowerment. In the case at hand the either/or and also amplifies the notion of 'community' to an all encompassing communisphere: the dialectic of perceived and conceived, first and second space becomes a quadlectic of spatiality incorporating an an-other space. Any theoretical discussion of the diasporic migratory passage across the badlands, borders and homelands, sites and counter-sites of the spatial communisphere begins with Foucault as guide and pathfinder.

The base camp for our trek through the real-and-imagined-spaces is Foucault's (1980) ideational *heterochronies*: the temporal equivalent of fourthspace. The example used by

Foucault is that of the heterochronies of ever accumulating temporalities: the museums, libraries and galleries. These are places where "time never stops building up" and which are seemingly "inaccessible to the ravages" of time (Soja, p. 160). The books and artefacts incorporate an ever-increasing trope of what I call the temporal visibilities which create a place of almost Aleph-like entanglement. Borges' description of the phantasm of the Aleph speaks of various temporalities made visible simultaneously. In a labyrinthine moment of conceptual clarity these temporal visibilities display that these times have other times within them:

> I saw the teeming sea;...I saw daybreak and nightfall;...I saw bunches of grapes, snow, tobacco, loads of metal, steam;...I saw a ring of baked mud on a sidewalk, where before there had been a tree;...(Soja, 1996, p. 56)

The Aleph, then is the accumulation of 'times within time' incorporating the past(s) of pasts. The quote above describes in fluidity the pre-industrial, industrial and the post industrial - all times in one 'past'. Importantly these are the sanctified pasts 'nurtured by the hidden presence of the sacred (Foucault, cited in Soja, 1996, p. 56). Borges himself alludes to this sanctifying of historicity when he cites the 'Mystics' and Ezekial, and then calls on the 'gods' to grant him a power to help him describe the impossible. But the 'impossible' is performed in the sanctified places of the museums, libraries and galleries. The first and second spatialities, the construct and the concept collude to situate time and make it, if not physical, then at least visible.

The perceived place itself, the museum or library, is almost effaced by what it encompasses: the conceived layering and situating of time. It therefore can be forgiven if

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the museum, library or gallery is regarded as a place *of all times* whether corporal or contemplative. This domination of the imagineered is also didactic. The museum displays artefacts and exhibits from different *historical* eras, ages or times to familiarise and rehearse a notion of a shared past of differentiated but global community. In this way it has a *strategic* function as an educational tool of perusal. It offers from a privileged, sanctified vantage point 'rationalised and sanitized' temporally situated 'places' which totalises the discontinuities and fractures into a homogenous unit. What is rehearsed here is the notion that the uniform model of the homogeneous place is 'natural, "substantial", purely physical' (Gregory, 1994, p. 277). This is Lefebvre's 'opacity' and Soja's 'myopia', and is, I suggest, the shortsightedness of colonisation by utilisation of the first and second spatialities of 'community'.

The spatial equivalent of the place of accumulating temporalities is to be found in the medium of television and the cinema. This is the Aleph seemingly made visible. Like the walls of the museums, libraries and galleries 'place' is effaced and temporalities evinced. In the cinema the ever accumulating 'history' dominates. Or maybe the correct phrase should be that the 'history of the ever accumulating history' is pre-eminent. Even a cinematic text set in the future is a history of that unfolding. In the televisual text, however, the nowness works to belie historicity positing every-time into an Aleph-like present. This is a thematic of Soja's 'hypermetropic illusion of transparency' (Gregory, 1994, p. 277). Through the 'strategy' of the mediated images - the politics of pictures - the ideological instrumentalities which govern the spatialities of the communities of family, state or nation are 'hidden from view under thick veils of illusion..' (Soja, 1989,

p. 50). Community space in the mediated images is; natural, not imagineered; substantial, not differentiated; physical not imagined; ever accumulating, never abating.

Like the visible temporalities of the museums, libraries and galleries the cinema and television are also pedagogic. They offer a visibility to an-other community but it is a blurred vision made hazy by the accumulating visions of the 'normal' community whether it be the white, able-bodied, heterosexual male, or the western, God-fearing, corporate-loving bureaucracy. The spatialities of accumulation accumulate differentiated spatialities under the banner of community and suggest (through the hypermetropic) that this community is 'luminous, innocent, freely intelligible' (Gregory, p. 277). The substantive seems to be more problematic. The accumulating, all encompassing notion of community here is broken down into three ideational moments: the perceived space of the communital; the conceived space of the communitopia and the liminal space of the communitas. But there may be a fourth moment inherent in the term 'community' - a less restrictive notion of communisphere. This communisphere concedes grudging acceptance of the fourthspace of the heterotopia and the vagrant space. This antithesis of the metanarratives of first and second space and its momentary impulse is stumbled upon in the 'streets and screens' of the simul- and virtutopias of the enclaves, malls, advertisements, and texts of the conjured communities.

In the chapters which follow we will be pursuing the vagrant space through the streets of the malls and the enclaves and across the immense or intimate screens of the cinema and TV. But before we unfold the map, purchase our ticket or take our seat on the sofa we

will take a short side trip to the seaside town of Pearl Bay the site/sight of the popular comedrama SeaChange and home to a community which offers a view of the otherness in the familiar.

Chapter Four •

SeaChange and the Virtutopia

In our discussion of the master planned communities the notion of a type of 'utopianism' was advanced. Lyman Sargent (cited in Kumar, 1991, p. 77) suggests that all utopian communities have been 'attempts to move from utopia to eutopia: from nowhere to the good place'. In the Australian made SeaChange this attempt is at the core of the narrative. Although this 'movement' is rehearsed in its major character Laura Gibson (Sigrid Thornton) the main thrust of the text is an inversion of Sargent's observation in that the community is trying to maintain the 'good place' of a small, interconnected, seaside community by stopping its movement to a nowhere of the 'high-rise, tourist' resort. This notion of inversion is a crucial aspect of similarity between the virtutopias and the palpable master planned communities in that it highlights the 'authoritarian' aspects of the latter whilst allowing for a display of the vagrant spaces of the former.

This notion also takes into account the idea of its antithesis, the dystopia, and it was here that the concept of the vagrant space found form in the enclave estates. It is noted that the first- and secondspaces of the planned communities work together to deny the vagrant space, positioning it as being a deleterious space which may be subversive to the overall efficacy of the community. Thus the design philosophy of the enclave and the discourses in the advertorial copy pertaining to these spaces, whilst offering notions of the utopian vision of healthy community through comm(on)unity, seek a way via representations of nature and the natural to divest them of the inherent dystopic visions that always

accompany utopianism (see Kumar, 1987). This nature is displayed, as an instrumental

essence as being needed to achieve community. It is also seen (but never mentioned) as

keeping negative aspects of community at bay. The enclave subdues the heterotopics of

nature, individuality and livable space via, at best, the utopianism of community and, at

worst through regimentation, or to remotivate a Foucauldian term 'a policy of coercions'

that act upon the community to make it 'docile' (see Rabinow, 1984, p. 182). These

coercions seek to produce a 'disciplined' or 'contained' body, an essential component of

comm(on)unity. Krishan Kumar in his work Utopianism (1991) describes the two types

of utopian community:

> The attempt to realize utopias...is fraught with danger. It is,
> at best, likely to bring about a society bearing only the
> slightest resemblance to the utopian conception and that in
> what may be its most superficial features. At worst it will
> create the opposite of utopia, an anti-utopia of authoritarian
> regimentation. This has been the experience of all so-called
> utopian communities and utopian societies, from the
> American communities of the nineteenth century to the
> socialist societies of the twentieth. (p. 95)

The denial of the vagrant space in the master planned communities via 'authoritarian'

'Investment Protection Guidelines' and 'Covenants' promulgate the utopian nature of the

estate. But as was discussed the heterotopic aspects in the site - the vagrant spaces - are

always already inherent in the topography and are merely repressed. However these

spatialities can arise in instances of 'anti-utopian anger' such as the impulse to graffiti.

The rules and regulations when strictly enforced and observed, often by the residents

themselves lead to the disavowal of the heterotopic vagrant (or even dystopic) qualities to

be found there. Kumar suggests:

> In utopia we are shown the good society in operation,
> supposedly as a result of certain general principles of social
> [and communal] organisation.(p. 31)

These general principles of organisation are themselves organised by the first- and

secondspatialities of the perceptual and conceptual aspects of the site which help to

absent any aesthetic of individualism. These spatialities blanket the site in sameness that

can lead the reader of the site to misjudge the 'desirability and practicability' (p. 32) of

the properties of the enclave. As Betrand de Jouvenel (cited in Kumar, p. 31) states:

The designation of "Utopia" should be denied to any exposition of a "New Model" of

Society that is bereft of pictures concerning daily life.

But as Kumar adds in utopian societies:

> There remains a fundamental ambiguity as to the concrete
> social order that is to emerge from the application of
> general principles.(p. 32)

Thus unlike the writers and visionaries of utopianism (from William Morris to Walt

Disney) the owners, developers and advertisers fail to spell out 'in terms of everyday life'

what the utopia of the enclave is supposed to be like. If the ambiguity suggested by

Kumar above needs an effort on behalf of the reader of the sites/sights to determine then

it is nowhere better established and expressed than in the other 'master planned'

communities of the televisual texts. The master planners, developers and visualisers in

the marketing offices for these sites are the producers, directors and writers of the isolated

or segregated 'communities' portrayed in one of the most popular genres of the 1990s,

the nostalgic, utopian 'comedramas'. These comedramas – a genre blending/bending text

which incorporates as the name suggests a mixture of comedy and drama with the added

characteristics of the soap opera - are what I call the virtutopias and are rehearsed in texts

such as the Australian made Seachange; the British produced Ballykissangel, Hamish MacBeth and Heartbeat; or the Canadian Northern Exposure. I suggest that these virtutopias foreground the everyday life via the notion of the heterotopic space in a rehearsal of the dichotomous utopian/anti-utopian aspects of the televisual communities. They organise the sites (the social order, the perceived and conceived spaces) drawing upon the notions of touristic and Disney consciousness and through a display of sameness and difference and the insider and outsider offer a visual perusal of the 'return of the repressed' of the vagrant space.

Utility of Utopias: The Return of the Repressed.

Before the focus becomes fixed on individual texts certain shared characteristics of the virtutopias need to be looked at. As will be seen, some of these idiosyncrasies have counterparts in the enclaves. As a simple starting point it should be understood that the sites of the virtutopias and the master planned communities have a common constituency of isolation from other constructed sites as well as the metropolis itself. Both the community of Pearl Bay in the televisual text Seachange and the enclaves of 'the master planned communities are isolated, bordered and separated communities. Although the fictional Pearl Bay does not have a wall around it the sea, the bay and the river whose bridge is incomplete isolate it. Thus the virtutopian community shares a common 'design' element with the enclave estate: the single (surveilled) entrance. Pearl Bay's 'entry statement' is displayed as a meandering country road wiggling through 'natural' flora. In the enclave estate nature is controlled, cosmeticised and commodified. For Pearl Bay nature may be 'restrained' or even retrained into second nature, but it is never completely domesticated. The panoptic sentinels give way to the sentimental panorama; the inversion of nature as furniture for a community becomes nature as fundamental for a community.

As can be noted the majority of the suburban enclaves are situated at a distance from the nearest city. Similarly the virtual sites of Lochdubh (Hamish MacBeth) Aidensfield (Heartbeat), Ballykissangel and Pearl Bay (SeaChange) or even Cicely (Northern Exposure) are obviously, in their presentation, removed from the metropolis. (The

opening sequence of <u>SeaChange</u> seeks to make this apparent by the juxtaposition of images of the city and seaside). The virtutopic community in <u>SeaChange</u> is positioned by virtue of its relationship with the 'natural' as being an 'organic' community and is actively trying to resist any encroachment of the 'planned' upon it. In this an extension of the utopian moment is broached: the concept of eco-topia.

In the opening sequence of the text the mise-en-scene describes the anti-utopian image of the city. The montage of images display the frenetic pace and claustrophobic conurbation of the metropolitan environment, a sentiment often reiterated as the city as dysfunctional and dangerous. This idea is also often linked to the understanding of the dislocation brought about by the pursuit of the material over the natural. The residents of Pearl Bay are positioned as trying to arrest this expansion of the material into the organic space of the community and this is the first hint of the virtutopia of Pearl Bay being a vagrant space. Kumar (1991) states in relation to utopian literature and the ecotopia:

> Material growth is limited because its ceaseless expansion
> has brutalized the mass of the population and devastated
> the natural order.(p. 104)

The distance and isolation from the city is accentuated by the moat-like natural environment which surrounds the real-and-imagined sites: the enclave estates are surrounded by either water features, ponds, wetlands, scrublands, natural flora and/or tree plantations, and the televisual sites include as 'barriers', moors, wooded hills, rivers and/or the sea. This is made evident in <u>SeaChange</u> with the (draw)bridge across the river being positioned in the narrative of the text as permanently incomplete and therefore a signifier of inclusion and exclusion. The sign on the bridge reads: 'Bridge Closed. Take

Alternative Route'. The obvious connotation here is that the resident of Pearl Bay would be cognisant of the fact of the closure of the bridge and therefore the message is aimed at the outsider. This in effect is a double warning: the first of potential danger and the second of an existing aversion to the other of the outsider.

In the virtual spaces of the advertorial copy for the enclaves and the televisual texts the closeness of this 'nature' infers a fundamental positive impact upon the community. That this nature is edifyingly beautiful, whether it be a man-made waterfall or a golf course in the estate or the windswept moors of Heartbeat, the rolling fields of Ballykissangel, the rugged mountain terrain of Hamish MacBeth or the calm and peaceful waters of the bay in SeaChange, infers a certain balance between this beauty and the people in the 'community'. Although these televisual communities are not in a permanent state of stability, a supposition can be made that there is a mutual understanding between the community members - a consideration and a respect for each other based on a nostalgic impulse sustained by the notion of the prelapsarian village ethos. This is reflected in the 'beauty' found in the representations of nature in the texts. Kumar (1991) in his discussion of William Morris' utopian text News from Nowhere (1890) suggests that 'beauty is taken to be the cardinal standard of society' (p. 103) whether it be the people themselves or the built or natural environment. In the virtual sights the beauty of the environment impacts upon the representations of the characters and the community as a whole. The series director Chris Clough in speaking in The Guide (January 25-31, 1999) about the second series gives Ballykissangel as an example of this. He states:

> Ballykissangel in the past always showed Ireland as an
> incredibly sunny place...We've used a lot more

> landscape...(to get)...the charm of the cold-climate village
> voice.(p. 1)

Thus the real-and-imagined Ireland that is the prelapsarian 'village' of Ballykissangel is measured in the perceived, firstspace (landscape) and the conceived, secondspatial 'cold climate village' and is inflected with an 'incredibly sunny' utopianism which encompasses notions of community.

In the enclaves the notion of the efficacy of beauty and nature is echoed, but somewhat differently organised. Here beauty and nature are equally manufactured and manipulated but in the form of landscaped parks, lakes, golf courses and marinas. Scenic walks and promontory parkbenches overlooking 'naturalised' waterways complete with ducks and swans take the place of sheep-dotted hills and trout-filled rivers. These (manmade) attributes are what Raymond Williams (1985) in The Country and the City has called 'pleasing prospects'. Whatever the example, nature and beauty are considered conducive for the completeness of community and are built into the environment. Added to this are the covenants pertaining to the individual houses. An inspection of the 'guidelines' for a Western Australian master planned community 'The Vines' reveal that they cover everything from vehicle 'accommodation' (boats and caravans to be screened behind building line) to letterbox and garden lighting (should be consistent with design criteria nominated by developer) to clothesline and refuse bin (must be screened from street view and golf course). Other restrictions address wall, roof and fencing materials, garages, verandahs and driveways, outbuildings and landscaping (landscaping to include...one advanced tree (2.4-3.0 metres); six other advanced species (1.2-1.5 metres) and other small nominated species – this is an example of what Rod Giblett (1996) suggests is

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beauty as small, feminised, well wrought objects). These covenants ensure the 'beautification of the community' (site) which impacts on how the community is read by the members themselves and their visitors.

In a return to the Foucauldian notion of the docile 'body', it is suggested that it was the 'modality' of the 'projects of docility' that worked 'silently' on the body turning it into the 'automatism of habit' which 'got rid of the peasant' giving him 'the air of a soldier' (Rabinow, 1984, pp 179-180). Foucault states that this modality: 'implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result' (p. 181). This same form of coercion and supervision is brought into play in the enclaves making for the 'automatism of habit' in the 'activities' (the observance of the regulations by self-policing) which changes the geographically located comm(on)unity into an affiliatorial community. The developers are not so much interested in the result (a substantive community) but in the processes themselves, which suggest the desired result. The inversion here is that the developers would prefer to reinstate the 'air of the peasant' of the nostalgic, pre-industrial village community. The alternative to the peasant, the individual which may be likened to Foucault's 'soldier' in the community might disagree with the sentiment of the 'strictly controlled development' (advertorial copy from 'The Vines') and may bring a vagrant moment of instability to what the owners/developers of 'The Vines' call: 'Perth's rarest lifestyle'.

If certain aspects of 'docility' are seen as a positive for community and these are made concrete in nature and the manipulated 'naturalised', environments then the site of its

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antithesis is the manic animation of the metropolis. The industrious 'unnaturalness' of the urban environment with its office towers and paved malls suggests the impression of, if not a dangerous dystopia, then at least a hazardous 'otherness'. The real-and-imagined sites position themselves via the virtual representations (the advertorial copy or the mise-en-scene) as being separated from the negative aspects of city life. The representations of the suburban sites (whether the photograph or the sound 'stage' of the film or TV) describe, albeit divergently, the concept of soundness and safety: the enclaves via the walls and security devices and the texts through the artifice of the prominent display of the 'offices' of the church, the police or the 'law'. Both the walls and the 'state apparatuses' function to keep the otherness of the city and the outsider at bay. Yet the otherness still manages to get past these gatekeepers.

In the enclave estates displays of the 'dystopic' other are witnessed in the outbreak of graffiti or minor vandalism which is often the work of the bored teenagers (the unwanted and therefore marginalised other) of the community. Or they are invited to enter nightly through the TV screen via the news, current affairs or texts such as the police drama or the sci-fi programme. (An interesting point to note is that the popular text <u>The X Files</u> set one of its episodes involving the paranormal in an exclusive enclave estate!) In the virtutopias of the televisual the police officers identify and contain otherness, often with the help of the community themselves. The community thus forms a united front against the outsider, shunning otherness by comm(on)unity led by a recognisable bearer of the office of community. This, however, is not always a hard and fast rule as sometimes in the virtutopian text there is a (playful) inversion of this with the 'guardians' being

invested with otherness, difference, and a vagrant spatiality in relation to the members of the community. For example, in the British programme the eponymous Hamish MacBeth displays certain characteristics of otherness: his scant regard for his superiors, his reticence to arrest the villain and his habit of smoking marijuana places him outside the norm of the British bobby rehearsed in texts such as Heartbeat. MacBeth's instances of otherness suggest that there is an alternative space to the either/or dichotomy which is the 'but also' spatiality of, in Hamish's case, the liminal (between the comm(on)unity and 'community') of the fourthspatial livability.

This notion of the either/or situation of the community of the real-and-imagined spaces of the enclaves and the characters in the televisual virtutopias is witnessed in that they turn their backs on the otherness of the city. They turn internally on, and to, themselves shunning the outsider who is deemed a threat. Accordingly the architectural philosophy of the enclave inverts the nostalgic notion of small town Main Street (where shops and houses fronted the major thoroughfare) by building the houses in the enclave facing inward offering their back-yards to the arterial roads that service them. Hillier and McManus (see Gibson & Watson, 1994) state that the effects of these 'special statements of design' (p. 91):

> ..has been to turn the backs of the new houses onto the
> main road adjacent to the public estate and to construct a
> three metre high 'security screen' between them. This
> process thus renders the excluded others less visible from
> the direct sight of the elite..(p. 97)

They also state:

> ..the creation of a walled suburb is encouraged through
> clever marketing which creates the 'need' for such a
> facility by establishing fear of 'the other.(p. 95)

I suggest that the televisual texts such as the news and current affairs can excite these 'fears' but it is in the representations of the communities in the virtutopias of the televisual that dignifies this process by addressing the issue of the outsider as other. In all the textual communities the interloper is seen to threaten the common unity of the group. In Ballykissangel it is in the form of a returned ex-community member Sean Dillon (Lorcan Cranitch) who struggles to be (re)accepted after a twenty-year absence. Similarly in Hamish MacBeth one on-going storyline had the return of MacBeth's girlfriend being seen as a continuing source of de-stabilising intrusion with the inevitable conclusion that for community cohesion she had to be 'absented'. In Heartbeat, however, there is a procession of outsiders who impact upon community unity but who also act to draw the community together inevitably displayed via the communal space of the village pub. By contrast in SeaChange it is the major character herself, Laura Gibson (Sigrid Thornton), who is positioned as the outsider trying to fit hopelessly and haplessly into a community whilst running from the dystopic city which has been the site of the breakdown of her family. This disintegration of the family unit is an important factor because the family is seen as being one of the tropes of community togetherness/participation.

Thus in the textual communities the notion of the outsider as a disruptive force or unsettling agent adds weight to the concept of Kristeva's abject other as discussed by Hillier and McManus (in Gibson & Watson, 1994). They suggest that the abject other is, according to I. M. Young 'too close for comfort' (p. 94) and that they are the 'blacks, the

unemployed, gays, disabled people' (a list to which I might also add: the aged and the teenager), the very types absented from the advertorial copy for the enclave estates and the communities of the virtutopias. Hillier and McManus suggest that these abject others 'exist less as overt repressions, but rather as avoidances, aversions and separations' (p. 94). Thus in the enclaves the walls enact these avoidances whilst in the televisual texts the notion of 'separations' comes into play. In the virtutopias the outsider creeps passed the gatekeeper but is banished as a 'vagrant' might be, forever to inhabit a separate space of aversion.

In the virtual communities of the televisual text the notion of the outsider is toyed with. In SeaChange Laura Gibson is an outsider by virtue of her position as a city-person and domestic misfit. But she is positioned as moving to Pearl Bay in an effort to 're-establish her self worth'. In an interview in The Australian Magazine (June 5-6, 1999) Sigrid Thornton says of the character she plays:

> Laura is a very flawed character with a tremendously long
> learning curve, and I loved the gaping holes in her
> personality. She's struggling with all kinds of life issues on
> a daily basis. It's a very slow journey of self-analysis.(p.
> 29)

The concept of the flawed character trying to establish self worth is just one of the attributes of the outsider that Colin Wilson discusses in his book The Outsider (1978). In the opening paragraph to the chapter entitled 'The Question of Identity' Wilson states:

The outsider is not sure who he [sic] is. 'He has found an "I", but it is not his true "I".' His main business is to find his way back to himself.(p. 147)

In Laura Gibson's case she is seen as working to 'find herself'. In the episode entitled 'Perchance to Dream' she returns to the site of her 'illusionary' self, the city and immediately realises that the community of Pearl Bay "means something" and that she "cares for these people". Sigrid Thornton in the article mentioned above states that one of the factors that makes her so keen on her part in <u>SeaChange</u> is:

> It explores something that I find important in my own life, namely *community and belonging, and a sense of responsibility to* other *human beings*.(p. 28)(my italics)

In this is intimated the notion of community as the comm(on)unity of belonging – a concept reiterated in the virtutopias of the texts and the simultopias of the enclave estates.

One of the other characters in the text who is seen to be, if not actively then, at least covertly, 'looking for himself' is confronted by Laura Gibson. She suggests that the reason he stays in Pearl Bay is because he feels wanted and a part of the community as a whole. The community gives him meaning. This character, 'Diver' Dan (David Wenham) is a self-imposed 'outsider' in, but not of, the community. He is a self-marginalised character who inhabits a vagrant space in, but peripheral to, the community. His sense of belonging and responsibility is diminished due to his position as self-imposed other or outsider. This notion of what I call 'Diver' Dan's 'vagrant spatiality' is alluded to by Wilson (1978) in his discussion of the 'Lawrence enigma'. Wilson suggests that:

> Man is not a unity; he is many. But for anything to be worth doing, he must become a unity. The divided kingdom must be unified. The deluded vision of personality that our Western civilization fosters and glorifies, increases the inward division.(p. 83)

'Diver' Dan represents heterogeneity; he is the 'many' that displays difference in sameness and which in turn unites the community of Pearl Bay. His is a heterotopic vagrancy which by virtue of his self-imposed marginality actually gives meaning to the comm(on)unity of the textual Pearl Bay. But 'Diver' Dan is also what Wilson calls the romantic Outsider. (This concept has nothing to do with the portrayal of Dan as being the 'love interest' for the Laura Gibson character in the text).

Wilson cites William Morris, the socialist Utopianist mentioned above, as being in this category of outsider. He states that the romantic Outsider is a 'dreamer of other worlds'. Wilson suggests, and David Wenham's character attests to it, that the romantic Outsider is 'not very active...because he is essentially a dreamer, 'the idle singer of an empty day'' (p. 49). The 'idle singer' in Morris' poem aptly titled The Earthly Paradise (cited in The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 1970) describes the difference within sameness within the Pearl Bay community. His dreaming usurps the notion of a homogeneity of the sameness in the isolated space of this community. It allows for the insertion of a valid and livable vagrant space of difference to intrude, but not disrupt the notion of good 'community' and by this intrusion suggest a unity and the commonality of difference in sameness.

The virtutopic community of Pearl Bay is both, and at once, imagined and imagineered into being. In the first instance it is the work of the writers, producers, directors and actors (among many others) who imagine the textual community into life. It is they who imagine and transmute an actual small town in Victoria, Barwon Heads, into the sleepy, seaside, holiday community of Pearl Bay perched on the edge of Bass Strait. It is they

who hypothesise the perceptual and conceptual properties of a community which according to the lead actor, Sigrid Thornton: 'In many ways mirrors the Australian way of life' (1999). But it is in the character of Diver Dan that the community is imagineered into a substantive existence. His 'other'-worldliness - in both senses of the term- supposes a unity of, and for, the other characters. His position as dreamer and traveller to foreign lands (in one episode it is said that he 'lived for a time in Japan...and even speaks the language') places him on the margin of the community and seeks to 'exoticise' his character. His combined business and living quarters - a mixed-use space of café, sports store and home is similarly on the periphery being marginalised in its location within the liminal space between the sea and the community to which this space is deemed an other. Diver Dan's isolation within an isolated community is rehearsed in the display of his loneliness. The viewer is informed, over time, of his unhappy childhood at the hands of a brutal father, the abrupt desertion of him by his mother when he was still a child, and his painful divorce. His 'silence' also isolates him (he is a character of few words). Williams (1985) in his discussion on Wordsworth's '..dispossessed, the lonely wanderer, the vagrant' (p. 130) has this to say about the community and the beggar:

> He is not now evidence of community...[O]n the contrary, more truly separated from its life in any direct way, he concentrates in himself, in his actual vagrancy, the community...[T]he spirit of community, that is to say, has been dispossessed and isolated to a wandering...embodiment in the beggar...Thus an essential isolation and silence and loneliness have become the only carriers of...community...(pp 130-131)

Diver Dan however is neither beggar nor dispossessed but he embodies the notions of the masterless man - the vagrant and, as Williams (1985) suggests, it is this embodiment of isolated, silent, loneliness that makes for the display of the unity of the community of

Pearl Bay. Laura Gibson is, in the main, attracted to Diver Dan because of the vagrancy he epitomises. Just as she is drawn to Pearl Bay itself - in its display as the antithesis of the city; the city's vagrant space; somewhere to visit not to stay - she is equally drawn into Dan's vagrant spatiality, a livable spatiality which is in direct opposition to the dead 'lived' spaces of the city and the community spaces of Pearl Bay.

This notion of the vagrant spatiality enacted by the 'Diver' Dan character is not an isolated case in the televisual virtutopias. In Hamish MacBeth it is reiterated in the character of 'TV' John, the illiterate but 'wise' assistant to the main character, MacBeth. That TV John is blessed with 'magical' powers of prophecy immediately positions him in the milieu of the romantic Outsider as well as locating him as otherness/difference. He, like the 'Diver' Dan character, is seen as being self-marginalised, isolated, lonely and a wanderer of sorts and this is witnessed in that he lives in a caravan on the periphery of the village. He is also a rehearsal of difference - a heterotopic character who simply by being close to the village makes a community out of a comm(on)unity. His is the display of difference that makes for sameness; by positing him as an 'other' he unites the display of the we of the village of Lochdubh.

A similar role is reiterated in the other comedramas mentioned above. Thus the character Greengrass in Heartbeat who is positioned as outsider through his display as the wheeling, dealing, 'streetwise', country bumpkin but who via his 'poverty of participation' in the community helps to make it a united one. In the Irish village of Ballykissangel the other to the town community is rehearsed in the character Donal who

is seen as being the outsider via his dim-wittedness and who for a time shares his house with an (ex)performing bear. Even in the Northernly exposed Alaskan town of Cicely it is the character of Chris Stevens the radio disc jockey, ex-convict and ordained minister of the Worldwide Church of Truth and Beauty who is the isolated and lonely bearer of community. The otherness of these various characters point to the utopian aspects of the textual communities. Though quirky and self-marginalised they, the individual characters, in all their difference are accepted by and are an integral part of the community in that in their portrayal the community is made whole. The utopian aspects of these communities are displayed in the portrayal of the integration of difference within the fabric of their societies.

In recent years there have been a few instances where the virtutopian vision is mated with the countryside ideal beginning, as has been noted above, with the Elizabethan pastoral poetry and on through to the 'country house literature' (Williams, 1985; Bunce, 1994) of Austen, the Brontes, T.S.Eliot, Hardy and Trollope. In more recent times in the United Kingdom the radio texts such as The Archers or Mrs. Dales Diary (in Australia their counterpart might be the legendary Blue Hills) have evoked the 'everyday story of country folk' in an almost utopian idyll. Bunce (1994) suggests that these types of texts:

> With their caricatures of country folk and social relations,
> have done much to perpetuate the myth of the village and
> the countryside in general as the last remnant of a happier
> way of life in which all classes co-exist in tolerant
> harmony.(p. 55)

He points to James Herriot's All Creatures Great and Small as being an exemplary example of his observation about village life and the class structure of England (in

Australia a recent ABC production called <u>Something in the Air</u> also dealt with country life and, to a certain extent, the Australian version of the 'class structure'). Williams (1985) makes a similar, if somewhat more acerbic observation: 'Justice and overseer, landlord and bailiff, *belonged in a common* and dominant world' (p. 86)(my italics). He then underscores this by saying that the position of the landowner, his wife, 'endowed son' and 'prospecting daughter':

> rested on the brief and aching lives of the permanently cheated: the field labourers..the dispossessed and the evicted; all the men and women whose land and work paid their fares and provided their spending money.(p. 54)

Thus the otherness and difference of the 'field labourers' made for the 'common' bond of the justice, overseer, landlord and bailiff. But this is a somewhat more chilling and possibly more accurate picture than Bunce paints when he states:

> In many respects the realities of country life...have become steadily more appreciated and understood by educated society. Yet the literary perspective is not easily dislodged from English culture. There remains in the popularity of its contemporary exponents and, even more obviously in the...television dramatisation of the earlier classics of the genre, a fascination for the old rural order which is perhaps more than just historical curiosity.(p. 56)

It is from these elements: the literary perspective and the fascination for an old rural order which have aided in the production and popularity of the televisual virtutopias of contemporary times. Williams (1985) suggests that in the (literary) texts: 'What is idealised is not the rural economy, past or present' (p. 47) and advises that what is on offer is the: 'rentier's vision' and that the country estate and village 'that is sought is not that of the working farmer but of the fortunate resident' (p. 47).

Two final observations from Williams might assist in 'placing' the virtutopian texts to be discussed. The first observation can be used to address a text which was at once an arrival at the televisual virtutopia and also a departure from the form exemplified in <u>All Creatures Great and Small</u> toward a new form in the contemporary texts such as <u>SeaChange</u> and <u>Heartbeat</u>. This arrival/departure is witnessed in the televisual text <u>The Darling Buds of May</u> and Williams in his discussion of the contrast between the city and the country states:

> The means of agricultural production - the fields, the woods, the growing crops, the animals - are attractive to the observer and, in many ways and in good seasons, to the men working in and among them. They can then be effectively contrasted with the exchanges and counting-houses of mercantilism...[T]hat contrast, in many ways, still holds in experience.(p. 46)

The contrast Williams notes and the notion of agricultural production is very much to the fore in the episode of <u>The Darling Buds of May</u> entitled 'A Season of Heavenly Gifts'. The second quote deals more with the contemporary virtutopias named above. In this Williams follows through with his notion of the contrasting sites but this time it is not so much between the urban and the rural:

> but a purchased freehold house in the country, or 'a charming coastal retreat', or even 'a barren offshore island'. This is then not a rural but a suburban or dormitory dream.(p. 47)

Thus Williams' quote applies to the texts addressed in this section; the coastal retreat of <u>SeaChange</u> or the 'barren' highlands of <u>Hamish MacBeth</u> is easily identified as being applicable here.

The 'Perfeck' Place.

One of televisions vanguards in the display of the virtutopia was that of the small screen adaptation of H. E. Bates' The Darling Buds of May. This text set in the early 1950s harks back to earlier myths of the efficacious rural community which Raymond Williams (1985) in The Country and the City traces through the poetry and prose of England's canonical literature. In one of his opening paragraphs he has this to say: 'On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue' (p. 1). Later on in his discussion he extends this observation by seeing this 'innocence, peace and virtue' as a 'myth functioning as memory' (p. 43) and as 'retrospect as aspiration' because:

> such an idea is drawn not only from the Christian idea of
> the Garden of Eden - the simple, natural world before the
> Fall - but also from a version of the Golden Age.(p. 42)

These oft cited notions are extended by Williams in which the rural utopia is one:

> in which not only innocence and security but peace and
> plenty have been imprinted, indelibly, first on a particular
> landscape, and then, in a powerful extension, on a
> particular period of the rural past, which is now connected
> with a lost identity, lost relations and lost certainties.(p.
> 139)

Thus the televisual virtutopia of The Darling Buds of May imagineers this age of innocence and security via the firstspatial, perceptual mis-en-scene while imagining with the viewer 'their' space within this landscape via the conceptual 'perspective' (to borrow from Williams) of the setting.

The opening sequence of the text rehearses how it is to be read. The mis-en-scene describes a large country house and as Bunce (1994) points out: 'Running through the history of the country place there is a strong current of romantic idealism about nature, land and country life' (p.101). But this country place is a working farmhouse complete with the mechanical equipment of trucks, tractors and threshing machines and barnyard animals. However, this visual notion of farm as productive site of work is tempered by the romantic idealism of the large 'family' gathered about an outside dining table which is bounteously covered with food and drink in a representation of the Eden of the Cockaygne (see Kumar,1987, 1991); the beautified (and arranged) 'country' garden of the son-in-laws' 'cottage' (see Williams, 1985; Bunce 1994); and the ivy covered walls of the main house. It is these oppositions in the text which inform the notion of the arrival of the contemporary virtutopia and the departure of the romantic idealised rural community. It thus can be read as a text that works with the concept of the vagrant space of the televisual virtutopia to address the 'poverty of participation' of the contemporary community of the enclave estates.

It is to be noted here that the use of this particular episode with reference to any of the others is selective. However, I think that it is also strongly indicative of the general tenor of all the episodes in this television series if not that of H. E. Bates' written texts themselves. It should be noted as well that the title of this particular text 'A Season of Heavenly Gifts' whilst relating directly to aspects of the storyline could also be read as a commentary on certain aspects of Kumar's (1991) discussion of Utopianism, especially in relation to the Cockaygne with its: 'absence of scarcity and the joyful abundance of all

that is desired - especially food and sex' (p. 18). That this is the vision repeatedly on offer in the virtutopia of The Darling Buds of May can hardly be argued against, neither can Kumar's assertion of utopia as being:

> The Paradisiacal image of a peaceful garden, with its fruits, trees, water, birds and other animals, is the perfect representation of this condition of primal innocence and natural harmony. In so far as utopia strives for stability, for an order of unchanging perfection, then Paradise and the Golden Age are the images that underpin this vision.(p.18)

Thus images and signifiers of Paradise and the Golden Age underpin the imagined utopian spaces of this particular text with the visualisation of innocence and 'natural' harmony being exemplified in the images of the garden in the opening sequence. Kumar suggests that: 'in utopia we are shown the good society in operation' (p. 31) but he also adds that a utopian: 'view of the good life is affected by the contemporary reality in which it appears' (p. 48). The reality playing on the edges of the selected episode of The Darling Buds of May dally with the 'fears' of the 1950s, the invasion into the community of the fateful otherness of disease (in the form of smallpox), as well as the fear across the years since, of the Other of the uncontrollable 'youth' and the despotic land developer - all of which have as their place of (de)generation the image of the dystopic city.

Zygmunt Bauman (1995) discusses this particular notion of 'degeneration' in his book Life in Fragments. In a section called 'The Body as Task' he cites Daniel Pick's extract from Faces of Degeneration (1989) and states:

> that the development of the nineteenth-century medical sciences and practises can best be understood against the background of that century's 'degeneration panic'.(p.168)

He cites the war against disease as being what the 'biological sciences and technologies...originated, promoted and monitored' (p.169). The Darling Buds of May alludes to this with the scenes describing the mass inoculation of the villagers against a small pox epidemic. The inference is that the affliction has had its inception in, and spread from, the diseased city. Bauman goes on to say:

> The medical profession was determined to find out and demonstrate that each disease has its cause, so that each disease could be fought (and, hopefully defeated) by singling out and eliminating that single and eliminable cause.(p.170)

This assumption harks back to the discussion earlier in this thesis about the notion of the garden suburb as being the exemplar of moralistic behaviour with the city being found to be the cause of this degeneration panic.

Similarly in The Darling Buds of May the city is positioned as being the cause of (future) degeneration. As we have seen just as the degeneracy of the faces of the inhabitants of the Rocks is caused by the chaotic buildings and higgledy-piggledy streets, then these diseased sites were inevitably the result of overcrowding. A similar scenario arose in England, but much earlier, with the displaced villager and farm worker - displaced in the main by the enclosure of the commons (see Williams, 1985; Bunce 1994) pouring into the ever-growing (and diseased) city. Donzelot (1979) adds to the discussion:

> In their struggle against the insanitariness and immorality of these hovels and caves, the hygienists were also struggling against a conception of the dwelling as refuge, a place of defence and autonomy. For them it was a question of...making housing into...no longer a 'military' space, of ridding it of everything that made for secret alliances and dubious combinations.(p. 41)

In The Darling Buds of May the threat(s) to the community is linked to what comes from the city. The insanitariness of the chaotic buildings and overcrowding found in the urban slums is signified by the threat of the smallpox epidemic (and before that malaria). The city is thus assumed as the antithesis of the clean, ordered and open, and therefore healthy, countryside. Similarly the city is seen as a type of military space of secret alliances and dubious combinations rehearsed in the connection between the aggressive and threatening 'ton-up boys' and the unscrupulous land developer. Thus disease, whether in the form of the epidemic, the bikie gang or the land developer who is 'responsible for those nasty little shops down there in Ashford' is the other to the 'perfeck' place of the rural/rustic space. As Bauman, citing Sander Gilman (1985) puts it: 'The Other...was both ill and infectious, both damaged and damaging' (p. 171) a perfect synopsis of the three threats to the village of the text.

The city as represented by the three threats is also an indicator of the threat to the rural community of modernity. This comes in three forms: intimidating technology (the ton-up boys); the consumption (and enclosure) of the land in pursuit of the accumulation of wealth by an outsider or other (the land developer); and, as Bauman puts it, the 'scandal of modernity' (p. 168) of disease and death. The latter has already been addressed above, now attention needs to be turned to the technology aspects and the consumption (and abuse of) the land.

In the opening sequence of the TV episode the viewer is confronted with a mis-en-scene of rusted and abandoned farm equipment. The only seemingly operable mechanical

device is an old blue truck. In fact throughout the text, the main character and head of the textual family, Sydney Larkin (David Jason) vacillates between this truck and a bright yellow vintage Rolls Royce. The colours of the vehicles are an indicator of Larkin's response to 'technology'. As a signifier of its use value the bright blue truck is hardly synonymous with that of a rural working vehicle. It is more in keeping with a pleasure vehicle. Similarly the Rolls Royce, its bright yellow colour being more a badge of whimsy than of wealth can be read as a signifier of pleasure in comfort and use more than a means of pride in possession. These possessions therefore articulate a certain comfort with the consumption of technology - they invoke a more composed time with the truck indicating, via its colour, the pleasure and satisfaction to be gained in honest (individual) toil and with the Rolls Royce being the reward to be had through this gratifying activity.

Against these notions is the technology of the motorcycle and the ton-up boys. Theirs is a technology of speed and violence - one that pushes the artefact to its limits removing the pleasure to be gained by looking at the landscape through a sedately moving window to a focus on the individual and the road, blurring the perspective in an effort to absent it. Man and machine become as one and this is reiterated in the ton-up boys uniformity of clothing; the black leather jackets and trousers which match the colour of their machines. Thus, the ton up boys signify an undifferentiated 'sameness' – not only between themselves but also between man and machine. The man/machine conjunction also suggests a violence that is immediate and conclusive whereas nature describes a slow and essential (but not necessarily final) degeneration.

The notion of the city and speed being coupled with violence is witnessed in the destructiveness and disregard the ton-up boys have for the countryside and its people. They try to destroy the son in law, Charlie's (Philip Franks) hop garden; they at various times verbally and physically assault village members; they get drunk and argue among themselves; and finally they threaten and lock up the young Girl Guides of the village in the barn. But this violence is also an indicator of the move away from notions of the efficacy of the community suggested in the simple rural village to a concept of the poverty of participation in the community in general. The sub-text here is of the privatisation of the individual, the turning inward and away from the collective to a more selfish perspective exemplified by speed and the motorbike. The latter offers the ability to blur everything outside of one-self so that the external other (the landscape and people) become just a mass of sameness devoid of contact with difference. In contrast Pa Larkin's mode of transport(s) allows him to take in the nuances of the differences that reside in the sameness (of landscape, village or people).

This notion of sameness/difference is offered in the character of the land developer, Mr. Cope. In this character we have the twin notions of the city other as well as the foreign other which, as Bauman puts it: 'have been made to measure for the sought-after signified for the 'Danger, beware' signifier. These may be foreigners, 'alien bodies' exactly like the assumed causes of death'(p. 177). At the hands of the 'foreign other' Mr. Cope the 'corpse' will be the village community and the land. Thus Mr. Cope is displayed in his sudden arrival and his foreignness (he is described as being Polish but with an anglicised name - seeking to eradicate his difference by embracing sameness) as

one of Bauman's 'vagabonds without a permanent abode, constantly on the move, precisely like the evasive causes of death they came to symbolise' (p. 177). Although a 'vagabond' he is the antithesis of the theoretical vagrant that has been offered elsewhere in that Cope's vagabondage seeks to destroy the communities which are made complete by difference. In the text it is said that Cope fabricates Levittown communities of unrelenting sameness, the mind numbing homogeneity of which is inferred in Pa Larkin's dismissal of him as being 'responsible for the nasty little shops' (The little boxes of ticky-tacky described in popular song). These oft-derided little shops/boxes are the beginning of the degeneration of the community. This coupled with Mr. Cope's obvious wealth (the large house where he is staying, the chauffeur-driven American car) are remarked upon, in the text, by Charlie's recitation of lines from a poem by Oliver Goldsmith: 'Ill fares the land/ to hastening ills a prey/ When wealth accumulates / and men decay'.

In the character of Pa Larkin we see the embodiment of what Bunce calls:

> all the elements of rural nostalgia, from rustic farm
> characters and earthy agricultural customs to the eccentric
> squirearchy and the parochial village community.(p. 49)

In both his presentation and his character Pa Larkin epitomises the idealised nostalgia of the countryside community. He is positioned as both 'yokel' and country squire - humble but benevolently generous. He is therefore inevitably seen as the leisured, landed gentry (he offers part of his land to the Girl Guides to use as a camping site) and the rascally, but in the end 'honest country bumpkin'. This is described when he inadvertently helps the 'upper class' Wing Commander to smuggle goods into the country and then conceals his knowledge of this from the custom agents when they stop him. However, his honesty is

restated as vouch-safe when in the final scenes he gives the stolen money (the ill-gotten gains of an unscrupulous land developer) to the police. His display of integrity places him as the good family man, and by extrapolation, the conscientious community member, but he is also positioned as the 'earthy' highly sexed lover, a type of rustic Lothario who attracts women of all ages and types. In this the binary oppositions in Pa's character equal a 'balance' – a balance which is echoed in the textual community which encompasses the old (the Colonel, the Nurse) and the young (the girl guides, the Larkin children) who come together to defeat the destabilising effects of the outsiders.

Pa Larkin's character also addresses two concepts that Thomas and Cresswell (1973) suggest are necessary for a successful community: self-containment and balance. In relation to the latter the Larkin family (as representative of a whole community) can be read as a balanced community. There is a symmetry to the family, in a physical, as well as textual sense. Textually this balance is witnessed through the display of the characters of the Larkin children, with the twins being the most visual reminder of the balance. There is also displayed in the text the balance of the modern with that of the antiquated with the signifier of the son in law, Charlie as the ideal of the city/village combination as witnessed in the master planned suburbia and Pa Larkin as representative of the bygone (golden) era of the independent farmer/landlord. That the Larkins are self-contained can not be debated. They are not only self-contained but are self-sustaining, but they are not inward looking in this aspect. They are positioned as being in touch with the larger community of the communisphere, especially when considered in relation to the other virtutopian texts. Although the Larkin family, and especially Pa, offer a vision of the

livable communisphere they tend not to deal with the issue of the vagrant, be-coming space. As was mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, <u>The Darling Buds of May</u> can be read as both a departure from the nostalgic notions of community, leading to the more encompassing concept of the communisphere, and also an arrival at the heart of the idealised utopian 'community' of comm(on)unity.

To return to <u>Seachange.</u> The characters in this text tend to rehearse more 'anti-utopian' attributes when it comes to self-containment and balance. There is no doubt that the community as a whole in <u>SeaChange</u> can be regarded as balanced – the disparate age groups which are on display in the text vouch for this. However, the attributes of the individual characters tend to belie this notion of balance and stability with a prominent trace of 'quirkyness' being a major factor. This quirkyness tends to expose otherness and the acute difference of, and within, the personalities of the characters. This brings forth a more defined notion of the negotiation of the fourthspatial. If the characters are less balanced this enables a vision of the vagrant space to peep through the text which might suggest that because of the difference within sameness of the characters of Pearl Bay a more livable and participatory community might evolve.

In the chapter to follow we will revisit and expand upon the issues which were looked at in relation to <u>SeaChange</u> and <u>The Darling Buds of May</u>. The American made sitcom <u>M*A*S*H</u> – an enduring and popular TV show of the 70s and 80s and one which is still being scheduled by the networks throughout the world - will be the basis for this discussion. This text takes the notion of the segregated 'enclave' estate (in this case an

army hospital camp in Korea) and the 'residents' (the doctors, nurses and corpsmen) and offers an insight into the workings of a conjured community, the poverty of participation within this community and the idea that the first and secondspaces of the perceived and conceived spaces makes for a thirdspace which is a dead space is addressed with regard to the various characters. That there is a vagrant fourthspace that is a *be-coming* space of the livable in the text will be the focus of the discussion.

Chapter Five •

Watching the sitcom: Community, communisphere and the poverty of participation in M*A*S*H.

Lynn Spigel (1992) in her essay <u>The Suburban Home Companion: Television and the Neighborhood Ideal in Postwar America</u> suggests that 'given its ability to merge private with public spaces, television was the ideal companion for these suburban homes (p. 188). She goes on to say: 'television sitcoms pictured romanticized versions of neighbor and family bonding' (p. 202) and she later adds '*I Love Lucy*, is a perfect-and typical-example of the importance attached to the theme of neighborhood bonding in the programs' (p. 203). At one point she states: 'It is a truism among cultural historians and media scholars that television's growth after World War II was part of a general return to family values' (p. 186). With these quotes in mind I would like to investigate the notions of the sitcom and family and community relations from the perspective of the contemporary sitcom and suggest that this genre offers a Janus-faced look at the family and the community. To help situate the discussion a brief perusal of the formative years in the relationship of the suburb and television will be undertaken.

From the beginning of the 50s the rise of suburbia and the ubiquitous shopping mall was mirrored by the rise in television receiver ownership and the popularity of the situation comedy and the soap opera shows. In 1953 one in five Americans lived in the suburbs and this exurban growth was expanding at fifteen times the rate of the rural and metropolitan regions of the rest of the country (Jones, 1992, p. 88). Similarly at the end of

1948, when television was introduced to the mass market in America there were just a half a million sets, but by 1950 this had increased to over six million. But was this parallel merely coincidental? Perhaps not.

Television and suburbia helped in formulating the nuclear family by stabilising people drawn away from their extended families and familiar neighbourhoods. Lack of appropriate housing and rising crime rates in the decaying urban landscape of the major metropolitan centres gave rise to the exodus toward the new frontiers of the subdivision and the 'Jeffersonian' ideal. This quite often meant crossing the continent, leaving behind family and friends and in this context the nuclear family became significantly important (see Spigel, 1992). The decentring of the cities meant that more work opportunities were arising in the new 'centres' and the infrastructure of the suburbs, mainly the freeway systems, saw more people pursue the 'American Dream' of home ownership. This, coupled with the purchase of automobiles fuelled by easy credit, and growing job security and affluence, meant surplus cash for leisure spending. The absence of any immediate, extended relational networks forced the segregated family inward on itself. The fathers/husbands more often than not commuted to a workplace located at a distance from the home - the business districts at this time still being firmly entrenched in, or around, the major city of the region. Thus after-work workplace relationships became difficult to manage as each worker dispersed to their various and scattered suburbs. Commuting also became a time-consuming exercise leaving little room for friendship formulation at the neighbourhood level and because of this there resulted a social gap to be filled, and television, in the form of the sitcom did this.

If suburbia separated isolated people confining them in the private spaces of their lounges and family rooms, then the ever-increasing, ever-present television brought the public space to them. As Lynn Spigel (1992) suggests in he discussion on the 'televised neighbour':

> They helped ease what must have been for many Americans a painful transition from the city to the suburb. But more than simply supplying a tonic for displaced suburbanites, television promised something better: it promised modes of spectator pleasure premised upon the sense of an illusory-rather than a real-community of friends..But it also maintained ideals of community togetherness and social interconnection by placing the community *at a fictional distance.* (p. 205)

Thus suburbia and television seemed to be made for each other with television becoming a tool people used to teach them how to live in suburbia. The pedagogic performance of the 'three R's' of the televisual 'elementary school' became: reflection, reciprocation and recital. The modern suburbanite was portrayed on TV as a citizen of 'small town' America with this being associated with the rural small town and as such the antithesis of the city. This 'enclave' which was seen as friendly and family oriented was constantly made familiar through media representations. The nexus of the suburban and the televisual suburbia reflected these values to each other in a reciprocal nightly recital of an act of reassurance and reparation. The merging of the two, suburb and small town, a type of 'utopian fantasy of space-binding' (Spigel, 1992, p. 203), suggested a liminal zone between the frontier and the future, a fantasy land where tradition met modernity, where a firstspatial *place* for a fresh start and a secondspatial *sense* of belonging were married. The T.V. suburbia and the suburbia of the T.V. age was Walt Disney's Main Street

actualized as a 'Disneyville': the fresh start of Tomorrowland and the sense of belonging found in Frontierland were entered via the Main Street of suburbia. Just as Disney built his first theme park as a prescriptive model for a 'family park where parents and children could have fun together' (Marling, 1994, p. 95) the TV, and especially the soap and sitcom texts screened nightly, were seen in a similar light. Gerard Jones (1992) in his book <u>Honey I'm Home: Sitcoms: Selling the American Dream,</u> quotes a more succinct and direct industry advertisement: 'Family Time is Prime Time' (p. 91) and prime time usually incorporated the situation comedy, a nascent tv genre which invariably was about idealised suburban nuclear families of Mom, Dad and a pair of pre-pubescent children. The sitcom and soaps became the advertisements for the consumer product known as the 'American Dream'.

In the introduction to his book Jones (1992) surveys the attributes of the sitcom genre. These he lists as (pp 4, 5):

- The sitcom as corporate product.
- The sitcom as a mirror.
- The sitcom as daydream.
- The sitcom as teacher.

These characteristics are inter-related so that the sitcom as mirror and as teacher are seen as models of how the family should be. However, the sitcom as daydream and corporate product are the indicators of the rise of the consumer culture within suburbia: a trope which made for the diffusion of suburbia itself. But these two areas of pedagogic reflection and the fantasy product were involved with deeper concerns - mainly to

promote a homogenous, normalised community and discourage the deviant and delinquent notions residing in the heterogeneous. Thus Jones' list of the ideals upheld by the didactic and the daydream include: (i) consensus and compromise benefit all (homogeneity is the normalised state of things); (ii) ideology and self interest get in the way (heterogeneity is deviance and a constant threat); (iii) the boss is the boss who must be respected (patriarchy is a given); (iv) there is no conflict between various interests (delinquency is dangerous); and (v) disagreement is the end product of bad communication (the 'speaking as' - the individual voice in a multivocal situation has to be silenced in favour of the 'speaking for' of the homogenous unity) (see Spivak, 1990).

The binary 'balances' admitted to here support the status quo and there are two distinct applications of the primary (transparent) one of display and the secondary (opaque) one of the hidden. These can be called the foreground and background areas and the work of the text is to proffer the foreground at the denial of the background. The consensus of patriarchy and the speaking for position are prescribed while heterogeneity, delinquency and the speaking-as are proscribed. The foreground is the *sight* of safe, exclusionary 'community' of sameness while the back is the *site* of the potentially more unstable, but inclusionary communisphere. The mis-en-scene of the foregrounded attributes promote a means to present a civil and commendable (familial) unity which, by extrapolation, would become a comm(on)-*unity*. These ideals are reflected in various approaches in the sitcom from the early days of <u>Ozzie and Harriet</u> through to the contemporary text, <u>Friends</u>. Jones concludes his introductory chapter by stating:

> All entertainment has hidden meanings, revealing the
> nature of the culture that created it...Through sitcoms we

can trace the hopes and concerns of the majority of
Americans over the past forty-five years. (p. 6)

Touring the Sitcom: The Familia(l)r Museum.

The hopes and concerns mentioned in Jones' list of characteristics are the items in our

luggage which we will take on our tour of the (real-and-)imagined spaces of the sitcom

community; hand-baggage which will be 'unpacked' as our tour progresses. This journey

then is, what I call, the *touristic* model of the sitcom and has its genesis in the work of

Dean MacCannell (1976). In his book, <u>The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class</u>,

MacCannell often refers to the notion of the *touristic consciousness,* which he asserts is

'motivated by its desire for authentic experiences' (p. 101). As mentioned elsewhere in

these pages these 'authentic' experiences involve the tourists entry into a 'back region' or

'back stage' - a work or work-related area usually off limits to the tourist. Examples of

such areas are the working factory and farms, the kitchens of restaurants, projection

rooms at a cinema, or as MacCannell (1976) cites, even the sewers of a big city.

Bennett's (1995) discussion on museums suggests that this is, in principle, the opening of

the workings of the back-stages of the community 'to that of everyone' (p. 65). These

areas were opened to inspection, at specified times, to all groups including such diverse

assemblages as schoolchildren, local and visiting dignitaries, documentary makers or

simply the curious.

In contemporary times there is an increasing tendency to open the back regions in an act

of 'show and tell' and to 'market' them as authentic work areas. The extreme example of

this is the 'living history' sites (see Kuntsler, 1993) but a more common everyday place is the restaurant 'kitchen'. This back-stage is relocated into the 'front of house' as a focal point in an attempt to utilise the first and second spatialities of the perceived and conceived to advance the notion of the Lefebvrian 'lived' space - a simulacra of a livable space. The 'lived' space is therefore a single-minded space, a hyper-reality where what is on display is usually the 'show' or spectacle of the act of cooking. The open-minded space of the livable/liminal spatiality of fourthspace is more likely to be found in the preparation work-area where the more mundane cleaning, cutting and washing, the 'authentic' work of the kitchen, is left hidden from the spectator in the back region. The latter then is an open-minded spatial example of the Foucauldian heterotopia, where anger, laughter, love, lust, as well as many other un-named moments can fleetingly emerge. This (hidden) back space, when thought of in these terms changes and charges the other spaces - the space of the on-display worker, the consumer, the passer-by. Invariably fourthspace is only emergent when thought of or confronted in its burning brevity and although these are often transient moments, there is scope for a more planned, structured livable space to be found in the recognition and 'ownership' of a marginalised 'speaking-as' position. An elementary example to cite is the space of the gay or lesbian, whether outed or not. This is a heterotopia of the speaking-as, livable space that has the potential to transform a type of space into an an-other space by practice. The first and second spaces, the physical and the conceptual in the public spheres (think of the space of the Mardi Gras) and private environment (the conjoining of the spaces of house and home) are changed, as are also the other interconnected spaces around them.

The back-for-front rearrangement is, in the main, a sleight-of-hand which inverts the surveilling, panoptical strategies of space - regulation by being visible to an unseen other - invested in the firstspatialities of the physical architecture of the site, (and which are supported by the secondspatialities of conceptual spaces) and replacing them with the notion of a space where everyone can see everything and everyone. Therefore, as everything becomes knowable through a shared scopophilia then everything is collaboratory and communal. This is the false 'lived' space of self-regulation through supposed non-regulation - disempowerment (of individuality) by co-operational exposition. This inversion informs notions of the illusionary consensual community - participatory, pleasingly performative, and engagingly interactive. By constructing a counterfeit (lived) third space through spectacle the 'show and tell rehearsal' disguises the poverty of participation of the individual in community. Thus the ideational 'lived community' negates the concept of the communisphere of livable space. The spectacle is a *speaking for* 'act' of consensual community not a *speaking as* act inherent in notions of the liminal communisphere. Any semblance of individuality (a becoming) is reworked as a participatory collective (an as is). Thus more often than not the 'authenticated' back regions the 'tourist' is allowed to see are in fact front regions staged-managed to look like back areas to dissemble the problematic of participatory community. (The 'hidden' back-stage is 'free' from surveillance and as so *becomes* a potential disruptive space). MacCannell points out an example of these tourist settings: 'The exhibitions of the *back regions of the world* at Disneyland in Anaheim, California are constructed only for sightseers, however, and can be called "stage sets"'. (p. 100)(my italics)

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The back regions of the world infer the 'actual' other spaces of 'livedness'. This is the space of the anthropologist's language of the 'real village' that they, as outsiders, are privileged to enter and share. The privileged viewpoint, a type of dominant specularity, states that this is the reality of how and where *they* (the other) live(d). But as Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto (1994) commenting on Tokyo Disneyland in Images of Empire says of the 'absent' back-stage:

> An(other)... aspect of the Magic Kingdom is the absolute separation of leisure from work. Any menial work, which is necessary for maintaining the proper functioning of Disneyland, is carefully hidden from the visible surface of the park. Disneyland is constructed in such a way that the "back-stage" would never be exposed to the visitors' eyes.
> (p. 189)

These notions of the show and tell *set* can best be approached in an examination of the enclave estate display or 'show' home and the small 'tactics of the family'.

The display home is an empty accumulating museum-like space where time is absented and first and second space validated. Open for inspection and fully decorated with all the fixtures and fittings of an 'authentic' home, it is frequently found to have 'momentoes' of a fictitious 'family' - the small tactics of photographs, toys, and books strategically placed throughout. The first and second spatialities - the physical *house* and the conceptual *home* - work together here with the perceived space - the house - taking a back seat during the 'tour'. The conceived spatiality takes precedence imagining and imagineering a family and community by reworking and refining collective memories, nostalgic images and mediated daydreams found in the 'supermarket' magazines, sitcoms and soapies. Firstspace, however, comes into prominence in the associated 'New Homes'

advertisements that invariably banish from view the family or individual. Communisphere is absented in both the (imagined) advertisements and the (real) show home, and 'community' is selected and surveilled as it struggles to the fore (sub)alter(n)ing the nostalgic and traditional notion of the family by the prominent placing of the artefacts of consumption and lifestyle of the panoptically positioned 'family'. The livable/liminal space of family is displayed as (always/already) lived space. Kim Dovey (1994) in Dreams on Display states:

> The model 'home' (it is never called a 'house') is furnished to the last detail - table set for dinner, champagne beside the spa...(it) is a mirror in which a suburban subject is constructed, which at once reflects and reproduces the great Australian Dream. It is a mirror in which we might read the suburban condition and the cultural values that drive it. (pp. 127, 128)

The palimpsestial, 'authenticated' display home, ever over-written by the developers, advertisers, salespeople and its 'tourists' and peopled only by the conjured *aura* of the non- and absented family is in fact a *model* and a *sight*. It is a marker and a monument, a touristic single-minded *set* of a private back region foregrounded. The term 'set' is apt here. As Dovey points out, citing a part of an advertising text for a display home: 'Someone should shout 'lights, cameras, action' as you sweep down the stair case..' (p. 127). The display home and the sitcom are closely related as models, monuments and sets for a type of touristic reflection, reciprocation and recital on a way of life and a set of values supposedly residing in the (ideal of) family and by extension, the (ideal) 'community'. Both the fake family in the display home and the conjured construction of the family of the sitcom text are used as a reflection of a consensual notion of the ideal reiterated in the 'show and tell'. But if the family is 'missing' in the show home it is very

much in place in the sitcom. Jones' notion of the sitcom as mirror can be read as the sitcom as the site/sight of a back region that opens up an area for an appraisal of the construction of self, family, community and nation. Jones says of the sitcom: '...(but) one of its functions has always been to show the American family to itself, *to open an alternate family room* within our own, to let us stop and check ourselves...'(p. 5)(my italics)

Here then is the notion of the *tourist consciousness* of the viewer and the sitcom as *sight* and *marker* of the 'ideal' suburban family or community. The conceptual family is heralded as being the mainstay of, and model for, modern society. It is synecdochal - concentrating the values and meanings of a whole community or society into one nuclear group. But modern everyday life fragments families into isolated, private cliques divorced from the participatory public arena (see Habermas, 1970). This dislocation and privatisation of the family removes the model from the realm of public scrutiny disempowering its didactic role. The privatised family, hidden behind fences and locked doors, is unable to be seen or *experienced* but what is offered is a discursive substitute, a marker, for the experience - the sitcom. By substituting tourist for viewer one can see how touristic consciousness is a component of the sitcom text. MacCannell offers:

> The tourist [viewer] comports himself "as if" he has seen the things...It is through his sightseeing that he enters into a relationship to society...Since popular consciousness has a pronounced bias in favour of "experience" as the main route to understanding, it is through sightseeing that the tourist [viewer] demonstrates...that he is not alienated from society. (p. 68)

The first- and secondspatialities work hand in glove here to offer a metanarrative of the authentic. The perceived *sight* and the conceived *site* confer an authenticity onto the experience of the 'lived' space which dismisses ideas of alienation - the poverty of participation - and promotes associational community. The spatial site/sight of sightseeing removes notions of the livable/liminal of the heterotopia of communisphere and in its stead offers a (pre-) lived 'dead' space of the temporal. This is a reversal of the commonly held notion that space is dead and time is fluid. The privileging of the first and second spaces suggests community by proximity - again the 'speaking-for' - and the 'speaking-as' voice of community by affiliation is absented. The site/sight therefore re-enacts the three 'rs': reflection, reciprocation and recital to absent fourthspace.

The sitcom is the site/sight of what MacCannell (1976) might call 'the spurious side of the social structure' of society (p. 147). The model, as it were, becomes a testimonial to the authenticated family which is a dramatised reminder of the 'authentic' rurally inflected one located somewhere other, someplace else. This distanced spatial relocation offers a clarity and coherence to the idea of the family, which becomes a desirable nostalgic 'attraction'. The sitcom describes a searching for, and finding of, an idealised family or community located in a nowspace of an 'elsewhere'. The sitcom home is always/already there, always/already lived. This imagined entity becomes a fixed point for self, familial and communal identification and the sitcoms become the accumulating and palimpsestial spaces of familial spatialities. The dramatisation of the family in the sitcom represents the continuities in and of the family and community spaces of the past within the present. The sitcom as site/sight is a symbolic marker for the family as

monument and the viewer as touristic sightseer visits the sitcom site/sight in an effort to 'meaningfully experience' it (MacCannell, p. 112). Spigel states: 'Television provided an illusion of the ideal neighborhood - the way it was supposed to be' (p. 202). However, as MacCannell asserts:

The ideas we have about the things we see are *already organised* before we see them in terms of the sight-marker relationship...Interestingly, just seeing a sight is not a touristic experience...An authentic touristic experience involves not merely connecting a marker to a sight, *but a participation in a collective ritual*, in connecting *one's own marker* to a sight already *marked by others*. (pp. 136, 137)(my italics)

The 'site' is obviously the firstspace of the physical whereas one's own marker - the sight - consists of the mediated images, memories and memoirs, reminiscences and re-presentations (palimpsestial markers of others) of the conceived secondspace. Therefore, the participatory aspect here is not with, or in, the community but with the *ritual* associated with the markers of conjured community. These rituals may involve the collective and palimpsestial moments such as the work-place discussions of the previous evenings programmes, the buying of the *souvenirs* of the show - the related literature and fanzines, or the hire or purchase of videos of the text. The acquisition of these souvenirs is an individual response to the collectiveness of the shared ritual of what MacCannell calls *sight sacralization*. He quotes Erving Goffman's definition of ritual as being an act in 'which an individual portrays his respect and regard for some object of ultimate value to its stand in'(p. 42). The first (physical) and second (ideational) spaces create the ritualised social space through sacralisation of first- and secondspatialities. The ritual is the stage at which the stand in object (marker) becomes sacralised, if not sanctified in a

Lefebvrian 'lived' space. Goffman's and MacCannell's ritual and touristic concepts can be applied to the sitcom as 'attraction' marker (perceived) and sacralised (conceived) site of the 'lived' 'family'. The pedagogically 'ritualised' model in the First- and Secondspatialities of this type of family leave little room for a perusal of the interstitial space of the livable family - the heterotopias of the household.

The connecting of the sacralised markers of family or community in the sitcom relies upon shared (ritual) notions of the imagined pre-modern, pre-industrial, pre-lapsarian, rural or small town model - a marker of a valued and authentic ideal proposed in politics, films and literature, past and present. This is a type of collective and over-inscribed morphic resonance with the bygone imagined communities, a strategic colonisation of livable spaces by first- and secondspatialities. But as with any colonising space the colonised are able to negotiate the fissures and fractures and discontinuities - the fleeting moments of fourthspace - bringing into view the difference difference makes. The display of differentiated difference in the mediated images provokes discussions of the loss of community and the devaluing of the family due to the 'interregnum' moments of recognition of the contemporary family as being an an-other to the nuclear norm of sameness. MacCannell suggests: 'The origin of the attraction in the collective consciousness is not always so obvious as it is when a society *dramatizes* its values and capabilities.'(p. 42)(my italics). The monuments of sameness are literally dramatised in the sitcoms and soaps but the livable/liminal fourthspace moments (of postmodernism? post-colonialism?) invert the sitcom as 'attraction' changing the utopian visions of family residing in the collective consciousness. The 'sacralised site' of the sitcom of the

normalised family (eg. <u>The Cosby Show</u>) gives way to images of the dystopic 'post-familial' family of <u>Roseanne</u> and <u>The Simpsons</u>. The poverty of participation of community in these instances is not hidden but displayed (celebrated) in a carnivalesque space reminiscent of the dysfunctional aspects (Punch and Judy, The Beast Boy etc.) seen in the Foucauldian travelling fairs (see Bennett, 1995). In a similar fashion the gay and lesbian Mardi Gras, a popular 'sight' is a coming together of the core and the marginalised where the margins are given a 'speaking-as' position. But it is still a 'site' for an enacting of the poverty of participation in the accepted norms of a 'speaking-for' 'community'. In the difference lies a sameness of differences of all the marginalised, and in the sameness resides differences of sameness. The indifference to sameness or difference is the paradoxical problematic of 'dramatised' fourthspace and communisphere.

These dramatised values and capabilities inherent in the spaces of the sitcom are what Levi-Strauss, when discussing travel, called an "exploration of the deserted places of my memory...and the 'discovery' of relics and legends' (cited in Robertson et al, 1994, p. 200). The deserted spaces are the 'empty meeting grounds' (MacCannell, 1992) of the liminal space between the perceived and conceived spaces of those relics and legends; the artefacts and narratives of a nostalgia for a type of 'community'. These meeting grounds are 'empty' because their borders are policed by the 'hysterical' histories (see Barthes, 1981) of the space of the relics and legends. The discovery is in fact a *re*-discovery formed by the border-crossings found in the acts of reflection, reciprocation and recital. The relics and legends are discovered by the 'border transgressing' media bringing them

back from the deserts - rescuing them from the prophets of the sitcoms and soaps and placing them in the museum of 'community'. An example of this mnemonic exploration is the case of Joe Connelly, an early sitcom writer whose Leave it to Beaver was a popular show in the late fifties. In Honey, I'm Home, Gerard Jones (1992) cites Connelly as stating: 'When we hired a writer, I told him to look for situations from his own background' (p. 124). (And of course the 'background' is the deserted landscapes of the (back) gardens of the rural utopias brought together under the rubric of first and second space). Jones then goes on to describe the father figure in Beaver, Ward Cleaver:

> At times he'd moan about the lost past, grouse about how soft kids were today...He'd grown up on a farm in Shaker Heights, Ohio, where his old-fashioned father laid down the law and whipped him for breaking it...He reminisced frequently about skating on frozen ponds, making his own kites, and walking twenty miles to school. He expressed fond memories of Weird Tales and the Our Gang comedies, a couple of marginally subversive bits of depression era kid lore. (p. 124)

Ward Cleaver's 'characteristics' contain the dramatised values of a type of Jeffersonian ideal juxtaposed by a nagging fourthspatiality of the heterotopia. So even here, at a time when the familial was sacred, the fleeting moments of the livable/liminal fourthspace can be witnessed. These work to disrupt the perceived and conceived tropes of the spatialities of the 'hysterical histories' of a mediated community. Although the imagery might be outdated and the texts cited no longer contemporary, the markers of a good society - the tranquillity of the rural, the inflections of a harsh but honourable past, the notion of a less consumer-oriented society, and the naivety of the images of subversion, are all easily recognisable nostalgic markers of an idealised place (relic) and past (legend). But they also offer an image of a both/and also situation.

The imagineered space of Shaker Heights and Ward's childhood may well seem like an Eden but there is a worm in the apple, one which would later be transformed into a Tolkienish dragon called, not Smaug, but Roseanne. To return to Jones' reflection upon Ward's history: 'In a broader framework he was a carefully constructed link from the prewar world to the present; farm to office; authoritarianism to consensus; real small town to generic one' (p.125). This 'journey' between the links is a spatial one, not temporal. Even the notion of consensus demands the explication of a spatial synthesis of people coming together in a common space out of *travail*. The images of the frontier stand out with the war being the border between rural and the urban, the ruled and the urbane, real-and-imagined which give rise to the power of first- and secondspatialities. Thus the reassuring visibility of the physical and the camaraderie of the conceptual are foregrounded. The (fourthspatial) worm had just commenced its journey to the 'core' in Leave it to Beaver.

Although Jones only traces the links back to pre- world war two, I contest that forged in these links are suggestions of the 'always/already' lived and a livable/liminal space and all that entails: the tensions between the rural and the city, tradition and the modern, the individual and the collective. The symbols of Ward Cleavers 'spatiality', the farm, consensus and small town are utopic markers of an ideal - an imagined absolute which is an important part of the imagineered sitcom make-up. Connelly's partner, Bob Mosher, echoes this idealised concept of the 'exemplary' society of the small town in a quote: 'The show (*Beaver*) was intended to celebrate everything that's good about small town

life'. To which Jones adds: 'but more specifically it celebrated what *could* be good about the *new* "small town"' (p.124). This new small town is suburbia and it suggests it is possible that the key to the good life fits the front door of the (sitcom) home. But lurking in the shadows between the tract homes is the (Peyton) place of the interstitial. The gaps and spaces of differentiated difference behind the safety of sameness displayed in the relics and legends of Town Square, courthouse, white picket fences, front porch and the Cape Cod home.

Of course, not all sitcoms have the synedochal home as their setting or the family as their subject matter. Some look at work areas (The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Taxi, Murphy Brown, Frontline) rather than the domestic and at larger groupings; extended 'families' of friends or neighbours (I love Lucy, Welcome Back Kotter, Happy Days, Cheers, Seinfeld, Friends). Still others combine work and 'family' (The Lucy Show, The Dick van Dyke Show, M*A*S*H, Hey Dad). Also while the harmonious group has been the mainstay of the genre there has always been room for the dystopic and the 'deviant'. Usually these idiosyncrasies were displayed in a minor character in the sitcom cast ensemble. For example one of the earliest sitcoms, Amos 'n' Andy, had, as the deviant to the norm of the respectable family, a character called Kingfish. He was to epitomise the 'lying, fleecing, strutting, mugging' (Jones, p. 55) 'other' and over the decades this character type has been rehearsed with varying degrees of deviance time and again so that in a later generation of the sitcom genre, Leave it to Beaver, the character Eddie Haskell is also invested with these juxtapositional, palimpsestial, and ever accumulating traits.

Thus the deviance of Kingfish, the muted recognition of the mutability of fourthspace, remains visible even though many subtle variations (depending on the generation of viewer and character) have been layered over him. For example, in M*A*S*H the character of Frank Burns is a refined Kingfish, perpetually marginalised and symbolically excluded by his stupidity, his greed and his sexual transgressions. Whereas in Family Ties a more subtle version is displayed in the character of Alex who is constantly at risk of trespassing into 'wrong regions' where to inhabit these would be to lose his tenure on 'yuppiedom', the key to successful inclusion. The both/and also reside not only in the fairgrounds of the periphery but also manifests itself 'marginally' - 'the risk of passing into the wrong region' (O.E.D.) - and marginally - 'outside the border' (O.E.D.). But as Jones observes:

> But it emerged quickly that the Kingfish was not to be reviled or even merely to be laughed at heartlessly. He was to be *pitied*. And in this lay one of the keys of contemporary social thinking: *People who don't fit in aren't evil but dysfunctional.* They are too dangerous to be allowed to run unfettered, but to destroy them would undermine the very concept of consensus. (p. 56)(my italics)

Here then is the pivot of fourthspace made manifest in the many 'mannered' versions of Kingfish.

To allow livable space to be unrestricted would lead to a deconstruction, and therefore, an inversion of the status quo of the staged-managed consensus and thus the eventual and obvious disempowerment of first- and secondspaces. But the both/and also must be granted a certain amount of space for its deviance. The dysfunctional needs to be pitied -

a symbolic incarceration - because with pity comes a rehabilitated subject, a productive body which helps uphold the performative aspects of first and secondspaces. The notion of consensus is part of common-sense that in turn leads to a shared conceptual notion of the perceived normalised, functional community. Deviance is permitted pedagogically because it offers a *visibility of difference* which ensures that deviance cannot run unfettered. It is protection by (slight) infection. This is not just the sacred providence of the sitcom but is also rehearsed daily in the news and current affairs, documentaries and dramas, poems and prose (the imagined and imaginary spaces), but it is more stringently refined in the imagineered spaces of the malls and enclave estates where deviance is completely absented by pedagogic performance. It is also didactically rendered on the streets of the cities, with Los Angeles - that most 'photogenic sprawl' of urban decline - being the arch actor. In the 80s and 90s the contemporary 'sitcoms and soapies' are enacted on the pathways and in the parks by the leading players of the periphery, the unemployed, homeless bag-people who, because of their numbers, are no longer confined to the various skid rows but sleep cheek-to-jowl with the corporate sky-scrapers of the CBD. These are the victims of 'community' and the outcasts from communisphere, a non-named because they lack a speaking position, nonactors in a mis-en-scene of pollution and environmental delinquency.

In the late 80s and into the 90s, it seems, in the televisual sitcom, the dysfunctional or deviant 'family', as opposed to a single character, is becoming the norm. Married...With Children, Roseanne, The Simpsons and Ned and Stacey all deal with differing degrees of dysfunctional families. The Fourth-as-other deviancy here is mainly to do with

inoculating (Barthes, 1973) the happy nuclear family with a didactic dose of the oppositional. This display in the sites/sights of the two extremes of the family - the utopic and the dystopic is also a trope of the touristic consciousness of the contemporary viewer. As MacCannell points out:

> A touristic attitude of respectful admiration is called forth by the finer attractions, the monuments, and a no less important attitude of disgust attaches itself to the uncontrolled garbage heaps, muggings, abandoned and tumbledown buildings, polluted rivers and the like. Disgust over these items is the negative pole of the respect for the monuments. Together, the two provide a moral stability to the modern touristic consciousness that extends beyond immediate social relationships to the structure and organisation of the total society. (p. 40)

In the sitcom, fourthspace became the carnivalesque 'fairgrounds' of the family and community. By offering sites/sights that may *excite* but disgust the potential of fourth-as-(dangerous)other is contained. Deviancy is therefore a mere childlike aberration - fleeting and transient, livable but only in a liminal space of immaturity which can be (s)mothered. The family as undeveloped, deviant desolation balances the family as a 'mothering' moral monument. The viewer of the sitcom is not only allowed to (sight)see the 'back regions' of the 'putative "intimate and real"' (p. 94) but is vicariously sharing an experience with an 'an-other' - the differentiation in society of the 'us' and 'them' and the both/and also. MacCannell addresses this idea through his concept of the touristic experience:

> Sightseers are motivated by a desire to see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the natives...the variety of understanding held out before tourists as an ideal is an *authentic* and *demystified* experience of an aspect of some society or other person. (p.94)

But of course the an-other is inauthentic; the demystification is mere artful prestidigitation. Thus texts such as Roseanne allow the viewer (tourist) to 'get in with the natives' - they scopically experience an 'authentic and demystified' 'lived' family in all its interstitial 'otherness'. If the preferred reading of Roseanne is of a peripheral social and economic 'them' which is in opposition to the 'us' of the norm of the core then 'we' are positioned as a Ward Cleaver or Cliff Huxtable rather than Homer Simpson. But even if Homer is a homuncular homage to an an-otherness his difference becomes the same under the 'sleight-of-hand' of the homonym of homogeneity.

M*A*S*H and the Aleph of Communisphere.

If, as Graeme Turner (1988) states, film is a 'social practice' in whose narratives and meanings we can locate evidence of ways in which our culture makes sense of itself' (pp. xiv, xv), then television, is the 'intimate and personal' (Kenneth M. Pierce, 1976) mediator between fact and fantasy, old values and new orders, the public and the private. The cultural historian Paula S. Fass (1976) sees television as a 'barometer and filter of the popular imagination' (p. 38), a description which could as easily be applied to Walt Disney and his various corporate and entertainment extensions as to the sitcom. She also states that television 'is a social institution which structures our lives and unites not only our values and conventions but the minutiae of daily habits' (p. 38). In her essay, Television as Cultural Document: Promises and Problems, she looks at two highly popular and critically acclaimed situation comedies: The Mary Tyler Moore Show and M*A*S*H. She sees these texts as 'contemporary versions of a basic historical conflict:

the impulse toward individualism versus the need for cooperation in a complex society' (p. 14). In both of the texts she sees the 'adaptation of traditional images to modern conditions' (p.46) as being the major thematic construction; the 'American folk imagery' of the frontiersman of the Jeffersonian ideal, the 'unconventional man' who is solidly embedded in the cultural past but linked with 'the specific problems of (to)day' (p. 49). The 'specific problems' she asserts revolve around the themes and 'threats' to the status quo of the 60s and 70s: the escalation of the Vietnam war, militarism and the corporate bureaucracy versus the contemporary individual, loyalty, colonialism, chauvinism, and the rise of feminism, to name but a few.

But one of the areas of concern in the 70s which is reflected in other sitcoms of the era, notably Happy Days (interestingly also set in the 50s) and All in the Family, was the issue of the state of the contemporary family and the 'community' structure. Fass states that: '"M*A*S*H", like "Mary Tyler Moore", pays respectful deference to group cooperation' (p. 48). I would like to address and extend this and argue that M*A*S*H, *as* 'Disneyville', rehearses the 'pseudo in the proto', that the 4077 is a 'displaced suburbia', a *disturbia*, of carnivalesque inclusions and a pedagogic display of the apprehensions and anxieties of the suburban dweller and the dichotomies inherent in the 70s suburban lifestyle. It also deals with four spaces (the us, them and both/and also) and the four spatialities and whilst privileging fourthspatiality it didactically uses this attribute to instruct the populace in the efficacy of 'community' and the dangers to the consensual status quo of deviance and delinquency. Depending on the reading position of the viewer it also shows that 'community' can lead to a poverty of participation and that the

speaking-as position is a valued tool to question the speaking-for values in that 'community. Whatever the case M*A*SH is a text about the communisphere - an Aleph like space of the little heterotopias writ large.

M*A*S*H as Disneyville.

M*A*S*H was originally a novel written by a doctor, Richard Hornberger (Richard Hooker), about doctors serving during the Korean war in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. The novel was a bitingly black look at the ugliness and futility of war and the pettiness of the military. In 1970 as the Vietnam war escalated and Nixon's promise to end it was seen as hollow rhetoric Robert Altman and Ring Lardner, Jnr. decided to turn the book into an anti-authoritarian, anti-war film. The film dissipated little of the novelistic acerbity, prompting William Self of 20th century Fox to decide to commission Gene Reynolds to produce a TV series. Reynolds turned to a veteran of ensemble comedy writing, Larry Gelbart, to transfer the characters to the small screen, whilst as Gerard Jones (1992) points out, seizing 'an opportunity to refract the 70s through the 50s' (p. 238). This image-making process displayed not only the anti-war message, nor even the socio-cultural changes occurring at the time, but offered a forbidding facsimile of life in the constructed communities of suburbia and exurbia. The 4077 is a displaced Levittown, where neighbours are stuck with each other simply because, as Lyn Richards (1990) puts it, they are 'all in the same boat' (p. 47). M*A*S*H is a symbolic 'tour' of, amongst other things, constructed, imagined and imagineered communities or types of Disneyland.

But this is a dystopic Disneyland: the Disneyville of Disturbia. As Yoshimoto (1994), citing Stephen F. Mills points out, Disneyland or:

> Main Street USA is a monument to an "era of good feeling", a born-again belief in the squeaky clean virtues of front porch USA, and nostalgia for a supposedly uncomplicated, decent, hard-working, crime-free, rise up and salute the flag way of life that is the stuff of middle America's dreams, an ersatz image of the past imposed within the here and now. (p. 192)

If this is the picture of the American Dream represented by Disneyland, then the Disneyville of M*A*S*H is its nightmare come to haunt it. The 4077 is the antithesis of Main Street. Apart from the virtue of hard work, the denizens of the 4077 are far from uncomplicated and decent. They are a mass of neuroses and vices, and as far as rising up and saluting the flag, Hawkeye and BJ repeatedly put down MacArthur and McCarthy, two 'standards' of the American establishment. If, as David M. Johnson suggests, that Disneyland is 'an extension of the packaged tour idea' (cited by Yoshimoto, p.186) then M*A*S*H as Disneyville is the equivalent of the travel narratives of Joan Didion or the poetical 'flanerie' of T. S. Eliot's The Wasteland.

By extension then the Disneyville of M*A*S*H contains the fragmented and failing family, the damaged and dangerous public sphere and the claustrophobia of the private spheres, the dismay at the homogeneity of the suburbs and the dread of heterogeneity in the community, the suspicion of the 'teenager', the 'fear' of the 'deviant' other, the disparate roles of work and leisure, the ease of mobility which destroys neighborliness and shatters extended family, the contradictions found in religion and the disturbing isolation of gender roles and gendered spaces. It is more than a culturally, or even

politically, motivated antiwar sentiment. It didactically offers a view of the newly formed master-planned communities of the suburbs of the 50s, 60s and 70s with their inherent fear of the dystopic city and the ghettoised other to be found there. More importantly, its representations and reflections are relevant to their counterparts in the 90s. This view, then, is of the 'flawed', carnivalesque community; a 'reality' which contradicts the media representations and advertising articles used to sell the 'Levittowns' and walled enclaves which have been so much a part of the landscape since the 50s. This dystopic view of the segregated suburb is built upon one premise: the poverty of participation.

Participation in its unrealised state is a subtext of M*A*S*H with its representations of assorted othernesses of the dysfunctional and deviant, which highlighted normalcy by virtually completely absenting it. Whilst focussing on war and inevitably concluding that it is dehumanising, it never fell into the trap of what Henry A. Giroux (cited in Elizabeth Bell et al, 1995) calls the 'politics of innocence' (p. 56). In his essay Giroux states: 'that cultural texts...mobilize social memories to legitimate particular versions of the past', which are then used to legitimate 'a nostalgic sense of history' (p. 57). One of the social memories recalled in M*A*S*H is obviously World War 2, with its shared memory of camaraderie in hardship, but there is also a deeper resonance of remembrance which springs from the war years which is hidden in the text: that of the utopic notion of family and home and the false 'unity' of an assailed community. (The McCarthy era testified to the falseness of the unified community which was propagated throughout the war years and re-invented during the Cold War). M*A*S*H uncovers these morphic memories by juxtaposing them with the alienation and the 'fragmentary' nature of war and the

dysfunctional deviance of contemporary conjured communities. It offers a reflection, reciprocation and recital of a time when family and community were under fire, but it still managed to reaffirm these tropes. It also stressed the notion of the liminal interstitial spatiality of fourthspace - the both/and also of a livable space.

Both the televisual army and the hospital are 'institutions' of the 'regimes of community'. Although binary opposites - one dealing in death and the other with healing - they promulgate the notion of Jones' list (see pp. 3, 4, 5). In M*A*S*H though these strategic regimes are carnivalesquely inverted by the tactics of livable space. The disciplinary space of the military and the regulatory space of the medical facilitate the formation of a formidable space of Machiavellian mayhem. Whereas in the everyday this assumption of control is fleeting. In the textual M*A*S*H it is a sustained assault both visually and verbally.

The victim of the onslaught in M*A*S*H is the restrictive community of the first and secondspatialities which is assaulted by the rehearsal of the communisphere of the three spatialities of the both (and) '/and also': the 'us', 'them' and 'an-other'. The exotic, eastern location of the 'them' enclavises the 'us' of the M*A*S*H unit in a type of ghetto of 'little America". This act of isolation is almost an incarceration that exposes the 'under belly' of deviance and delinquency. Foucault speaking of 'Illegalities and Delinquency' (Rabinow, 1984, p. 228) states: 'The prison makes possible, even encourages, the organisation of a milieu of delinquents, loyal to one another'. This then is the M*A*S*H unit as 'prison' (a motif often reiterated in the text) which enumerates and celebrates the

many deviances and delinquencies of a dystopic communispheral society whilst stressing the false loyalty (the back-stabbing and constant bickering) and false values (the sexual and social politics) of the normalised 'community'. The double confinement in M*A*S*H, the enclave of the 4077 and the cultural isolation encourages the exposure of the liminal space of the temporal interregnum. Time offers little or no control of, or for, the M*A*S*H enclavite and space is seen as the ambiguous arbiter of conduct. Thus the activities in the spaces of the 'swamp', the operating room, the colonel's office, Rosie's bar and the mess tent are not temporally affected but spatially effected. As Foucault stresses, space is 'fundamental in any form of' power and communal life (Rabinow, 1984, p. 252). The spaces are utilised when, and as, required and as such these spaces are outside of temporally driven routines and regulations and are open to acts of deviancy and delinquency. Thus space, not time, makes a place for the heteropological assault on community.

In order to enable this 'sustained' assault M*A*S*H places America onto an eastern foreign soil, the traditional space of the other, and brings together in one community the perverse under belly of Western society. This displacement to an-'other' space allows for an interrogation of deviant aspects of western society in an 'exotic' location which is perceived, ironically, to be the repository of deviance. Therefore the disturbing knowledge that the "them' are intrinsically a part of 'us' is deflected. Similarly temporally relocating it from the 70s to the fifties further eases the discomfort of confrontation and the use of the comedic apparatus additionally allows for a disengaged reading. By laughing at the warped characteristics of the community of the 4077 the

power to disrupt the status quo inherent in them is disarmed and can actually be used didactically to demonstrate the strength of the perceived norms of society. The spatial distancing and the comedic apparatus of the text, enable the viewer to 'get in with the natives' and interrogate the demystified 'experience' of the otherness found within the topos of America. The viewer is a sightseer who is offered an 'experience' of, to paraphrase MacCannell, many elements which make a 'set' - in both senses of the word - called America. Each character, from Frank Burns to 'Radar' O'Reilly to 'Hawkeye' Pierce, is a symbolic marker of both the values and meanings of the 'community' they come from and America as a whole, as well as the /and also of the an-other of the communisphere. The 4077 of M*A*S*H as a reflection and recital of contemporary suburban community is a proto- and conjured community, frictional, fragmentary and, in the final analysis, a fabricated failure. This is a pointer to the poverty of participation in the integrality of the enclave estates and the malls.

M*A*S*H therefore can be read as a social document focussing on issues of deviance and delinquency to comment on the social practises of the normalised conjured community of the sanitised mid-America and, by extension, via similar social and locational topos, Australia. As a text it brings the marginalised, the 'them', face to face with the 'we' of the centre and allows for an inspection of the meanings and values of the constructed 'us' - the 'community'. These notions of community may be seen as stemming from what Foucault called the 'political technologies of the body' (Rabinow, p. 173) which were the 'elaboratory procedures for the individual and collective coercion of bodies' (p. 187) which pedagogically produced the ideal community through the assertion

of the productive body. As an indicator of how this concept is visualised in the sitcom we can turn to the character of Max Klinger.

Klinger is the 'section-eight' seeking Lebanese-descended deviant and delinquent 'other' who desperately wants to be rid of army life. In his extreme women's fashion statements he is positioned as being as deviant as Hawkeye's moonshine swilling character. His 'section eight' (discharge due to insanity) antics are juxtaposed with his desire to return to the normalcy of his stateside-based community and his girl friend. But Klinger's neighbourhood and extended family are repeatedly displayed as even more deviant. In comparison to his uncles and friends his deviance of cross-dressing is a mere peccadillo, but their antics are not seen as dangerous because they already inhabit the heterogeneous, 'dangerous' spaces of a large American city. What points up Klinger's delinquency is that he is positioned as being located in a type of 'suburbia', not the suburbia of the M*A*S*H camp but an idealised suburbia of mid-America which will not countenance any form of aberration.

His deviance is further underscored by his marriage to an exotic other in the shape of an 'orphaned' young woman who is displayed as being (almost) a camp follower. Her character is rehabilitated by her insistence on finding her family and by being wed in the western manner. She is positioned as being 'cured' and is therefore seen as a productive member of (white/Western) society and of course her rehabilitation has a positive effect on Klinger's deviance. But the circle is not closed. There is still the chance that this couple might be recidivists and therefore they are banished to the margins, forever

(presumably) wandering throughout Korea looking for her family. Thus only by finding and re-affirming the ideal of family and community can the Klingers re-enter that community. Interestingly enough the only other M*A*S*H-ite to remain in the margins is the priest, Father Mulcahy, and he is also banished because he is no longer positioned as a complete and productive member of society.

Father Mulcahy is involved in an accident and his hearing gradually diminishes until he is almost totally deaf. This impairment positions him as being deficit in some manner as though his incompleteness or *lack* makes him less productive to the community. His only option is to work with the Korean children of the orphanage. Here it is shown that he is doubly marginalised. Firstly, he is incomplete and therefore is childlike and must take his place among the children. Secondly, he must be banished to an an-other space where his sameness of difference firmly places him in the margins. Unlike Klinger's case it is safe to speculate that Father Mulcahy is permanently peripheralised.

Throughout the text there are numerous examples of how the 'elaboratory procedures' of first and second space are inverted and inspected to reveal the fourth of both/and also. To open the door for the commencement of our journey through the (real-and)-imagined spaces of M*A*S*H (in the shape of Disneyland, Disneyville and Disturbia) let us return to Foucault who states:

> I do not think that it is possible to say one thing is of the order of "liberation" and another is of the order of "oppression"..There always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience and oppositional groupings.(Rabinow, 1984, p. 245)

The both/and also spaces of M*A*S*H: Disneyland meets Disturbia.

Although no map of the 4077 is offered for display, familiarity with the text allows for an educated guess at its topography and it is this 'landscape' which is its initial point of comparison with Disneyland and the enclave estates. In the opening and the majority of external sequences in the text, it is seen that indistinct hills and peaks which appear, in some sequences, as 'misty' surround the 4077. These misty hills visually signify (i) the isolation of the camp, (ii) its position as marginal, (iii) the siege mentality of the 'wagons in a circle', (iv) the concomitant connotation of the 'frontier', and (v) the intrusion of a constructed community in a 'rural' landscape. These aspects of the site all bare negative connotations due to the breakdown of the visuality of the core/periphery relationship. The site is no longer in sight and the removal of the panoptical gaze leads to a carnivalesque inversion of the (constructed) norm. The carnivalesque camp in its peripheral position reinscribes the prescribed notions of the frontier and the rural. In M*A*S*H the frontier is not the site to forge the Jeffersonian ideals, where shared hardships lead to unity of community but is witnessed as a place of disruption and disconnection. Similarly, by inserting the constructed community into the 'rural' the pastoral becomes a site of dislocation, disharmony, and fear and loathing - the contrary to the nostalgia of the normalised ideal. The hills also indicate how the community of the 4077 is to be read. The elevated vista is the province of the elite in society, but Hawkeye *et al* are located in the valley, semiotically signifying their position in the hierarchy. The hills also seem 'empty' and this signifies that the deviancy and delinquency of the M*A*S*H citizens is rampant because of the withdrawal of the panoptical gaze of surveillance. The an-

otherness of the M*A*S*H-ite is given free rein because the asymmetrical power relationship has broken down or been removed. It is the case of when the warders no longer watch the lunatics will take over the asylum.

The *misty hills* make a statement in much the same way as the walls which surround the contemporary enclave estates, the car park and blank external walls of the mall, and Disney's "earth embankment' surrounding the Anaheim Disneyland. In fact, in the case of the enclaves the developers often make the walls an integral feature of the estate, pointing to the 'dramatic entry statement'. The drama of the entry plays with notions of the separation between the mundane (outside) world of work, and the fantastical (inside) world of the leisured estate. In the malls the blank exterior and acres of parked cars is a visual remark upon the mundane reality of outside which infers an edenic world of desire and fantasy inside. In M*A*S*H, however, there is an inversion. Eden becomes a hellish nightmare with the outside world positioned as being a (nostalgic) haven. This is a theme explored repeatedly in the text via letters to and from home, BJ's family vignettes, and Pierce's Crab Apple Cove reminiscences.

In the case of the fantastical world of the leisured estate M*A*SH reflects through a distorted mirror the underbelly of the social world of the enclaves. Thus the cocktail hour becomes a prolonged and almost never ending drinking bout of home-distilled martinis. Sex and sexuality are openly displayed and often uncontrolled, and the ideal communal cohesions are fractured through petty arguments and incessant bickering. This goes a long way to shatter the community myth that 'being in the same boat' will lead to a

homogenous unity of good neighborliness. Lynn Richards (1990) foreshadowed and debunked the theory that by segregating the mundane world of work it will lead to a more fulfilling existence based upon shared family, social economic and leisure experiences. M*A*S*H therefore offers a textual example of the poverty of participation in contemporary community brought about by the division and segregation of the mundane and the fantastical. However in the 50s the divide between reality and fantasy was still offered as a way to a utopia and these notions marked Disney's thinking. As Robert De Roos (1994) points out: 'He surrounded the entire park with a high earth embankment. "I don't want the public to see the real world they live in while they're in the park. I want them to feel in another world."' (p.61). To make one feel (as if) in another (fantasy) world starts with the construction of a clearly defined boundary. However, within the borders of M*A*S*H the theme park and enclave estate trope has been inverted. This idea is clearly demonstrated in the 'golf' games the M*A*S*H-ites attempt to play. The leisurely pursuit of the white ball which is seen as a selling point for the more affluent master-planned communities becomes a game fraught with danger in the M*A*S*H camp. Thus the enclave estate world of pleasure is replaced by the seemingly endless work of 'mundane' meatball surgery, while the dreamlike 'fantasy' world of consummate leisure has become a sleepless nightmare of danger.

A further signifier of the dystopia of suburbia is that in the opening sequence where the farm boy from Iowa, 'Radar', is displayed facing the hills. It is frequently alluded to in the various episodes that 'Radar' is an offspring of the rural. His character is invested with the stereotypical characteristics of the 'down-home' country boy: naivety, sexual

innocence, child-like disposition, affinity with nature and animals; simpleness; high moral values; and the hard work ethic. So 'Radar' signifies many prelapsarian values and, in the opening sequence is seen facing away from the camera to the hills and what lies beyond, the war zone where the soldiers are fighting. The battle zone is a place of the dangerous other, fear, death and, if not quite decay, than at least waste, disintegration and degeneration – a la Bauman (1995). It is the place from which people are trying to escape, an exodus which parallels the urban flight to the suburbs. The visualisation of it in the text displays decrepit homes and desolate landscapes which invoke the image of the declining cityscape.

Slightly further from Radar's sight is the military headquarters from where orders originate and authority is maintained. The military zone, the General Headquarters, however, is the place of the authoritarian, corporate and bureaucratic body. It is city hall and the Coca-Cola corporation and is the residual home of the 'norm' that is America and all that stands for: the synecdochal icons of Mom and apple pie. It is also the panoptical place of control and censure. Even further from Radar's gaze is the core, America, the centre to 4077s periphery. The final zone is the centre itself - urban America, the consumerist heaven of TVs and TV dinners, drive-ins and drive-throughs, the Disneyesque futureland as seen from the 'frontier'. So Radar is looking in a frozen moment from a somewhere (which is) other to a someplace else (see MacCannell, p. 155). As the epitome and the incarnation of the (good) rural (nostalgic) other he stands bemused and it is his bewilderment of and at these first and second spaces that is at the hub of the opening sequence. Radar is a both/and also. He is positioned as 'betwixt and

between', a Mr. Suburbia, rurally inflected as naive and somewhat stupid. But equally he is seen as super efficient and the administrative backbone of the M*A*S*H community - at times almost reading minds to ascertain requirements or speaking others sentences as they are composing them themselves. This efficiency denotes the contemporary city white-collar worker. But Radar is also a and/also. In one telling episode he is witnessed as being a site of Foucault's 'resistance, disobedience' and oppositional confrontation.

By positing Radar as looking outward from M*A*S*H (suburbia) to the three notional zones of the urban suggests that deviance and delinquency is a major integral part of the communisphere of the cityscape (see Jane Jacobs, 1961) and its absenting in suburbia leads to a poverty of participation. Radar could almost be seen as a *post-colonial* subject staring in bewilderment (and often defiance and resistance) at the 'centre', from a space that is a no(madic)-place, bearing a substitute name that is given to him by a more powerful 'coloniser', and with a voice that is denied both the speaking-for and the speaking-as position; a voice which can only mimic. This notion of mimicry locates Radar as the *white-not quite*, the suburbanite who demands the rural (the indigenous) whilst desiring the urban (and its inherent modernity).

If Radar is the stereotypical innocent farmboy, the Jeffersonian ideal of the American frontiersman, then he is matched by and juxtaposed with the other characters with varying degrees of worldliness or 'deviance'. A brief discussion of these accumulating and palimpsestial traits of differentiated differences, but also over-lapping similarities displays the heterogeneous heterotopological 'paunch' in this outwardly homogenous

(the army, the hospital) space. The deviance of the other to Radar's innocence can be sorted into four categories: the dysfunctional / immoral; the functional but foolish and inept; the functional but alienated; and the morally and culturally superior. All these categories operate outside of the norm of the ideal - the illusion of transparency of the naive and innocent. The complicated and opaque other characters themselves are aligned with, and in opposition to, each other and stand in stark contrast to the more complete and concrete character that is Radar.

For instance, BJ Hunnicut is aligned with Hawkeye but is also his opposition. Both are anti-establishment having a deep hatred for authority displayed in their unkempt appearance and their preference for outlandish clothes rather than military uniforms. Both are positioned as wisecracking, practical joke playing, dipsomaniacs. But whereas Hawkeye is a womaniser, making a 'virtue' of his 'caddishness', BJ is distinctly a one-woman (nuclear family) man. But he is also someone who is firmly located in the heterotopic of the communisphere. His character and 'history' enables him to *speak-as* an individual within the communisphere and in so doing rejects the *speaking-for* position of a community. His positioning as speaking from, and as a self-imposed marginalised individual, a family man who prefers the unity of a single family to the common unity of the communal, is reminiscent of a bell hooks or an Anzaldua (see Soja, 1996). In this he is aligned with the character Colonel Potter who, though having spent nearly all his life in the army separated over long periods from his wife still cherishes the notion of the singular family unit, perhaps even more so because of his life-long immersion in the conjured community of the military. That his preferred heterotopic model of the family is

a success is signified in that he makes a virtue of remembering his wife's birthday and their anniversary and that he remains sexually faithful to her.

Colonel Potter is in opposition to BJ though in that he is a career officer something Hunnicut would never aspire to be. This trait, however, puts Potter together with Major Margaret Houlihan, a self-professed 'army brat'. Her reliance on the first and second spaces of the physical and conceptual of the military - the elaboratory technologies of coercion secures her productiveness as a person and worker. For Houlihan 'oppression' is 'liberation' and vice versa. But the fourthspace of the heterotopia resides in the fleeting moments of fourth-as-othering such as her obvious but 'hidden' feelings for Hawkeye. Margaret Houlihan as career service woman is highly capable but her position as head nurse segregates her from the other women in the camp, while her status as a Major divorces her from the males. Her alienation is succinctly described in an episode where she berates some of the other nurses for not inviting her to their 'parties' or even for a coffee (the re-enactment of the classic myth of the 50s housewife and the coffee and gossip mornings- revitalised in the nineties by Oprah and Rickie Lake, *et al*). The only relationship permitted to her is with the ineffectual, foolish and inept Frank Burns. Burns' inarticulate name-calling, face-pulling and cowardice distance him from the 'men' and his other non-masculine traits position him as 'girlish' and therefore more of a buddy to Houlihan than a lover. Margaret does get 'married' in the series but hers is a short-lived and long distance non-reciprocal relationship which in itself echoes the housewife/husband relationship of 50s suburbia where the husband was absented most of the week due to his work (and absented at the weekend by his leisure pursuits). Her

alienation describes the most obvious example of the poverty of participation within the 4077 community. However, the two outsiders, characters not in direct opposition to or aligned with the others, and who have no need or desire for direct participation in the community or communisphere are Father Mulcahy and Major Charles Emerson Winchester III. These characters represent the ideological state apparatuses, and as such are positioned as being separate and aloof.

The combining of the characters in the categories outlines aspects of various disparate 'families'. The two extremes are BJ and Radar who represent the Jeffersonian ideal of the rural set, which is dichotomous to the corporate and institutional Charles Emerson Winchester III and Father Mulcahy. Klinger and Hawkeye are witnessed as the bane within the (suburban) community, the rebellious and uncontrollable 'teenager'. They are anti-authoritarian and a danger to the status quo. That Hawkeye is positioned as being a threat to the community (the norm of suburbia and all it stands for) is witnessed in his lampoon of middle America, his now famous speech on communist aggression:

> I don't know why they're shooting at us. All we want to do
> is bring them democracy and white bread, to transplant the
> American Dream: freedom, achievement, hyperacidity,
> affluence, flatulence, technology, tension, and the
> inalienable right to a coronary at your desk while plotting
> to stab your boss in the back.

If this is a description of middle America, and by extrapolation the suburbs and the suburbanite it might be asked who is the 'they' that are shooting at 'us'? In this speech are contained the vagrant spaces of the fallacies and failures of the American Dream for the majority of Americans. As a social comment on the 50s, 60s and 70s it is a very

succinct one. The movement from freedom and achievement to death and conspiracy - the journey from the flower power of Haight-Ashbury and Woodstock to the assassinations and attempted assassinations of prominent American figures and the notion of collusion in these by the C.I.A or the F.B.I. is clearly defined here. The textual reflection of this is witnessed in the character make-up of Frank Burns. He is the touristic marker of the suburbs. He is positioned as very patriotic but exceedingly selfish; monied but greedy; educated but stupid and inarticulate; trapped in a loveless marriage and too weak willed to leave; forced to share an environment with people beneath his dignity; blindly obedient to authority but desiring the same authority for himself. But mainly he is depressingly boring. As Hawkeye points out: 'Frank, if I could yawn with my mouth closed you'd never know just how boring you are'. Thus Frank/suburbia is equated with boredom. Frank is the epitome of the participatorially impoverished suburbanite trying desperately to fit into an ideational and constructed 'community' while all the while denying the option of a more open communisphere of fourthspace which would allow him to break the shackles and fully participate.

If Hawkeye is positioned as the disruptive 'teenager' denied participatorial rights or the vagrant spatiality of the liminal space, then Colonel Sherman Potter and Colonel Henry Blake are the rehearsal of the aged in the text. Blake's character demonstrates the negative aspects of the senior citizen: their incompetence and foolishness which is reiterated in the media and accepted in the public domain. He is at the mercy of the others especially Houlihan and Burns who, like their counterparts in the suburbs, want the 'oldies' out of the way. An example of this is that in the majority of the enclave estates

very little is done to accommodate the aged. Along with other 'undesirables' - people of colour, gay and lesbians, homeless people, unmarried people (whether with or without children) and teenagers, the aged were 'zoned' out by the use of the 'construction and 'red-lining' policies of the Federal Housing Association' (Spigel, p. 189). Spigel goes on to conclude that 'Suburban space was thus designed to purify communal spaces...while at the same time preserving the populist ideal of neighborliness.' (p. 189). The only character that really feels for Blake is Radar and this can be attributed to the notion of the ruralised extended families, including the aged, living under the same roof. Potter however is like the aforementioned Ward Cleaver from Leave it to Beaver. His character describes a nostalgic impulse for a discernible past, of horse and buggy small town. Even his military hat dates from the First World War. He dishes out homespun homilies and common sense and tries for consensus whenever he can.

Although M*A*S*H is ostensibly about a segregated and self-contained community it actually deals with the greater issues of the vagrant and heterotopic spaces of the communisphere. Thus, the characters although residing 'in the same boat' are nevertheless the epitome of otherness and difference. These characteristics it can be said work together to make for a livable fourthspace of participatory community. The governing body of the MASH unit – the army – in its perceived and conceived construction offers the antithesis of the livable space – the dead thirdspace of the 'lived' community. The characters in M*A*S*H interact with each other to display a community as an organic 'whole' with no character taking precedence as instigator of participatory community. In the filmic text to follow, The Truman Show the major character Truman is

seen to be the sole character who galvanises the community. He is in fact the single

raison d'etre of the conjured community of the enclave which is Seahaven.

Chapter Six •

The imagineered virtutopia of The Truman Show

> He was part of my dream of course, but then I was part of
> his dream too."(Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking
> Glass)(Opening of Pleasantville script by Gary Ross, 1996)

In the past the city has been, in the western perception, the predominant site for an

interrogation of the dysfunctional aspects of community in literature, films and, more

recently, television. In the 1980s (a decade which arguably saw the zenith of the genre)

these critiques of the negative aspects of the city were reflected in texts such as

BladeRunner, Escape from New York and Colours. These films offered a bleak view of

contemporaneous society with the main tropes being that of the break down of, not only

societal and community values, but also the entire built environment that secures them.

The mise-en-scene of these films and others of their ilk describe not only an environment

of accelerating decrepitude but also incorporates a dysfunctional heterogeneity of the

inhabitants of the city. Asianification of the residents (and the streets) of the city is

seemingly 'rampant' as is the pre-eminence of the latino and chicano often depicted as

violent teenage gangs. In these depictions the collective fears of the WASP homogeneity

of the middle class suburbanite are rehearsed with the 'other' (oriental, teenage gangs)

and 'difference' (the 'white-but-not-quite of the latino) being the site/sight of destruction

of the individual and the collective.

At about the same time as BladeRunner was retro-fitting the cityscape with a dystopic

filmic mise-en-scene the suburbanite was being assailed, in their own homes via the

television, with dysfunctional images of the 'community' as a whole. The text M*A*S*H could arguably be seen as a forerunner of this phenomenon with the mobile army surgical unit being regarded as both 'family' and 'community'. It could be reasoned that M*A*S*H played with the fears that the individual had about the changing aspects of society on the social and familial fabric – the rise of feminism, race relations, class structure, the sexual revolution and 'deviance', marriage and fidelity – and displayed them via the small screen. But it can also be argued that this was done in a non-confrontational manner by using the comedic pretext and by locating the narrative elsewhere (Korea) and elsewhen (the 50s). However, as the 80s segued into the 90s a more disquieting perusal of the community surfaced with the most unusual texts being Twin Peaks and American Gothic. Both of these texts spoke of the 'otherness' that is resident within the community with difference being positioned as deviance. The subtext which could be read in these types of texts is that difference within sameness destroys community fealty and therefore must be proscribed.

There was also at about the same time another televisual seachange with the concentration moving gradually away from the community as a whole to a more narrow perspective focussed on the family (dis)unit(y). The confirmingly homely images of togetherness witnessed in The Cosby Show were gradually giving way to a more discomforting depiction of the family in shows such as Married with Children, Roseanne and, of course, The Simpsons. Thus 'difference' and 'otherness' in the guise of disunity was seen to be creeping over the walls of the enclaves and into the lounge room. Where once this 'threatening' (but safely removed) difference was witnessed almost solely during the evening news in the form of third-world 'otherness', now it was surfacing

within the sacred site/sight of the 'home'. Thus TV was playing a major part in warning the enclave suburbanite of the possibility of what lay just beyond the walls and what may eventually move into the neighbourhood. As the 90s drew to a close there seemed to be a conjoining of the 'macro-view' offered in the filmic text and the 'micro-view' of the televisual.

The dark, soft and therefore vulnerable underbelly of the community has been filmically exposed repeatedly in the past with notable works and genres such as <u>Peyton Place</u> and the daytime soapies, <u>Coronation Street</u> and the gritty realism of the English kitchen sink dramas, and <u>Blue Velvet</u> and the more recent <u>American Beauty</u> coming to mind. However these differ in their presentation with a more recent filmic scrutiny of the community witnessed in <u>The Truman Show</u> and <u>Pleasantville</u>. These latter texts share common characteristics not witnessed in the former. Primarily the focus is upon the enclave style of community one which is completely isolated from the outside world. In <u>The Truman Show</u> the enclave is built specifically to house the faux community which is scripted for Truman alone. In an inversion of the raison d'etre of the enclave estate – to keep the other out – Seahaven's purpose is specifically to keep the otherness of Truman – his singular (in both senses of the word) difference to that of the faux community in. In the simultopian enclaves the outsider must never breach the walls. However, in <u>The Truman Show</u> Truman as outsider must never know of the walls, or what lies beyond.

In <u>Pleasantville</u> the community is isolated within the tv 'script' and this inevitably limits the 'outside world'. Thus Main Street is described as a circular road which never ends but

which also never leads to anywhere except itself. Thus in this text as in <u>The Truman Show</u> otherness and difference lie within but whereas Truman's difference points to the 'misfortune' of sameness within the conjured community in Pleasantville the admission(as in acceptance and admittance) of difference leads to a more improved communisphere.

Both the texts therefore, like the enclave estates outside of these imagined worlds, are inward looking. But this interiority is counterbalanced by the notion of the televisual. The films are films about the televisual as a site for investigation of the notion of community (and comm(on)unity). The notion of the enclave as 'tv set' (as apparatus and artifice, technology and backdrop) suggests a type of touristic and Disney consciousness with the cinema spectator watching a film about a tv show about a community similar to theirs which could possibly be seen as a film on *their* tv sets in *their* enclave. The artifice of the (filmic) television show both encloses and isolates the concept of community whilst it opens up the notion of seeing difference and otherness and of difference and otherness being seen to be seen which leads to a more coherent and sound community. This is a major trope of the filmic texts and the sites/sights under discussion.

Blue skies…nothing but blue skies:

The notion of the blue sky as a signifier of contented times is an important aspect of the filmic text <u>The Truman Show</u> (1998). The 'boundary' which enclavises the 'town' (set) of Seahaven itself and which surrounds the main character, is painted with blue skies and

wispy clouds in an effort to conceal its fakeness. This concept of the faux blue sky acts as

a backdrop for a perusal of the efficacy of the real-and-imagined enclave estates. This

text is also useful for the purpose of this thesis in that it distinctly joins the notions of the

scopic world of the 'eye' of the filmic and the televisual, with that of the 'I' of the

enclavite. The opening sequence of the cinematic text is a 'fake', or simulated, opening to

a (fictitious) tv show which 'stars' the unwitting Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey) as an

enclave community member. Following this opening sequence the narrative further

advances the conjoining concepts of the filmic/televisual, the eye/I nexus and that of the

notion of surveillance/voyeuristic viewing which is the platform on which the various

'communities' – whether of the mall or enclaves or the filmic, televisual or advertorial –

are built. Andrew Niccol's (on line, 2000) shooting script for The Truman Show

describes the scene thus:

> A FOGGED MIRROR
>
> Behind the fog we hear the sounds of a bathroom. After a
> long moment, a hand wipes the condensation from the glass
> to reveal the face of TRUMAN BURBANK...It is
> immediately apparent that we are viewing him through a
> two way mirror...
>
> ...Finally he speaks, talking to himself in the mirror as if
> participating in a TV interview.
>
> [...]
>
> Truman resignedly opens the door of the cabinet and
> replaces his shaving tackle. It partially obscures the lens of
> the hidden camera. (p. 1)

The mirror, like the TV show itself, can be read as a window onto the (in this case,

Truman's) world. It is also positioned as being a reflector of the community and of

society as a whole. That it is 'fogged' alerts the viewer to the difficulty of ascertaining a clear vision of the essence of community – the fogginess alludes to the indistinct nature between the thirdspace of 'lived' conjured community – inscribed in the conjoining of the first and secondspaces – and the livable fourth space. Thus, in this simple opening sequence lie deeper issues *vis a vis* the conundrum of 'community' which are revealed and questioned throughout the text but which are initially alluded to via this 'fogged mirror'. Truman, therefore, is like some sort of latter day Alice. Just as her adventures in the 'looking glass' were about different communities and how she, as other or different is connected to and located within these communities then The Truman Show places Truman in a similar situation in relation to both the other enclave cast members and the TV audience (and even the audience in the cinema watching these filmic communities). As with Alice Truman must negotiate the 'we' and 'them' situations as they arise.

So the first issue to arise and one which confronts the major characters in the text is who are the 'we'? In the mirror sequence it is suggested that it is the 'us' of the cinema audience, participating within a darkened auditorium in a shared experience of the cinematic spectacle. As the narrative progresses a plethora of other diverse 'we's' are revealed and these are 'disclosed' by their collective act of watching Truman's life via the television screen. Thus a variety of 'communities' are suggested who are positioned as participatory communities because they share the comm(on)unity of televisual spectatorship. They also vicariously share Truman's life via the small screen but all of these spectator positions are 'framed' by the cinematic eye. Here is a display of the conundrum of the real-and-imagined coming together in the imagineered spaces of the

simul- and virtutopias. That the television screen is the junction which links the (illusionary or notional) communities within the text (and that of the 'real' cinema audience) is not coincidence. Lynn Spigel in her essay 'The Suburban home Companion: Television and the Neighborhood Ideal in Postwar America' (cited in McDowell (ed), 1997) says this of tv:

> It promised modes of spectator pleasure premised upon the sense of an illusory – rather than a real – community of friends...it also maintained ideals of community togetherness and social interconnection by placing the community *at a fictional distance*. Television allowed people to enter into an imaginary social life, one which was shared not in the neighborhood networks of bridge clubs and mahjong gatherings, but on the national networks of CBS, NBC, and ABC.

> Indeed, television – at its most ideal – promised to bring to audiences not merely an illusion of reality as in the cinema, but a sense of 'being there', a kind of *hyperrealism*. (p. 43)

In this Spigel is describing what is inherent in the text and what is also an integral part of the simul- and virtutopias - the hyperrealism of *being there* juxtaposed with the *fictional distance* of being disengaged. Thus, in the text two tropes are operating. The first is that the 'communities' who are watching Truman's life unfold – the two octogenarian ladies in their lounge room, the two uniformed guards, the middle-aged couple exercising in their bedroom in perfect sync with Truman, the mother and daughter in a kitchen, the man in the bath, the waitress, barman and customers in a bar and even Christoff and his team in the control room – become involved in Truman's story/life because of the immediacy – the being-thereness – of the televisual apparatus which suggests participation within a commendable community. On the other hand television also opens up a space which makes for a distance which in turn denies participation within this

commendable community. Thus the screen becomes both mirror and window but, as the text suggests this window/mirror often tends to be 'fogged up'. As Spigel states:

> According to popular wisdom television had to recreate the sense of proximity...to make the viewer feel as if he or she were taking part...At the same time, however, it had to maintain the necessary distance between the public sphere [of the community] and the private individual. (p. 41)

The various communities feel as if they are participating/sharing with Truman and each other a community experience when in fact they are experiencing an individual response to a fake community. They are 'seeing' a community which is a reflection of a type of community they want to see. The TV is blurring or 'fogging' the actuality – the fakeness offered by the TV programme and Christoff - as being a real community. Here is witnessed the imagineered as real.

The window/mirror has a secondary purpose within the script which is linked to the above. The mirror as window allows for the viewer/spectator to intrude and vicariously experience Truman's vagrant space – the private but fleeting moments of his otherness. However, the mirror as mirror reflects Truman back to himself which suggests that his everyday experience of community is limited to a superficial understanding. He is unaware of the faux aspects of the community in which he resides and takes at face value the images of community *reflected* back to him by the 'actors' and extras

The notion of the fake is further addressed in the name given to the character which plays upon two ideas. The first addresses the notion of the character as being, through the auspices of the televisual medium, a 'True Man'. This is suggested because his whole

'life', from his birth until the 'present', is enacted through this medium with, as is noted in the text, the admission that the 'whole world [is] watching'. The hypothesis offered here is that 'truth' is found via the televisual and that seeing is believing. This is made abundantly clear when it is noted that during the 'flashback' sequences which deal with crucial aspects of Truman's formative years (such as the incident on the beach with his father when the four year old Truman climbs dangerously to the top of a cliff before being coaxed down by his father; the seven year old Truman telling his teacher in class that he wants to be an explorer – and being mocked by her: and the pivotal sequence when his father 'drowns' in a boating 'accident' during a 'storm' on the bay) the replay(s), as noted in the shooting script 'appears to play on a television screen (on line, Niccol, 2000). The second point deals with the character's surname – Burbank – which was the name given to a major studio that dealt with the production of significant television programmes. These examples are just two of many subtle self-reflexive moments in this text.

In the text the filmic/tv eye is a voyeuristic one surreptitiously filming the everyday life – within the home and the community itself – of the major protagonist Truman Burbank; the I of the enclavite. The seeing-eye of the numerous cameras is not that of the panopticon of the simultopias of the mall or the enclave estates because in the text Truman is unaware that his actions are being 'broadcast live' to the world. The omnipresent panopticon has been replaced by the voyeuristic 'static' flaneur of the camera and spectator. In a carnivalesque moment the stasis of the site being seen (the landmark or monument) is replaced by the stasis of the camera's eye. Thus Truman

becomes the movable sight of both 'monument' (the True Man) and subject (the 'I' of the community member). The camera eye is just one single artifice in the apparatus of control. The main 'actors' in this area are the fellow 'cast' members and extras that bring the 'set' to life for the show and for Truman. These 'actors' act as secondary eyes for Christoff and his team. They are there as both cast members and 'monitors' who are linked by radio to Christoff. These observers ensure that Truman is kept ignorant of the conjured aspects of the community.

The opening of the film seeks to position how the text (and by extrapolation the world of the enclave and the filmic and televisual) is to be read. It introduces various characters from The Truman Show (the film) but they are acknowledged not as who they are as actors in the filmic text of The Truman Show but as characters who are playing 'actors', who in turn are playing characters in the (fake) tv show called 'The Truman Show'. Thus the character in the tv show, Marlon, is given the 'credit' as being played by Louis Coltrane. However in the credit sequence at the end of the filmic text this double character Marlon/Coltrane is displayed as being acted by Noah Emmerich. This artifice can be thought of as a postmodern textual vagrancy, of and in, the text. In a heterotopic moment it changes the notions of actors and characters. The opening credits admit to this chicanery and, as an aside, offer a passing interrogation of the real-and-imagined community of the enclaved 'world'. Further to this Truman's 'wife', Meryl Burbank/Hannah Gill/Laura Linney offers: "Nothing fake about (the) Truman Show" whilst it is also suggested that there is: "No difference between public and private life". The most telling remark is given by the Marlon/Coltrane character who states: "It's all

true..it's all real..nothing here is fake. Nothing you see on this show is fake..it's merely controlled."

The notion of the 'controlled real' where nothing is fake – or imagined – leads to the conclusion that the show is 'imagineered'. Similarly in the enclave estates the controlled reality of the site/sights – the various nostalgic architectural impulses which seek to restate 'community' aspects such as the prelapsarian village green, the American small town bandstand with a picket fence or the Mediterranean piazza and clocktower – seek to imagineer a community constancy. So later on in the text Ed Harris, who plays the character of the producer/director and creator (a role reminiscent of the enclave or mall entrepreneur/developer) of the televisual Truman show, Christoff (a name which plays on the God/Christ/Creator concept explicit in the text) states: "We accept the reality of the world we're presented with...it's as simple as that." He is speaking of the imagineering aspects of the real-and-imagined spaces for and of community. Therefore as in the filmic text, the world we are presented with, and one which we accept as 'lived' known community, is conditioned (or controlled) by the perceived and conceived spaces of the first- and secondspatialities; in this case the mise-en-scene (architecture) and the text (community).

The mise-en-scene and the underlying premiss of <u>The Truman Show</u> share many characteristics with other virtutopias discussed in this thesis. Thus, in what may seem a serendipitous moment the name of the town where the narrative is set Seahaven (sea heaven?) is complementary to that of the title of the Australian televisual text <u>Seachange</u>.

This single shared characteristic, however, may not be entirely thought of as coincidence. The upsurge in the interest in lifestyle and leisure texts, whether tv shows or magazines, alerts the reader to a phenomenon which describes a desire for change and these televisual and filmic texts are a reflection of this desire. This desire is also driven by the nostalgic impulse for community generated by a plethora of TV and filmic dramas set in what might be called the Golden Eras of the 50s and 60s where a simpler, united community was thought to exist. An era when families were happier and closer, neighbourhoods friendlier and fear and danger virtually non-existent. This notion leads to the second driving factor for the 'desire' (which is replaced by a media instigated 'need') for enclave communities - the fear of crime and violence which is presented (and beat up) daily in the newspapers and on radio and TV. As Christoff states: "The world, the place you live in is the sick place. Seahaven is the way the world should be". Thus the notions of 'change' and 'heaven' in the names are also indicative of this desire.

The mutual characteristic of the names is not the only one common to the two texts. As the name implies both are associated with water, with the sea acting as a barrier which isolates both of the communities presenting them as enclaves of refuge from the city/world. They are also both presented as being how the 'normal' world should be with Christoff suggesting in The Truman Show that: "I have given Truman the chance to lead a normal life". They are both further isolated from the world by an incomplete bridge, although in each of the texts this isolation is not total, both have alternative routes which join the communities to the 'outside' world: with Seahaven having a second bridge and Pearl Bay the coastal road. This notion of isolation is witnessed in the other texts under

discussion such as <u>Ballykissangel</u>, <u>Heartbeat</u> and <u>Hamish MacBeth</u>. As has already been mentioned with these texts it is the topography of the mise-en-scene – the moors, mountains and heaths and not an expanse of water – that separate the insiders from the outsiders. In contrast, in <u>Pleasantville</u> this notion of isolation does not apply to the text via the 'geography' of the mise-en-scene. There is a carnivalesque inversion in this text because what isolates and makes the community is initially the TV programme. However, the major factor which segregates the community but, ironically finally unites it is their 'interiority of otherness' – the hidden difference in sameness.

The concept of the insider/outsider is consistent throughout the various texts under discussion. In <u>Pleasantville</u> the various community members, mainly those of the margins experience an 'experience of otherness' and difference to that of the norm of community. Thus they are positioned as outsiders who arrive as a threat to the community. In <u>Heartbeat</u> and <u>Hamish MacBeth</u> the threat to the communities of these texts is usually heralded by the arrival of a transient outsider. Whilst in <u>Ballykissangel</u> and <u>Seachange</u> it is the outsider as recently arrived *insider* that poses the problems. <u>The Truman Show</u>, however, offers an inversion of these hypotheses in that Truman himself, the ultimate insider, is a threat to the (albeit contrived) status quo of the enclave community. He is seen as a potentially disruptive element which will contravene the comm(on)unity of the enclave. Thus he is ultimately positioned as inhabiting the vagrant fourth space to that of the community. Whereas the replicants and the outsiders in the other texts mentioned above are seen as Other, Truman is *othered* by being incisively a part of the community. Unlike the actors in the other shows he is, in fact, *the* community; its very raison d'etre,

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because, as the final scenes of the film are witness to the community disintegrates without him. Thus Truman's difference is not only desired but imperatively *needed* for the continued longevity and efficacy of the comm(on)unity. The question asked in the text is "was nothing real?' to which Christoff supplies the answer to Truman: "you were real". What made the reality of the text both as film and TV show was Truman himself with his unmistakable difference as an insider negotiating with the other insiders whilst *desiring* the outsidedness of difference.

The Truman Show is a display and/or an interrogation of the fourthspace of the vagrant space. The hidden cameras are specifically positioned to capture Truman's fourthspatial moments, with the exposition of his (almost child-like) antics in his bathroom being an exemplar of this. In his presentation as community member in the comm(on)unity of the thirdspatial fixed, lived space, there opens up the vagrancy of the poverty of participation within (for Truman) this community. All that he desires is to venture out into the communisphere, the heterogeneous world he knows to be out there, some where. His initial ideal destination is to be Fiji the site of an antipodean otherness to where he lives. He is seeking the exact opposite to that which he knows but it is a difference embedded in sameness; both Seahaven and Fiji are islands, both are therefore isolated and self contained. Fiji is also the place where he thinks the true love of his life, the Lauren/Sylvia character is living. In this latter point he is searching for balance to his life. He is, in fact, seeking to replace one 'perfect community' for another that is the same; He is seeking the real in the imagined from a position of the imagineered or simulation. But Fiji also represents the otherness of difference of heterogeneity. Hence it is not so much the

Lauren/Sylvia character which Truman desires, nor even the imagined Fiji it is the notion of a participatory place in the communisphere of the heterogeneous community where he is not restricted by the thirdspace but rejoice in the fourthspace of be-coming.

The Truman Show, offers for interrogation Thomas and Cresswell's (1973) Reithian notions of the exemplary community as being both balanced and self-contained. The isolationary aspects of the text automatically suggest the latter in that they, like the contemporary enclave estates (and up to a certain point the shopping malls) 'turn-in' on themselves. The virtutopian communities in the texts are 'provided' with a variety of self-sustaining facilities: shops, schools, pubs, churches and police stations. (However, if this is not always replicated in the simultopias of the enclave estates, the community members are, nevertheless, provided with easy access to the bulk of these facilities via the shopping mall and the civic centre that is more commonly attached to them). It is in the former trope, that of the balance, in and of, the community, which is more actively brought to the fore in the texts. All of the texts to a certain degree display 'difference' and the free association and mixing of various 'characters'. Yet, only The Truman Show offers characters of varying ethnic backgrounds within the enclaved community (although these are seldom brought to the foreground). This display of difference suggests a degree of balance within the community of Seahaven, a balance which seeks to deny the display of difference. Thus in The Truman Show the enclave members whether black or white, blue or white collared represent a harmonious homogeneity.

This concept of homogeneity describes a certain type of nostalgia in <u>The Truman Show</u>. However, the 'present' of Truman's world harks back to the 1950s, and more specifically that of a Disneyesque 1950s of Main Street, USA. The 'present' of the commendable community is located in a mythical mnemonic of a 'Golden Era' past. Stylistically the text reiterates this notion with its imagineered mise-en-scene that conjures up visions of the church and village green of Peyton Place or the neighbourhood of, what David Marc (1989) in <u>Comic Visions</u> calls the domesticoms, such as <u>Father Knows Best</u> or <u>My Three Sons</u>. Thus the white picket fence is prominently displayed as a signifier of this nostalgic period of a (irretrievable) community ethos. The costumes which Jim Carey wears as part of his character creation also recite the style of the mid-twentieth century, whereas the car he drives is definitely located within the latter part of this era. Similarly styled is Truman's wife, Meryl, who is reminiscent of a Mary Tyler Moore (as Laura Petrie) in the early 60s <u>The Dick van Dyke Show</u>.

The mise-en-scene of the town of Seahaven in <u>The Truman Show</u> is thus, what Paul Rodaway (1994) describes as a themescape. He states that:

> The theme designer...constructs a resemblance, or simulation, of a particular place or, more accurately described, *style* of place. The choice of themes and presentation of them is grounded in a cultural tradition and *much reference is made to television and cinema images and stereotypes.*(p. 165)(my italics)

He goes on to add: 'This cross-referencing between cultural media is especially evident in leisure parks and shopping malls' (p. 165). The latter quote establishes the links between the simultopias and the virtutopias and in <u>The Truman Show</u> these are brought

together in the perusal of community. One aspect pertaining to the themescapes and one that is echoed in the text is that of 'control'. The simultopias are controlled environments whether it is via the caveats of the enclaves or the flow of 'guests' through the mall both of these spaces are completely managed. Rodaway (1994), citing Chaney states:

> [A] shopping centre is an enclosed space so that customers, once they have entered, have no experience of the physical environment that is other than completely culturally controlled. (p. 168)

Similarly in the construction of the virtutopia of the televisual and the filmic the producers maintain strict authority over what is eventually seen. In The Truman Show the text as TV show addresses the text as film as well as remarking upon the community as 'text'. This concept of the community as texts allows for a discussion on the control of the community via visibility and the inherent poverty of participation this visibility/control nexus establishes. Christoff, the producer/director of The Truman Show the TV text, and his crew inhabit the 'moon' in the mise-en-scene of the text. This 'moon' is a television studio where they receive the camera signals from Seahaven and broadcast them 'live' to the world. It is interesting that the producers/writers of the filmic text of The Truman Show chose this particular site for the creator/director of the eponymous TV text to reside, because it carries with it, in its mythology, the idea that it is the 'eye in the sky'. It also carries with it deeper meanings. Baring and Cashford (1991) suggest that the moon is the 'primal image of the mystery of birth, growth, decay, death and regeneration' (p. 41) a notion that seems to be close to Christoff's heart as he chronicles Truman's life (and even suggests that if he,Truman, were to have a child then this child will carry the show's mantle after Truman's death and into the future).

The single eye of the 'moon'/studio collects the images from the multiple eyes of the camera and directs the manifold eyes of the actors on the set who are the de facto surveillors and controllers. The only eyes which are not controlled are those of Truman himself. (The popularity of the 'show' suggests that Christoff also 'controls' the eyes of the (textual) viewers as is witnessed in the cut-away shots to the (TV) spectators throughout the duration of the film. The cinema audience in the auditorium during a screening are also somewhat controlled, but not by Christoff but by Christoff's 'controller' the director of the filmic text, Peter Weir). The multiple cameras, and Christoff's position as 'omniscient being' enable the actors in the text to channel Truman's day as if it were scripted. Hence his everyday routine is heavily inflected with cliché and repetition and it is only when he uses his own eyes and notices the repetitions that he begins his journey away from the homogeneity of the community - whilst realising his poverty of participation within it. The moment when this comes together is in the scene when he points out the repetitive sequence of the "lady, flowers and dented beetle". This is when he realises and acts upon his position within the vagrant fourthspace and *be-comes*, in his own words, spontaneous.

If control is an important element and theme of the text than the notion of vagrancy is equally to the fore. In The Truman Show there are offered *moments* of vagrancy and *acts* of vagrancy. The former are rehearsed in the scenes where the lighting equipment falls from the 'sky'; when the 'rain' falls only upon Truman before becoming more generalised; and when the car radio transmission is interrupted by the surveillance

monitor from the main studio. These moments are fleeting and heterotopic in that they change the concept of the enclave as enclave and neighbourhood to that of the enclave as set and set-up. These moments are thus out of Truman's control but are still important because he starts to think about his geographical location (the perceived) and the community (the conceived) and therefore begins to question the way his spatiality is 'lived' - he starts to wonder about other(ed) spaces and different places and ways of living.

There are two types of *acts* of vagrancy in the text as well as two displays of the vagrant space enacted by cast members other than Truman. The first of the *acts* of vagrancy is what may be classed as *naïve* acts. This is when Truman is acting childlike or secretive or when he is confronted with a situation which he knows to be unusual but cannot fully comprehend its enormity or importance to him. The most significant example is when, just before she is whisked away, the Lauren/Sylvia character tells Truman about the Tv programme and the conspiracy to keep him in Seahaven. This is a portentous sequence for two reasons. Firstly, from this point on she becomes the focus for his reason to escape and acts as the object for his quest. The second reason for its importance is that Lauren/Sylvia's revelation occurs on the beach. This space is an exemplary vagrant space – it is a liminal space between the ocean and the land and is therefore a *be-coming* space. (As will be seen in chapter eight it is the space where past, present and future 'meet').

The second type of *act* is the *empowering* or *legitimating* act of vagrancy and this is when Truman's questioning of the community is put into action. This is witnessed in the

second example of the vagrant space being seen in another cast member – when Truman's 'father' reappears in the town and is rewritten into the 'script' as a cast member. That he reappears dressed as a 'tramp' is telling as this image visually situates Truman as being both at one with the community – Truman's difference is negated - and as being apart from the community – he sees past the ominousness of otherness and difference to the essence of the communisphere.

After all the above is taken into considerationthe conclusion to be drawn from <u>The Truman Show</u> is that the concept of vagrancy is Janus-faced. The first face looks inward toward the enclave and rehearses the issue that a single individual commanding the vagrant fourthspace has the power to disrupt (or as in Seahaven destroy) a whole community. By inhabiting the vagrant space the comm(on)unity of consensual community the individual acts as a heterotopic agent which questions the spaces (perceived and conceived) that make up the community space; the third, fixed, lived space of homogeneity. The second face looks outward toward the livable/liminal space of the heterogeneity of the be-coming space; the mixing and blending space of difference and otherness. Thus in the text Truman's vagrant *act* might de-balance and un-constrain the enclave community so that 'things fall apart; the centre can not hold' but judging by the reaction to the 'audience' of <u>The Truman Show</u>, the (simulated) televisual text, it has redeeming and maybe necessary factors.

As in the simutopias of contemporary society architecture and topography are important factors. The first- and secondspaces of the perceived and conceived spaces describe the third, fixed, lived space of the show and the estate.

Chapter Seven •

Pleasantville: 'A Fairytale'

> "A Film about life that was, the life that is, and the life we've all wished we could someday visit."(Blurb for Pleasantville)

The title of this section is the name given to a film by its writer producer and director, Gary Ross. This film is about two 90s teenagers who find themselves inserted into a virtual community of a 50s era television sitcom called 'Pleasantville'. It could also almost be the name of this thesis as a whole because all of the sites/sights under discussion have aspects of the fairytale attached to them. Certain elements of folklore and the imagined (or in the case of the malls and enclaves the imagineered) are remotivated and combined with the nostalgic impulse in an effort to conjure a 'fairyland' of a consummate and coherent community. The fairytales of the fairy lands for the sites/sights describe 'pleasant' places that rely upon homogeneity and consensus. However, the fairytale depends upon the acknowledgment of the big bad wolf and the dangerous place – the vagrant spatialities which, it is suggested, once defeated or removed make for a better community.

In the simultopias of the malls and enclaves a similar tactic is employed. The 'otherness' or 'difference' of the vagrant spatialities are worked upon to disarm or absent their sometimes dangerous, but more often than not simply surprising or disruptive potential. However, in the virtutopias of the filmic and televisual texts the vagrant spatialities are

presented to the viewer in all their big-bad-wolfedness to suggest that a good resides with

sameness

In the discussion in the previous chapter about the film The Truman Show it was noted

that the narrative was predominantly about the vagrant other within the community and

how the community of Seahaven needs 'otherness' and 'difference', as embodied in the

character of Truman, to survive. In the film Pleasantville the TV community of the show

'Pleasantville' already 'exists' as a community but needs the insertion of a vagrant

spatiality in the shape of the teenage characters David/Bud (Tobey McGuire) and

Jennifer/Mary Sue (Reese Witherspoon) to make it a more coherent and participatory

community. Although initially when they take the place of Betty and George's children,

David and Jennifer are not seen as vagrant spatialities they soon embrace the role of

vagrant otherness in an effort to make the community recognise the efficacy of difference

in sustaining the notion of commendable community.

The Truman Show depicts how the builders of the community of Seahaven (Christoff and

his team) see the vagrant space of otherness and difference as needing to be contained.

Christoff acknowledges that if Truman is allowed to inhabit his vagrant spatiality it will

inevitably lead to the destruction of the 'community'. However, in Pleasantville the

community (be)comes to realise that it is a fake (and therefore participatorilly

impoverished) and that it can only be enriched by the arrival and acceptance of the

vagrant other(s) of difference. For the (filmic) TV viewer within The Truman Show text

– the old ladies, the security guards, the Japanese family, the bar-room workers and

clients and even the operators in the 'lunar studio' – there dawns the notion that Truman's vagrantness and difference is valued as being necessary for all communities, large and small, and that living in a shared space – being in the same boat – makes for a community in name only. This idea suggests that there are certain aspects of society that may be deemed destructive but go to make for a healthy community.

This sentiment is also displayed in Pleasantville where, as the David/Bud character describing the world outside the (scripted) 'Pleasantville' community says: 'Oh...I don't know...It's different...Well it's louder...And scarier I guess...And...and a lot more dangerous...'. The notion here is of an otherness to that of Pleasantville - a difference and differences which is/are the heterogeneous antithesis to the homogeneity of the grey world of the (scripted) enclave community.

The towns of Seahaven in The Truman Show and Pleasantville have other characteristics in common but these are treated differently by the two texts. The aesthetic of colour is a mutual trope but one which is more circumspect in Pleasantville. In The Truman Show the colours of the town are, in the main, muted pastels with only Truman himself being dressed more garishly as the film progresses. This notion works in two ways. The first is that the pastel shades of the townscape describe a safe and secure environment with surprise or 'loudness' being banished. This in turn suggests the homogeneity of the space/place and of the people of the town. The 'twins' who Truman encounters and who are dressed in identical clothing echo this supposition. That Truman is trying to sell them insurance and they are undecided proposes that they feel safe in the town environment

and so have no recourse to such an overture. Thus safety and sameness are subtly depicted as being a mainstay of the enclave community.

The second concept around colour in this text has to do with Truman's progressively garishly loud outfits. In this can be seen his movement from the homogeneity of the conjured community to a more individualistic position which informs notions of the (importance) of difference in sameness – the heterogeneity – within a robust community. As Truman moves further, conceptually, from the community, as he asserts the vagrant space of his individuality his clothes and his actions take on an ever more visually stimulating and assertive aspect. It is only when he is making his final foray for freedom, when he is ultimately escaping from the fake community, that he returns to more muted colours. Thus, his previously garish attire was a signifier of his attempt at assuming a significant difference and otherness. This can be read as Truman striving to remove himself from the stultifying environment of the enclave of Seahaven in a search for the more heterogeneous spaces beyond the walls.

In <u>Pleasantville</u> the colours also carry a wealth of meaning. In the opening scene when the David and Jennifer characters are in their 'real' world the hues within the mise-en-scene duplicate those of <u>The Truman Show.</u> They are muted and subdued with very little offered to excite the viewer. However, after they have fallen Alice-like into the small screen world of 'Pleasantville' the environment in which they find themselves is a wash of grey. Apart from positioning the text as being from an earlier era of the 1950s (where black and white TV was the norm) it also acts as a comment on the community within the

text. Thus in the mise-en-scene there is very little perceptible contrast with even the strong difference between black and white being denied by the grey slough. This lack of the contrast in difference is replicated in the 'characters' of the TV show who are singularly one dimensionally bland. The notion behind the film and the TV town in the film is a comment on this blandness with the name Pleasantville, which is taken to mean 'pleasant town', being a euphemism for a WASP enclave of homogeneity.

The father George epitomises the one dimensionality of the town and characters by reiterating the almost standard 1950s sitcom catchphrase 'Honey, I'm home'. This single phrase works to conjure a notional world of balance and certainty with the outside public realm of work being that of the male whilst the domain of the house is the sphere of the wife and mother. This notion is further reiterated through the various 'male' and 'female' spaces in the text. The spaces for and of, the male in the town of Pleasantville are the *institutional* or insular and segregated spaces of the Chamber of Commerce, the courtroom and the bowling alley. These spaces alert the viewer to the notion of dominant male power within the town of Pleasantville. They suggest the physicality of 'work' in a public male domain and this notion is linked to that of an ordered, logical cerebral space. They also infer a male enacted uniform homogeneity signified by the bowling outfits the men wear. This in turn implies that these spaces are where otherness in the form of the women is outlawed and that they are potentially disruptive of the sameness within the male space which is pointedly acknowledged when one of the characters Roy reveals his burnt shirt. "Big Bob' McGee (who the script describes as 'owner of the drugstore, supermarket and Chevy dealership' – three key areas of modernity and the male

dominated capitalist arena) says contemptuously that Roy's wife had defended her mistake because 'she was just thinking'. To Bob and the other men women 'daydream' and 'thinking' is not considered a women's activity and to the males for women to indulge in this activity is tantamount to rebellion.

The adult females in the text are linked with the home and the interior. The 'public female' places are aligned with the private or marginalised spaces - the soda shop and lover's lane – with these spaces being loosely linked to nature and a type of 'sub cultural' space of (bodily) pleasure. Thus the character of the mother, Betty (Joan Allen) is 'drawn' to Mr Johnson (Jeff Daniels) and his 'art works' in the social space of the soda shop. The soda shop becomes the site of the vagrant otherness of community where a type of dis-order and inconsonance are allowed to arise. The soda shop is positioned in the opening sequences of the film as being the epitome of conformity and 'pleasantness' with Mr Johnson's inability to break his routine and the 'safe' bland music of 'Johnny Mathis, Perry Como, Jack Jones, The marches of John Phillips Souza or the Star Spangled Banner' are the only permitted 'recorded music' on the jukebox. However by the end of the film the soda shop represents a heterotopic space which affects and changes all the other spaces around it. During this change the soda shop can be seen as a vagrant space where the marginalised otherness is allowed free range. That this otherness is seen as being a female and therefore a 'dangerous' space is witnessed in the destruction of the soda shop by the mainly male 'grey conformers' in the town.

It is in the soda shop that the Bud/David character introduces Mr Johnson to the world of painting via the art book. As they leaf through the 'masterpieces' in the book the colours in the paintings become more vibrant, dramatic and surreal. It is also in the soda shop that Betty reveals her 'colouredness' (or as the script discloses her "true color") to Mr Johnson which initiates their (inferred) affair. Mr Johnson subsequently paints a 'beautiful, sensual nude' portrait of Betty which provokes the crowd violence. Thus the hitherto outlawed (vagrant) 'body' takes prominence over the mind and a potentiality of the pleasure in difference replaces an oppressive pleasantness of conformity or sameness.

In the early stages of the film Betty, with her (as the script describes it), 'stewardess smile' and fetish for cooking and (over)feeding the family and George with his 'Honey I'm home' reiteration act as indicators of the homogeneity of the community which is one of symmetry and certainty. However, it is only when one of these characters (initially rehearsed in the marginalised and repressed Betty) realises their potentiality - and has faith in their difference - that the homogeneity within the community is seen as being the oppressive apparatus it is. Thus the *pleasantness* in the town of Pleasantville works to remove the vagaries of livable community whilst maintaining the grey, dead spaces of the thirdspace of lived community. The Bud/David character alludes to this in his courtroom confrontation scene with Bob:

> DAVID: See, I know you want it to stay "Pleasant" but
> there are so many things that are so much better: like
> Silly…or Sexy…or Dangerous…or Wild…or Brief…
> > (beat)
> And every one of those things is in you all the time if you
> just look for them.

Thus all of the descriptions used by Bud/David can be applied to the vagrant fourthspace and are there for the taking. This suggests that the fourthspace is a becoming space of potential which is shut down by the homogeneity of the community of conformity.

Apart from the accord of the artifice of colour within <u>The Truman Show</u> and <u>Pleasantville</u> these texts also share the idea that these types of conjured communities are somehow 'defective' or imperfect, lacking or incomplete – a concept that leads to the notion of an impoverishment of participation within the community. <u>The Truman Show</u> demonstrates this impression of the defective or imperfect via: the 'stage light' falling to earth in the opening sequence, the localised rain which falls on Truman alone at the beach, the radio frequency mix up and Truman's confrontation with the *extras* who are waiting their turn as 'community members'. This latter instance is of importance because it is here that the backstage region intrudes into Truman's frontstage world. In a neat play on Goffman's concept there is a juxtapositioning of a number of back and frontstages - real-and-imagin(eer)ed areas, with the 'real' spaces of the extras, the outside world and Truman being 'walled of' from each other. Nevertheless, all three 'exist' in counterpoint and justification of, and for, each other. The outside world and the extras by virtue of their otherness and difference make for the imagineered community of Seahaven. Similarly the conjured community makes for the reality that Truman possesses – his vagrant spatiality is rehearsed via his difference to the community. Thus the discussion which Truman has with Marlon about wanting to 'escape' to Fiji alludes to the vagrant space of otherness which is the *concept of* Fiji. It is therefore not the actual place, Fiji, that Truman desires but its complete antithetical and antipodean difference which marks it as 'other'. It is this

difference which he seeks to claim as his own and to inhabit. As he points out to Marlon: "See here, this is us. All the way round here, Fiji. You can't get any further away before you start coming back".

In Pleasantville the notion that the thirdspatial community is seen to be found wanting in certain areas is demonstrated by the absence of a toilet in the rest rooms of the soda shop, the absence of words and illustrations on the pages of the books and Betty's ignorance of sex (even though she is supposed to have had two children!). This lack is due to the notion that in the community of the televisual there are no backstage spaces and as such an understanding and familiarity with them is absented. In the conjured community of the 50s sitcom the spaces of otherness – or in this case the otherness of the unknown – are absented because of a type of social nicety. The mention of sex, bowel movements and personal hygiene was thought of as being a social taboo. Similarly in a virtutopia of a town like Pleasantville the simulacra of the façade and the faux – the imagineered and the imagined – replace the real.

The notion of lack can be linked to that of the dichotomies of choice/no choice and/or awareness/unaware. These dichotomies operate in both The Truman Show and Pleasantville. In the former everyone (including the 'viewers' within the text) are aware of Truman being oblivious of his situation. It is shown that his fellow 'community' members work hard to keep him in the dark with each individual wearing an ear piece so that instructions may be passed on from the controller Christoff in the operations room. This effectively limits Truman's opportunities and abilities to make considered choices. It

also limits his ability to get away from the homogeneity of the community and he is therefore forced to seek fleeting (vagrant) moments in equally transitory (vagrant) spaces (the beach, the basement, the bathroom) to *become himself*.

In Pleasantville this notion of awareness and choice is reversed with the major characters of David/Bud and Jennifer/Mary Sue being in control and the community having their choice of action and obliviousness to difference taken away from them. This notion is further advanced with the introduction of the television repairman played by Don Knotts. (In an interesting aside it should be noted that in the original script the writer Andrew Niccol had written the TV repairman character as Dick Van Dyke - an actor who, with Mary Tyler Moore, was a star of some of the most popular sitcoms of the late fifties and early sixties). The Don Knotts character is seen as being the person who is responsible for inserting the vagrant spaces brought to the community of Pleasantville by David and Jennifer. In so doing he changes the character of the town from one of symmetrical homogeneity to that of the heterotopic heterogeneity – from the 'lived' dead space of insipidness to that of the potential space of the incisiveness of 'becoming'. After the changes have started to become effective he pleads with the David character to return to the 'real' world so that he can change the televisual 'Pleasantville' back to its one-dimensional blandness. Here is demonstrated the nostalgic impulse for a return to the prelapsarian, small town world of Main and Elm Streets found in the Disney lands and worlds, the malls and the master planned communities of the contemporary era. It is a nostalgic impulse for a myth of community togetherness of the village green and the

picket-fenced band stand – two topographic and architectural artifices used by the enclave developers in conjuring 'feelings' of community within potential buyers.

In The Truman Show the Christoff character is aligned with the mall owner/manager or enclave estate entrepreneur. He is the originator/developer of the site and keeps it under his control. In an omniscient manner he commands Truman's environment deciding when it will rain or shine and even when the sun will rise. He also controls the 'flow' of the vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Thus Truman is at the dictate of the owner/manager/controller Christoff. In the mall the owners/managers have a similar, if more limited, 'power'. They are able to dictate, within the precinct environment, the temperature and the mix and flow of the traffic. The maller has very little say in what goes on in the mall and in fact can be removed from this privatised 'public' space by the manager (or his/her minions) without notice. In the enclaves the 'kindly processes' operate to control the residents with the caveats, rules and regulations working to remove 'unpleasantness'.

In Pleasantville the TV repairman is the nominal controller who inserts the major protagonists into the text/town. He (like Christoff, the mall managers and the enclave 'committees') acts as a figure of surveillance correcting (or endeavouring to) anything untoward within his area of control. The TV repairman fails in his task as master manipulator because he underestimates the desire within the population for a more livable space which is the space for potential. This is also reflected in the shift of 'ownership' of the public spaces within the conjured community of the text. Like the TV repairman the

adult males in the town of Pleasantville have jurisdiction over the streets and the public domain. They surveille the other groups which make up the town membership – mainly the teenagers and women – from the panoptical spaces of the sidewalk benches and storefronts. That the other groups are 'controlled' in the public (adult, male) domain because of this surveillance is made clear with the introduction in to the civic spaces of the heterotopic vagrant spatialities acutely depicted in Mr Johnson's window murals.

You can colour my world: Return to Main Street

The town of Pleasantville in the film of the same name about an eponymous TV programme rehearses all the elements of an enclave estate. That it is a town in a TV show immediately describes its separation from the outside (real) world. That it is *meant* to be a TV programme should alert the viewer to its construction – its conjured connotations – and might also lead the reader to the conclusion that to suggest that this is a 'community' is nonsense. However, by virtue that the 'characters' themselves within the televisual community of the *town* of Pleasantville do not seem to realise that they are characters in a show should deflect this criticism. Throughout the film the characters are totally oblivious to themselves as being constructions and regard themselves as 'real', if at times bemused, people.

The town within the TV show is positioned as being totally isolated. In the film the major thoroughfare of Pleasantville, (the epigrammatically named) Main Street is seen as a loop road. At one point early in the film the Jennifer/Mary Sue character asks the geography

teacher about what is at the end of Main Street to which the almost Disneyesque reply is: "Oh, Mary Sue. You should know the answer to that. The end of Main Street is just the beginning again". This circularity of Main Street positions Pleasantville as being, like the contemporary malls and enclaves, inward looking thus promoting the notion of the homogeneity of the community. It also suggests a continuity which resides in the nostalgic impulse which is a major trope of the film. This continuity also denies ambiguity and infers a sameness which is a direct result of the claustrophobia inherent in the enclaves. The discontinuity which informs and is a constituent of difference has the potential to breach the (socio-economically policed) borders. Thus the potential for otherness or difference is absented. The fact that the filmic David and Jennifer characters are immediately accepted as the televisual Bud and Mary Sue suggests a sameness in continuity within the community. The difference in appearance between the replacement by David/Jennifer with that of their counterparts, Bud and Mary Sue is completely ignored – there is no discontinuity or 'difference' in Pleasantville!

The town of Pleasantville replicates the contemporary enclave in other respects. Main Street is the only major thoroughfare – the point where Pleasantville begins and ends. This suggests a sympathetic topography with that of the master planned communities. This notion is further advanced later in the text when Pleasantville is finally linked to the outside world and Main Street is the road that acts as this link. But there are more similarities between the real-and-imagined spaces of the sim- and virtutopia. The lake where the teenagers gather in the early scenes of the film distinguishes where the Main Street 'loop' begins. At the end of the film when Main Street is the main arterial road

leading in or out of town the lake is the marker of the periphery of Pleasantville the town. Thus the lake and its surrounds can be read as an 'entry statement' of the 'enclave', a device which mirrors that of the contemporary enclave estates. This notion is further advanced with the understanding that the Pleasantville entry statement shares similar elements of construction with that of the enclave 'statement'. Both rely upon 'natural', albeit cultivated, constituents such as bushes, trees, plants and water. Although these constituents are landscaped they suggest an 'essential community' which in turn connotes images of exemplary and genuine community. The Pleasantville statement has a bandstand as part of its construction which is a similar device to that which is usually included in the master planned communities where the gazebo, the amphitheatre and the (often empty) town square replete with clocktower take pride of place as a signifier of community unity. The schema of the 'furniture' works as an indicator of the enclave's theme and in 'Pleasantville' the empty and (apparently) unused bandstand offers a subtle comment on the poverty of participation within the community of Pleasantville.

One of the aspects alluded to in the film deals with the notion of the need for diversity within the built environment to help formulate the livable space. The notion of the mixed use of space as a benefit to the community is hinted at in the (brief) scene where Miss Peters the geography teacher asks a class member, Tommy, about the differences between two streets in Pleasantville. His answer is that Elm Street is not as long as Main Street to which Miss Peters replies:

That's right, Tommy. It's not as long. Also, it only has houses. So the geography of Main Street is different than the geography of Elm Street.

Here is a passing comment upon the notion of *zoning* and its effect upon the virtual town of Pleasantville and, by extrapolation, the contemporary enclaves. It is suggested that part of the bland, grey homogeneity of Pleasantville (and of the contemporary enclaves) is partly due to the separation of the use of spaces, which removes diversity within the streetscape. This in turn leads to dead spaces. Zoning policies have long held the belief that housing space, shopping space and work space should be kept segregated. James Howard Kunstler (1993) suggests that one of the greatest problems of the suburban pattern (of which the enclave is the apex) is the 'extreme separation of uses' (p. 117). He goes on to add:

> The idea behind the separation of uses had its origin in the nineteenth century, when industrial activity became an obnoxious nuisance to city dwellers...So industry was led off and given its own part of town in which to be dirty and noisy. With the advent of the car, shopping became a more or less mechanized activity – motor vehicles generated noise and fumes and cluttered up the street – so there began a trend to separate commerce from places of dwelling too. Today, of course, the idea has been carried to absurd extremes...The separation of uses is also the reason why there are no apartments over the stores in the thousands of big and little shopping centers built since 1945, though our society desperately needs cheap, decent housing for those who are not rich. (p. 117)

He then observes:

> Today, we have achieved the goal of total separation of uses in the man-made landscape. The houses are all in their respective income pods, the shopping is miles away from the houses, and the schools are separate from both the shopping and the dwellings. Work takes place in the office park – the word *park* being a semantic gimmick to persuade zoning boards that a bunch of concrete and glass boxes set among parking lots amounts to a rewarding environment – and manufacturing takes place in the industrial park – ditto. (p. 118)

Jane Jacobs' (1961) book <u>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</u> is basically an extended discourse on the uses and need for diversity in American cities (and the suburbs). She constantly argues for heterogeneity over the monotony of the homogeneity of 'sameness'. In the section entitled *Some myths about diversity* she states: 'If the sameness of use is shown candidly for what it is – sameness – it looks monotonous. Superficially, this monotony might be thought of as a sort of order, however dull' (p. 236). This idea is reflected in the mise-en-scene and narrative of <u>Pleasantville</u>. The built environment, the separation of diverse spaces and therefore the eradication of the mixed use of the space leads, in Pleasantville, to a sameness of action and thought for the residents. This sameness in turn leads to a homogeneity which denies otherness and difference and leads to an unhealthy chauvinism. Further on in her piece Jacobs cites Eugene Raskin when she comments that 'genuine differences in the city architectural scene express':

> ...the interweaving of *human* patterns. They are full of people doing different things, with different reasons and different ends in view, and the architecture reflects and expresses this...it is the richness of human variation that gives *vitality and colour* [my italics] to the human setting...
>
> Considering the hazard of monotony...the most serious fault in our zoning laws lies in the fact that they *permit* an entire area to be devoted to a single use. (p. 241)

That diversity is denied in Pleasantville is rehearsed in the monochromatic streetscapes which are in direct contrast with that of the vicissitude of the lake area which is one of the first to offer an image of vitality and colour. As Jacobs points out: 'No special form of...blight is nearly as devastating as the great blight of dullness' (p. 246).

This lack of diversity is also found in the contemporary enclaves where the zoning codes remove the heterogeneity of the diversity of a livable street and in its stead offer bland dead spaces. Enclaves such as 'Ellenbrook', along with just about every master planned community of its mid-priced ilk, offer instead of true diversity of use manager-controlled cosmetic diversity or what Jacobs calls 'contrivance' (p. 237). These contrivances, she states: 'represent the desire merely to *appear* different' (p. 237). Thus in the 'Ellenbrook' style enclaves the (management initiated) planning codes allow for slightly different house frontages – different brick styles and colours (within a certain range), different garden plants (of a certain height and width) and various house styles (within the strictly governed theme of the enclave). There is little allowance for diversity in areas such as the set-back distance of the house from the street, house height or width, 'garage flats' or even battle-axe blocks. What diversity comes down to is a Disneyesque façade which as James Howard Kunstler in The Geography of Nowhere (1993) reminds us is simply: 'Viewing a landscape full of totem objects designed to convince us that we live in a thing called *community*' (p.123). Later in his book under the heading *A Place Called Home* he avers:

> These housing "products" represent a triumph of mass merchandising over regional building traditions, of salesmanship over civilisation. You can be sure these same houses have been built along a highway strip outside of Fresno, California, at the edge of a swamp in Pahokee, Florida, and on the blizzard-blown fringes of St. Cloud, Minnesota. They might be anywhere. The places they stand are just different versions of nowhere…Tradition comes prepackaged as screw-on aluminium shutters, vinyl clapboards, perhaps a phony cupola on the roof ridge, or a plastic pediment over the door. (p. 166)

Although Kunstler here tends toward an evangelical tone and doesn't specifically relate his points to the suburban enclave the sentiment he addresses prevails. Later again within his discussion he suggests that these totem facades be related to the prominence and importance of the televisual within contemporary society.

As the outside world became more of an abstraction, and the outside of the house lost its detail, it began to broadcast information about itself and its owners in the abstracted language of television specifically of television advertising, which is to say a form of communication based on simplifications...As in television advertising...the intended audience...will glance at the house for a few seconds. So, one dwelling has a fake little cupola to denote vaguely an image of rusticity; another has a fake portico a la *Gone With the Wind*, with skinny two-story white columns out of proportion with the mass of the house, and a cement slab too narrow to put a rocking chair on, hinting at wealth and gentility; a third has the plastic pediment over the door and brass carriage lamps on either side invoking "tradition". The intent is to create associations that will make the house appear as something other than...it actually is, something *better*, older, more enduring, resonant with history. (p. 169)

It is also an attempt to offer an image of community membership through the nostalgic impulse and their associated resonances. Kunstler points to this in a section entitled *The Loss of Community*:

> But community is not something you *have*, like a pizza.
> Nor is it something you can buy, as visitors to Disneyland
> and Williamsburg discover. It is a living organism based on
> a web of interdependencies...It expresses itself physically
> as *connectedness*. (pp. 185, 186)

Within the text certain aspects position Pleasantville (as well as the enclaves) as being somewhat utopian in constitution. In the film this is established with reference to attitudes pertaining to the family and the community as a whole. In regard to the latter there are a number of clues with the most obvious being that of the town fire brigade. The brigade's first appearance in the film sees them rescuing a stranded cat from the branches of a tree. Although this is a rather cliched scene of a 1950s-small-town-motif it does however offer a rather subtle indicator of the utopian aspects of the post World War II society and its mirror, the early TV sitcom. This is made more evident a little later in the film when the fire brigade is again used to highlight the nostalgic notion of the safe and secure 50s small-town. In this instance Betty's self instigated orgasm spontaneously ignites a tree and the brigade is called in. Unfortunately it is evident that because there has never been a fire before in the show/town the brigade has never had to extinguish one. The character David/Bud has to show them how to connect and use the hoses and what to do to put the fire out. Although the fire is a new experience for the town and the destruction of the tree should alarm the community members they seem nonplussed by the occurrence. This may be read as a signifier of the naivety of the community who remain safely secure in a utopian 'fairy land' – a land before the arrival of the vagrant otherness of difference.

The nostalgia for a type of carefree and confident naivety demonstrated in the 1950s TV sitcom community in Pleasantville (and by extrapolation the erstwhile community of the 'real' pre- and immediate post-Second World War) remains a strong factor of the concept behind the contemporary real-and-imagined communities. Gerard Jones (1992) in the

aptly (for this chapter) titled <u>Honey, I'm Home!</u> takes note of this. In the opening to a

chapter named 'Inventing America' he argues that:

> When the pop culture eye turns toward the mid-1950s, it
> almost invariably sees a time of placidity and
> changelessness, an eerily homogenous landscape of
> spacious houses and smiling, self satisfied WASP families.
> This was the image most advertisements and
> entertainments of the time seemed determined to project.
> Yet this willfully quiet veneer was hiding – and facilitating
> – the biggest shift in the American way of life...[of] the last
> century. The sitcoms of those years, which have done so
> much to shape our impression of the era, *were conceived to
> explain and exploit and take some of the fear* from that
> shift. In the process they came to crystallize some of the
> great American self-delusions of the 1950s. (p. 87)(my
> italics)

In this paragraph Jones has neatly summed up the issues that are at the heart of the film

<u>Pleasantville</u>. Although not directly identified Jones has alluded to the need of the

enclave and mall owners, their allied copy writers and indeed the TV and film makers to

'explain and exploit and take some of the fear' out of contemporary everyday living. This

fear, in the 50s, concerned the Cold War Warriors whereas in the 80s and 90s it is the

concerns of the cruel world worriers. Thus the developers tried to relieve the fear by the

promotion of the third space via the notion of community residing in the aesthetics of the

built environment. Jones has also (although somewhat less dynamically) identified the

need for the recognition of the heterogeneity of the vagrant fourthspace – the space that

may well be the essence of the fear but may also be the saviour of 'community' within

the conjured communities.

The filmic text <u>Pleasantville</u> plays with these sentiments whilst also making comments

upon the dystopian aspects of these eras with the major condemnation being reserved for

that of the destructive impetus of racism within the communities. The otherness of 'colour' (a once 'polite' epithet for people of an African or Indian lineage) in the text is a pointed reminder that the 'utopian' communities of these generations depended upon exclusion and marginalisation of an-other of dissimilarity – but it was never sold as such. Jones (1992) makes some acute comments upon this. He states:

> The suburbs were freedom, wealth, happiness, personal fulfillment. Paradise had become a commodity, and an affordable one at that...By the early 1950s producers and consumers, government and citizens, advertisers and audience had pulled together in a consensus of unprecedented size, power and harmony. There were, of course, people outside of the consensus. Blacks for instance, had been virtually barred from the suburbs. Developers wouldn't sell to them. And if they did, white neighbours found quiet ways [read: kindly processes!] to keep them out

But marginalisation is not limited to the 'people of colour' in the text. It is also seen to operate toward another group who are still presently marginalised within the contemporary enclaves and, to a greater or lesser degree, society as a whole. This group are the teenagers within the town of Pleasantville. They are the first group to understand and grasp the potential of the vagrant space of otherness and heterogeneity. They are also the first to come to terms with the dangerous aspects of a livable, yet liminal (vagrant) space which is rehearsed at Lover's Lane.

The adults in the text seek to hide the effects of this 'becomingness' via trite panaceas (especially to 'teenage ailments') and cliched responses such as those of Dr. Henderson. In the text after 'examining' Lisa Anne (Mary Sue's best friend) via a throat inspection with a tongue depressor he states: "Well...I don't think it's anything to worry

about…It'll probably just clear up by itself…Cut down on greasy foods and chocolate. No french fries, that kind of thing…It's just a "teenage" thing". The teenage 'thing' then is something which is fleeting and therefore of little importance. However, the teenage experience is very much equated with the vagrant space: it is silly…sexy…dangerous…wild and brief. But most of all teenagers are heterotopic in that they change the space they inhabit and in turn change the spaces which surround it. The teenage, as vagrant space is, above all, a potential space of _becoming_.

Similarly Betty is distraught when she turns 'coloured' and she says to the David/Bud character: (trembling) "I can't go out there this way. How can I go out there this way?" In a later scene this issue, and that of the homogeneity of the community, is again addressed when Betty and George are discussing Betty's colouredness and her 'future' with in the community.

> BETTY: Look at me George. That meeting's not for me.
> Look at my face.
> GEORGE: It's fine. You'll put on some make up and…
> BETTY: I don't want to put on some make up…
> (George's eyes widen. It is a watershed moment)
> GEORGE: (protesting) It goes away…It'll go away.
> BETTY: (gently) I don't want it to go away
>   […]
> GEORGE: (the '50s patriarch) Okay—now you listen to
> me…
>   (beat)
> You're gonna come to this meeting and you're gonna put
> on this make up, and you're gonna come home at six
> o'clock every night and have dinner ready on this table.
> BETTY: (softly) No I'm not sweetie.

This brief exchange is an important and explicit one in that it describes not only the 'community's' attitude to otherness and difference but also the singularity and

homogeneity of the attitude within the community. The complete regimentation and predictability – home at six o'clock, dinner ready on the table for the husband and father – of the lifestyle echoes the representations of the blandness of contemporary simutopian communities found in the photographic texts. What is marked in the dialogue above is Betty's insistence on claiming and not denying the vagrant space of 'becoming'. Her simple dismissal of George's suggestions and demands and her final, tender rejection of his propositions sees Betty moving away from his world into a more heterogeneous realm of a livable self identity.

Pleasantville offers an easily accessible insight into the notions behind the contemporary enclave estate, the concept of community and the vagrant fourthspace. It starts from the position of the fragmented family (and community) of the 1990s, where divorce is seen to be commonplace and the TV set takes the place of the parents and the TV programmes are substitutes for relationships. The film then makes a quantum shift into another spatial and temporal zone – the small town of Pleasantville of the 1950s – by virtue of the televisual apparatus itself. Through the auspices of the two teenagers acting as heterotopic others to the conjured community the notion of otherness and community values are and during the film the impoverishment of participatory community because of the banishment of difference is witnessed. However, as the vagrant space begins to work upon the community the controlling and restricting influence of sameness is loosened and a more participatory community is revealed.

Chapter Eight •

Muriel's Wedding: The family and the communisphere.

As has been seen <u>The Truman Show</u> and <u>Pleasantville</u> offer for inspection the experience of the conjured 'community' of the enclave estates with the major characters of Truman in <u>The Truman Show</u> and David, Mr Johnston and Betty in <u>Pleasantville</u> inhabiting the vagrant spatialities of the heterotopic spaces found there. This chapter seeks to remove the walls and borders of the enclave and to open up for discussion the vagrant spatiality of the individual who is not sequestered within the confining spaces. Although the town of Porpoise Spit can be seen as being an enclave in appearance, it boasts all of the main enclave attributes –being a 'spit' it is semi-isolated from the main land, it has the classic single entry/exit road, and, to all intents and purposes it is a 'balanced' and self contained 'community '- it plays a minor, if very important part, within the narrative. What is under scrutiny in the film is the 'vagrancy' of the individual within the confines of a more general, but nonetheless unmistakably conjured community. Thus the vagrant spatiality under consideration here concerns that of the major protagonists, Muriel and Rhonda.

P. J. Hogan's <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> is an Australian film which has been classed by Jane Landman as part 'of the Australian Gothic' (Jane Landman, 1996, p. 112). This she states, quoting Dermody and Jacka (1988), is where: 'The normal [especially the suburban] is revealed as having a stubborn bias towards the perverse, the grotesque, the malevolent'. These three characteristics are reflected in the temperaments and physicalities of the actors who play the major characters. The main protagonist in the text

is, of course, Muriel who is played by an overweight Toni Collette. This 'largeness', as Hogan points out was an essential part of the character. He states that in his experience overweight women:

> 'feel physically uncomfortable with themselves - always trying to improve what they thought were deficiencies...but their unhappiness seemed to begin physically and I thought this was important for Muriel. The emotional load on Muriel is really this insurmountable weight. (p. 32)

Muriel is the vagrant space of the monstrous grotesque – the otherness to the 'normal community' of Porpoise Spit, the isolated enclave of the text. The emotional load Hogan identifies is exacerbated by the perceived need to live up to the expectations of the community, whether physically, emotionally or socially. Muriel in this respect repeatedly fails and as such is marginalised, seen as somewhat deviant, ab-normal and useless as her father Bill keeps asserting to all and sundry. Muriel's 'partner' and fellow outcast in the text is Rhonda (Rachel Griffiths), but whereas Muriel's marginalisation and deviance stems from the twin failings of the carnivalesque excess: her shyness - 'you hardly spoke when we were in school' - and her equally excessive weight, Rhonda's is more of a moral divergence. Although Rhonda's body falls well within the 'accepted' criteria of being shapely and slim, her excessive characteristics help to place her on the margins of what is acceptable behaviour. She is a heavy smoker, bordering on chain-smoking, has a physical failing in that she is an asthmatic, has, she hints to the Doctor, 'too much sex'. That her libidinal liberality is a prime marker of her deviance, and her premeditated promiscuousness is a pointer to otherness is suggested when she has sex with two men at the same time. That these men are American sailors one of whom is black (a status that excludes him from the 'normal' community) is a further testament to her status as

deviant. Rhonda, it is assumed is uninterested in following the standard pathway to community acceptance in that she is quite uninterested in men as husbands, but sees them as being simply there for her pleasure. If Muriel is the feminised female, reflected in her desire for acceptance via marriage, then Rhonda is to a certain extent her 'masculinised' partner. That Rhonda is made to seem more 'male-like' in demeanour and action is witnessed in her propensity for swearing at, and the disparaging of, Tania and her friends rehearsed when Muriel comes to take her away from Porpoise Spit. Rhonda is positioned as momentarily centred within the masculine domain when she casts Tania and company as 'cocksuckers'. Her reaction to their false friendship and their hyperbolic hypocrisy and two-faced fawning she sees as being merely 'lip service' to her. But Rhonda transcends this centred positioning by taking a vagrant space, and voice, of her own, denouncing and renouncing the conjured community of Porpoise Spit for her own liminal space. It is to be expected that Rhonda's displays of individuality can never go unpunished and it is immediately after the sexual romp with the two sailors that she is diagnosed as having a tumorous cancer on her spine and is eventually confined to a wheelchair. In this new role as physically disabled - *ab*-normal - she is explicitly doubly marginalised as helpless (she has to move back to Porpoise Spit because she 'cannot even go shopping' without help - which might be seen as another marker of her aberrance as a female community member) and as being the recipient of pointed, sarcastic pity (Tania says to Rhonda's mother after Mariel/Muriel's wedding 'We'll push Rhonda around, Mrs. E').

The other major and minor characters also have certain attributes that indicate how they are to be read. Bill Heslop, Muriel's father, is known as 'battler Bill' which is an obvious

salute to the Australian bush-myth of the self-sufficient, anti-authoritarian male. In this text, however, this mythical stance has been corrupted to a point where Bill is a scheming, self-absorbed authoritarian despot who blames his family for his failures whilst hiding behind the facade of a community spirited man who is 'battling for Porpoise Spit'. The character Bill carries with it two connotative roles. Firstly, as town councillor he is positioned as being akin to the enclave/mall developer/owner. Bill, in the film is forever scheming to build various 'projects' to, as he puts it, 'help the community to progress'. Secondly, he can be seen as the dark, under belly of the community, the corrupt core beneath the 'sound' surface.

Bill is also overweight (and throughout the text he is observed in one restaurant or another) but his large girth, however, can be read as a marker of his 'success' and also of his position within the community. As P.J. Hogan states: '[I]n a small town like Porpoise Spit, the fat just contributes to the power of the men' (p. 32). Bill's wife Betty is also overweight and like Muriel this stems seemingly from her unhappiness and Hogan suggests that this is indeed the case. Although she is never seen 'comfort eating' I would submit that her weight problem stems from a compensatory urge which tries to make up for her inadequacy as a wife, nurturer, homemaker and mother. This is displayed in two instances with the first being when she is 'commanded' by her daughter Joaney to make Bill a cup of tea. That Betty is ordered, not asked, by her daughter is an indication of Betty's powerlessness and alienation in the gendered space of the home. This is further underscored when Betty uses the microwave to accomplish this task. The second instance is after Betty's suicide when Deirdre and a friend are cleaning the house and Deirdre

pointedly remarks that the bathroom is 'a big job'. Betty's ineptitude as wife and mother is pointed to in this statement and to this Deidre adds that Betty's only useful contribution to the family, and Bill, is her death. Her suicide deflects the spotlight from Bill's court case thus saving him, and enabling him to keep the 'family' together. Deidre says without a trace of irony: 'She'll be glad that her life amounted to something'.

The minor characters of Leo Higgins and the store detective Deanne also have attributes that suggest the poverty of participation within the community. Leo's claim to fame is as Bill's apostle with Bill proudly heralding him as the man who 'concreted Woolham beach for us'. Leo with his ugly, swollen and cancerous 'drinker's nose' is firmly entrenched within the 'un-natural' world of the 'progressive' ethos espoused by Bill and his like. This concept, ironically called the 'grass roots of the prosperity of Porpoise Spit' by Bill sees the importance of the building of malls, highrises, resorts and casinos as being for the betterment of the community. This is a Disneyesque attempt to fabricate a favourable community via architectural and spatial 'sets' with the notion of the constructed and conjured community coming to the fore. If Leo is the 'devil's disciple then Deanne is Bill's advocate. Her oversized glasses immediately place her in her 'policing of the community standards' role similar to that of a self-grandised neighbourhood watcher. The Heslop women always seem to be under, and at the receiving end, of her surveillance.

The minor character of Tania (Sophie Lee) is the character that epitomises the fallacy that is the conjured community. She is, at her own admission, 'beautiful' and in the opening

scenes of the film is getting married to her fiancé 'Chook'. But her character and their marriage is a grotesque carnivalesque inversion of what they are supposed to be. In this inversion is found what Bakhtin (1984) in the introduction to <u>Rabelais and his World</u> calls 'the characteristic logic of the carnival' which neatly describes the narrative of <u>Muriel's Wedding</u>. This is:

> ..the peculiar logic of the "inside out" (a l'envers), of the "turnabout", of continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic *crownings and un-crownings*.(p. 11)(my italics)

These crownings and un-crownings and inside out logic are signalled in the opening scenes of the text. At their wedding reception Chook has sex, in the laundry of Tania's mother's house, with Tania's best friend, Nicole, and afterwards when it is discovered that he has 'lipstick on his dick' he blames another friend of Tania's. Tania in an act of revenge 'sucks the dick' of this friend's husband to, as she says 'put herself in her place..to try to understand her'. Thus the community-sanctioned unity of matrimony is seen as a sham. Tania and her friends see themselves as the beau ideal, a fact often grossly inverted in the text and which is exhibited in Tania's grotesque face distortions and near hysterical screaming and crying and the hurling of vociferous abuse. Only Muriel and Rhonda retain a certain type of dignity and 'beauty' of self, an attribute which Muriel seems more and more out of touch with as she struggles for community recognition.

Poverty of participation: The badlands of be-coming.

If the focus of The Truman Show and Pleasantville is a type of scopophilia and the eye, and its correlational trope of surveillance then Muriel's Wedding is a rehearsal of the postmodern and touristic idea of seeing, being seen, and being seen to be seeing as a means to invoke an identity. The individual texts suggest control by conspicuousness. The control of Truman and the characters in Pleasantville is rehearsed through visible invisibility, where an absence must be brought into a presence, an identity validated via visibility. In Muriel's Wedding, however, Muriel insists upon a type of visibility which will deny her invisibility, a 'being seen to be seeing'. Muriel is not hiding in, or from the glare of this light, as the text is 'pervaded by a sense of 'over-exposure'...[C]olours are garish and saturated...in the glare imputed to the harsh Queensland sunlight' (Landman, 1996, p. 111). Here is found the notion of the spotlight, or even the keylight of the stage, which Muriel is seeking so that she may *become* someone. This theme is reiterated when Muriel is seen to take centre stage in her real-and-imagined spaces, whether the 'real' stage of the amateur night on Hibiscus Island or the imagined stage of the faux weddings in the boutiques. She wants to be a someone, she tells her 'friends', 'who is more like you', a someone who is a member of the homogeneous imagineered community of Porpoise Spit, a community someone who is replicated in a multitude of communities throughout the Western world. The inference here indicates the 'staged' (conjured) nature of the community. Tania and her friends are positioned as being both real-and-imagineered, the 'normal' (community members) who strive to be 'different'. In the Breaker's Club 'sea grotto' Tania and her friends state:

> 'People think we're mad but that's just us. We're ragers.
> People invite us to parties because they know we'll just
> have a good time. We're mad...party, party, party. That's
> our image'

They are locked in the spaces of the perceived and conceived, the first and second spaces of community and even their difference is deflated by these spaces restricting them to inept acts of 'deviance' or otherness.

In contrast, in <u>The Truman Show</u> Truman is seeking to shun the spotlight in an effort to be 'less like you'. He is however, the community more than the community itself, a fact that denies him a place outside the community and locates him firmly in the filament of a homogenous community of the enclave. He is deeply entrenched in the community and is, in fact, the 'authentic' original of the community – with it being but a simulacrum. Thus Truman and the community can not be separated from each other. The community for Truman is the 'copy without an original' where Truman is the only *true-man* in, and of the community. However, Truman would prefer to relinquish his position as true-man for that of 'free-man'. For Muriel the opposite applies. She wants to be 'authenticated' by being accepted, taking her place as a type of simulacra of an original community member and all that this implies. Truman is reaching out to a self-authority over his status as a simulacra. He is seeking authorship of his self as individual and this can only be found outside of the conjured community in the outside world. Thus he can only be as one with his self in the heterogeneous outside world of the communisphere of the livable space of the heterotopia – the otherness of difference found in Fiji or the markets, bazaars, theatres, shops and arcades or the other 'obligatory points of passage (Hetherington, 1997, p. 14).

Muriel, on the other hand, denies the livable space in preference to the dead spaces of the 'lived' with the markers of marriage and a husband as her entree into the community. Finally, though, in the denouement she is seen to reject the first and second spaces of the thirdspace for the *becoming* spaces of the fourthspace located somewhere on the journey between Porpoise Spit and (we assume) the city - the vagrant space of the communisphere, borderless, transient, fleeting. Just as Truman's journey is outward toward the heterotopias that might present an 'aura of mystery, danger or transgression' (Hetherington, 1997, p. 41) there is also an ambivalence and uncertainty to the space of the communisphere Muriel is embracing. In Muriel's 'elopement' to the city is embodied (literally) the essence of the heterotopology - an understanding of the 'absolute perfection' within an imperfect absolute which Muriel's physical shape places her. Her 'grotesque' body is simultaneously 'slime' – the monstrous grotesque of her excessively overweight body squeezed in to inappropriately tight and lurid clothes suggests the excess of bodily functions – but it is also sublime in her acceptance of it and substantive in its display of it to others in *subtopia* (Giblett, 1996, Chapter 2). There is in this a juxtaposition of 'an exercise in both freedom and control in all its ambivalence' (Hetherington, p. 40) an 'alternate ordering' of the heterotopology, vagrant space and the communisphere situated in the nexus of the incongruous and the everyday which Muriel inherently displays.

Muriel's markers of *community* acceptance, her false step to utopia, as it were, is rehearsed within the public sphere with the pinnacle of her recognition as a (conjured) community member being enacted in, and within, the archetypes of the community and

the public space: the church and the media. These are the front regions of the community where displays of comm(on)unity are sanctified. However, the back region of authenticated community membership, the nuclear family and all it stands for, is anathema to Muriel. The family and the family home, in the text, are the dystopic, withdrawn and private counterparts of the homogeneous public world where the values of community, hard work, respect for parents and family togetherness have broken down. This is the world where difference has led to 'deviance' never more keenly exemplified than in the character of Rhonda the archetypal vagrant within the text. The organic family unit, the purported mainstay of community, is positioned in the text as dysfunctional with even the newly wedded 'family' of Tania and 'Chook' being seen as a sham. As Landman (1996) points out: 'After the wedding Chook...is only present in Tania's anecdotes' (p. 116) which confirms the notion that this type of community family is of a transactional nature and not intimately relational in its enactment. There is a poverty of participation with Tania and Chook's wedding (and marriage) merely an adjunct to guarantee community membership, something one must do - even if it is short-lived - to gain full acceptance.

Muriel's father Bill's marriage to Betty, enacted almost exclusively within the confines of the family home, is also a fraudulent one. Betty's 'private' display positions her as a grotesque of the nurturing female figure, the antithesis of the wife and mother, a hollowed out parody who mouths Bill's platitudes and is at the mercy of her children whilst being lost in a (her) private world. Betty, like another well-known Australian TV carnivalesque grotesque Maggie Beare of the ABC produced <u>Mother and Son</u>, is

obviously lost in the gendered space of the home. As Landman (1996) suggests: 'Her emptied space is repeatedly colonised by the needs of others' (p. 115). But unlike Maggie Beare Betty commands no space of her own from which to speak-back-to, or even, *as* herself. Even in her death by suicide she is voiceless, leaving no suicide note, except for the smouldering shreds of clothes on the clothesline an indicator of the tattered condition of the private family within the conjured community. On the other hand, Bill's relationship with his mistress, Deirdre Chambers, is enacted within the public sphere of the community which suggests that this is a more presentable and, therefore 'community-oriented' partnership. These twin displays of Bill's relationships point to the Disneyesque trope of the falsity of the real (Bill's marriage) and the reality within the fake (Bill's affair) where the 'real' fake is valued above the 'fake' reality. This is Hetherington's notion of the 'two castles' to which I will return later. Suffice it to say here that Bill's position within the two relationships points to two types of agency. The first is Sade's vision that offers individual freedom while the second is the disciplinary spectre of social control. This is possibly one of the most reiterated tropes throughout the text and is witnessed in the transition of Muriel from the latter spatiality of social control, to her liminal *becoming* space as Mariel, and finally her transition into the space of the individual agency of the communisphere via the *taking* of the vagrant space as her own. This is a measure of Hogan's 'extraordinary in the ordinary' (1994, p. 33). The journey from conformity and obedience to a community, to an individuality and obduration in speaking-as herself suggests the poverty of participation rehearsed in the conjured communities.

If <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> highlights the Disneyesque trope of a spurious utopia built upon the fake in the familial then Truman in <u>The Truman Show</u> faces a specious dysfunctional dystopia foregrounded in the public domain. As has been mentioned above Truman is so much a part of the community that is always already a part of it just as it is seen to be always already a part of him —he is always at his destination. He needs the journey of escape to grasp the vagrant space of the livable communisphere. However, Muriel initially refuses her journey until she is confronted with the 'vagrancy' of the betwixt and between space of the heterotopology of the 'On the Beach Motel'. (The name of the motel here is an intertextual reference which plays on the notion of the 'end of the world of Mariel' and the beginning for a 'new' Muriel. <u>On the Beach</u> was the title of a novel by the author Neville Shute with the major motif of the text being the end of the world by nuclear apocalypse). Hetherington (1997), referring to Shields, points out that: 'the beach in the spatialization of…culture acts as a liminal zone…between the seriousness of urban space and the arcadian place myth of the rural' (p. 25). This liminal space in <u>Muriel's Wedding</u>, however, is situated between the sea (vagrant space) and the town (community site) and is the impetus for her travels to the fourthspatiality of the communisphere. For Truman, the lack of liminality is cartographically consigned. He is locked into a 'scripted' life and has no future to '(be)-come' into. The communisphere of the outside world is the ultimate but seemingly unavailable livable fourthspatiality for him. But for Muriel the lived dead spatialities of the first- and second-spaces offer the *conjured* desires of (un)fulfilled comm(on)unity.

This concept of the liminal 'becoming' locates Truman and Muriel as different and deviant. But it is with the similarity between Truman and Muriel that the different/deviant nexus is made more absolute. Truman as an inhabitant of the conjured space can be described as a potential non, or faux, person. The world of the fake for Truman is the virtual world of lost, or non, potential: potentially individual; potentially 'liberated'; potentially 'human'; potentially more *human* than humanised (normalised, managed); potentially more centred by his marginality; potentially more a part of the communisphere of potentiality. To grasp this potentiality he must free himself from the cloistered, conjured space. Muriel in contrast is struggling to be one of the non-potential people in her real-and-imagined world of the community. She is trying to disavow her attributes of individuality, liberation, human-ness and potentiality. It is only through her 'eloping' with Rhonda that the two protagonists recognise their poverty of participation within the first and second spaces of community and place themselves within the fourth spatiality of the communisphere of *becoming*. Both of them choose the vagrant space, the liminal spatiality of the 'road' leaving behind the dysfunctionality of conjured communities. Although their destination is unknown the act of a journeying is the first step of 'becoming' initiated by recognising the vagrant space. This is signified when Muriel and Rhonda make a pointed act of saying goodbye to the controlling first and second spaces of Porpoise Spit.

The final scenes mentioned above in the respective texts, and the notion of the potential of dreams and desires speak of a type of *jouissance* found in the virtual text and in the everyday act of vagrancy. In <u>The Truman Show</u> the idea and examples of jouissance are

few (the most notable ones are witnessed in Truman's 'back-stage' play acting and the fleeting moments of madness, excitement and freedom he experiences there). The lack of examples is mainly because of the fixity and conformity inferred by the ever surveilling eye, the first space of the homogenous architecture of the mise-en-scene and the concomitant controlling aspect this suggests. However, <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> has its foundation in the desire for the desirable, a trope of *jouissance*, rehearsed in the notions of pleasure, generosity, flux and sensitivity. The term *jouissance*, in relation to Muriel, suggests the notion of the 'joy' and 'benefits' of the vagrancy of the fourthspatiality of the communisphere as difference within sameness, as opposed to the poverty of the ideational community where restraints and the homogeneity of sameness (without acknowledging difference) restricts the potential fruitfulness and fecundity of communal relationships.

Finally, before embarking upon a further reading of <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> which will expand upon the aspects of the text mentioned above as well as bringing in other examples of the community/communisphere dichotomy it is pertinent to restate the importance that a 'space of ones own' plays in the texts and in the notion of vagrancy and the communisphere as a whole. This notion, springing as it does from Virginia Woolf's <u>A Room of One's Own</u> (1945) and captured and harnessed by many contemporary feminists (and it can be argued, postcolonial theorists), addresses the concept of the community as the speaking-for position in place of the speaking-as position, of vagrancy, communisphere, Muriel, Truman and David, Mr Johnston and Betty in <u>Pleasantville</u>. Woolf suggests that a removal from a community which is speaking-for the woman (or

individual), is in fact, a position which is promulgating a demarcated space described, prescribed and inscribed and which enforces the community ethic upon the individual, a removal from that space promoting the potentiality of difference. A space (or room) of one's own opens up the speaking-as position, offering a liminal space where the perspective of the communisphere may enter and a 'becoming' eventuate (even if it is not to be fulfilled). Thus, in <u>The Truman Show</u> Truman has the cellar and his trunk to hide his photographs and momentoes - to secure and protect the markers of his identity, his memories.

Muriel, however, is in the process, throughout the text, of finding a space of her own and in her search she crosses the borders and boundaries of the mundane (Porpoise Spit) and the exotic (Hibiscus Island); the inanimate (the home) to the inane (the Breakers Club); the incompatible (the Rickshaw restaurant) and the inchoate (the 'On The Beach Motel'). Throughout her journey the first and second spaces of community face and follow her and its precepts, coupled with the carnivalesque charivaristic actions of the community members and their repeated insistence on her ab-normality, ensure that her search for identity is stymied. Only when she is able to command 'herself' via the fourthspatiality of difference in the livable space of vagrancy is she able to *become* 'Muriel' (forsaking the simulacra which is the first Muriel as well as the spurious incarnation, Mariel). Muriel's own space or the one that she makes her own is her bodily space of difference. She becomes Muriel only when she *takes* that space as, and in, celebration instead of being *given* it in denigration. She has a worthwhile identity when she speaks-as, and from herself - the marginalised - as opposed to the spoken-for position. In the latter, Bill

Heslop is the exemplary emblematical character, but when Muriel claims her own voice and becomes 'wedded' to her difference he, as Hogan states, 'gives the bride away' (1994, p. 31).

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From Muriel to Mariel...and back again (only this time with feeling).

Jane Landman in her essay 'See the Girl, Watch that Scene' (1996) opens her discussion with a reading of the bridal bouquet title sequence of the film. As she states: 'The title sequence of the film establishes the terrain on which female desire is to be explored' (p. 112). I certainly agree with this but would also add that it sets up other important, but possibly less obvious 'topographies' for investigation not least of which are the notions of nature and society, or more pointedly the natural and the constrained; the interior and the exterior, or greenery and garishness; the faux and the 'faux pas', or the false and the 'false step'; difference and denigration, or deviance and deprecation; the community and the communisphere, or the imagineered and the animated.

In the opening sequence these dichotomies are set up via the visual of the bridal bouquet, a blue sky and confetti. In this opening sequence the shower of confetti is blown, swirling against the backdrop of a very blue sky. This is a metaphor for Muriel's journey as she is caught up in the vagaries of community condemnation and her compulsion to lie to offset these charivaresque censures. Then, literally out of this blue, the bridal bouquet drops like a bomb, but instead of carnage it provokes a carnivalesque scene of ecstatic embattling to grasp this trophy. That the bouquet seems to comprise artificial flowers further

underscores the notion of the invertedness of acceptable community behaviour suspended by virtue of the wedding. This scene is an indication of how the text and the major protagonist, Muriel, are to be read. It is at this point amid a sea of faceless waving hands that Muriel, the only face to be seen clearly, is fleetingly centred. Throughout the text she is seen to be seeking just such a position in her real-and-imagined spaces. This starting point, where Muriel catches the bouquet, commences her journey away from community, through the liminal spaces of vagrancy toward the heterogeneity of the heterotopologies of communisphere. The bouquet's procession from empty blue sky to front yard suburbia, or subtopia, is not only a metaphor for Muriel's journey, but also helps situate the other characters within a conjured community which is inward-looking and exclusionary. That Tania insists that the bouquet be taken from Muriel and retossed emphasises both the ascendancy of the collective and Muriel's marginalisation.

Muriel's naive, excitedly suppressed giggle and childlike wiggle when she innocently proclaims 'Looks like I'm next' is enhanced by the unfortunate Leopard-skin print mini-dress and her overlarge ear-rings which suggest a type of pre-pubescent child/woman who is playacting at adulthood in a childhood fantasy of 'dressing-up'. This locates Muriel as the child-like adult or the adult-like child located within a liminal region between acceptance within the community and rejection. This is similar to the plight of the teenager who is of the community but more often than not absented from it. Either way she is positioned within the sphere of the carnivalesque 'grotesque' and as the camera pulls back to isolate her from the throng Muriel is revealed in her obese entirety. In this scene her double exclusion is displayed and is witnessed in the double bind of her

physical and intellectual attributes. She is marginalised by the community due to her perceived inability to conform physically or attitudinally. Tania and her friends may see themselves as 'mad' but they are seen as being 'beautiful' and acceptable in their community-minded 'temperament'. Muriel, on the other hand, is excessive in all circumstances; from the juxtaposition of her size and her childish actions, to her naivety and her non-plussed lies, and this excessiveness to the point of compulsion peripheralises her.

In an interview with P. J. Hogan in the journal Metro (1994) Louise Wignall suggests that Muriel's 'largeness' is 'a response to the powerlessness that women feel and the pressure they feel to conform to some stereotype to be happy' (p. 32). Whilst I totally agree with this and also point out that it is an important theme of the text I would suggest that other factors are at play here, namely that the largeness, unfortunate fashion sense, the child/adult quality and the oft reiterated notion that she is 'hopeless' and not 'normal' locates Muriel squarely within the sphere of the *jouissance* of the carnivalesque 'grotesque' and liminality. By placing Muriel within this sphere she is situated, not as Landman suggests, at the commencement of some type of female 'hero's quest' but at a point where she can *begin* to speak-as a centralised margin or a marginalised centre. P. J. Hogan, in the interview with Landman, hints at this:

> You see I wanted to make a film about the sort of girl you see everyday sitting in the Bourke Street Mall...I wanted to put that kind of character...the extraordinary in the ordinary...centre stage and the beautiful best friend in the position of living horror. (p. 33)

Demonstrated here is the kind of carnivalesque thinking, the inversion of not only the classic Hollywood genre, such as, as Hogan points out, Sleepless in Seattle (p. 33), but also of tropes of community and acceptable community membership. Muriel has, what has been mentioned above, a Borges' Aleph-like quality, which in this case is an inclusion and inversion of all types and worlds: centred and peripheralised, adult and child-like, responsible and irresponsible, naive and knowing, abject and inchoate. Muriel is all of these dressed in a leopard-skin mini-skirt or bursting out of a silver satin pantsuit. In essence, and to borrow from a scene in the film itself, she is the blank cheque from the father (the patriarchal voice who speaks for all, the community of Porpoise Spit included) and handed to her by her mother (the individual without a voice save that of echoing the father). Muriel 'writes the cheque' and in so doing rewrites herself, taking not only the father's money (the one thing that centres him) but also his voice and eventually his speaking position. The scene in the burnt-out back garden after the mother's suicide when Bill turns to Muriel's sister Joaney and says 'Muriel's going back to Sydney' confirms this. Bill has failed as a community member not because of his illegal transgressions but because he has lost his speaking-for position when his voice could no longer speak with community authority to his wife or Muriel. The burnt-out backyard with thick green vegetation at the edges and the Hill's hoist standing forlornly in the centre is symbolic of, not only the poverty of participation that Bill feels for, and within, the conjured community of Porpoise Spit (a community he helped to construct through his developers legerdemain) but also of the poverty of community itself. The opposition also points to the fecund nature of the livable communisphere (the cosmopolitan city) to which Muriel

is heading signified by the green vegetation surrounding the dead (lived) space of the yard and the flora which surround the fading sign at the end of the filmic text.

Throughout the text the frottaging of natural greenery and nature and the nexus of garish colours and the community play an important role. There is a lushness repeated in the various exterior mise-en-scene of the text that is juxtaposed to the garishness of the interior sequences. The mise-en-scene of the suburban 'resort' of Porpoise Spit in the opening sequence balances lush tropical growth with high-rise buildings which are presumably hotel or holiday apartments. The greenery, however, gives way to a billboard, cars, shops and a mixture of buildings that display the oppositions within the text. The billboard announces the various (male-oriented?) clubs in Porpoise Spit such as Apex, The Lions Club and Rotary among others too faded to read clearly. This in itself is a subtle indication of a way of reading the text. The designation for Porpoise Spit on the sign as the: 'Jewel of the North Coast' situates the town within a male-centred discourse of the feminine, and therefore the subaltern, space. The male-dominated speaking voice is prominent and with it the notion of community based upon patriarchal ideas of the nuclear family, female spaces and domestic division. These signs with the various club badges appended to them point to a certain homogeneity within the suburban community of Porpoise Spit. One of slogans printed against an ostentatious yellow background sanguinely states 'You Can't Stop Progress', which is either an adducement or an admonition and in the character of Bill Heslop it is probably both. Behind the sign, and partially hidden by it, are a shopping precinct and a parking area. This framing of the shot begs the question of whether progress itself or simply the idea (and espousal) of it is the

major factor for the community. To underscore this two palm trees partially obscured by the sign stand disconsolately alone and obviously dying, a further indicator of the values inherent in, and of the ascendancy of the first and second spaces of the community, its constructed nature against that of, the autonomy of the communisphere.

In contrast to the evident absence of nature in the town, the suburbs are rich in vegetation to the point of being claustrophobic. In the sequence where the police are driving Muriel home the high-rise hotels on the horizon counterbalance the lushness of the mise-en-scene surrounding Muriel's home. The Heslop household and the streets approaching and surrounding it are lavish in their greenery. In fact, the ferns and palms butt up against the windows of the houses, especially the Heslop home where the plants are so thick against the windows that the light is filtered through them giving a greenish tinge to the rooms. This suggests that there are certain spaces surrounding, and within, the restrained and controlled world of Porpoise Spit which are butting up against and trying to usurp them. These are the vagrant spaces of the communisphere and within the context of the film this could apply to Bill's downfall at the hands of 'outsiders'. It also indicates that the community of the text as represented by Bill Heslop and his ilk is an imagined and imagineered one wholly fabricated and faux. The greenery suggests an an-other space not governed by the first and second spaces of the conjured community but by the fourth spatiality of the essential communisphere.

Within the Heslop home itself there are signifiers of the vagrant spaces appertaining to the family. The walls and furniture in the lounge are a pale, sullied green indicating a

vagrant space which is somewhat unspecified linking it more with the notion of corrupt 'truancy' rather than true vagrancy. The colour of the furniture is echoed in the fixtures and fittings with the lampshades and curtains restating the 'unhealthy' hues, and the curtains in particular with their fern-like motif juxtaposes the lushness of the 'natural' world found outside of the window with that of the faux within. Elsewhere in the house, especially in the kitchen, laminated wood panelling further attests to the fake in the real of this 'community'. A final image in the mise-en-scene of the Heslop household is witnessed in the Galleon motif on the wallpaper in the stairwell and hall. This motif and its location speak of the heterotopological spaces that are denied by the family in an effort to maintain the family and community ethos.

This notion of the space of nature displayed in the prolific greenery which is offering alternative spaces to that of the first and second of the community and the home is witnessed in the Heslop's backyard. This area of utility and the (usually) controlled luxuriant splendour of a lawn is over-run and verdant. The Hill's Rotary Hoist, a 'colonising' symbol of 'civilisation' over nature, seems to tilt toward the re-appropriating plants and grass and at the edges of the yard thick luscious ferns and palms seem to await their turn to encroach. As a metaphor for the themes in the text these motifs are very powerful signifying the vagrant spaces of a heterogeneous heterotopia which are (almost) within the borders of the community - touching it and offering the potential of change. It is significant that there is no physical border, either fence or wall around the yard that leaves it open to this intrusion. This suggests that the Heslop household has always already been a space of the potentiality of the vagrant space, with only Bill being

positioned as the surveilling and policing 'apparatus'. In the enclave estates the barriers are firmly in place policing and patrolling the spaces of otherness lurking beyond.

The greenery is also a metaphor of Muriel's character. Her voluptuousness is reflected in the fecundity of the plants and just as they are finding new spaces of 'freedom and livability' so shall she. That the back yard can be read as a type of vagrant space is displayed when the son Perry is commanded by Bill to mow the lawn. Instead of applying himself to the task he proceeds to 'play' football complete with his own running commentary, positioning the yard as clearly not a space of utility or 'normal' leisure but an alternative space for alternative actions, a space, in Perry's case, of one's own, outside of community. But this is clearly not a 'viable' vagrant space because he is not claiming it as an alternative but is enacting a simulacra of a community sanctioned alternative within the spectrum of popular sport/leisure. As will be discussed later, sites of leisure and control are a complex part of the conjured communities.

The notion of the colonising of nature for community profit and leisure and the peculiar rationale of this concept is displayed in a brief scene when the Heslop children are watching the cricket test match on TV. The greenery of the cricket pitch is lush but measured and manipulated, controlled and constrained for pleasure and profit. The irony here is that the children are watching the game on TV thus nature is relegated twice, once in subordination to the game and secondly as part of a spectacle. As if to demonstrate the position of nature within the community and its potential 'threat' to conjured communities when not subordinated is noted with Muriel - the potential inhabitant of

vagrant space-often seen wearing brash, flower-print dresses. This is indicative of her 'nature' and of her vagrant status, and one that aligns her with the peripheral communisphere. The dead flowers in their vase in Muriel's bedroom display a signifier that, at this point Muriel, has not found the space of her own. Although they are dead, these flowers are still part of the topography of the lived space of the faux family.

That Muriel, the vagrant space and unrestrained nature are to be read as one is rehearsed in the final act that the mother performs before she dies. In the church at Muriel/Mariel's wedding Betty is virtually 'invisible' to Muriel, and almost everyone else. She arrives late clutching her wedding gift just as Muriel is leaving the altar. Muriel sweeps past Betty completely self-engrossed and Betty is left alone and forlorn as the rest of the congregation follows the bridal party. The realisation that she is, and probably always has been 'invisible' is the final straw and she torches the backyard before committing suicide. The final act of arson is a condemnation of the community and her place within it. The only time when Betty is visible is the time she is caught mistakenly shoplifting by the surveillance of Deanne, the store detective. Here her visibility springs from her transgression as a 'good' community member and for this deviance she has to be punished. The irony is that Betty, as a person without a space to call her own, is neither different nor deviant to, or even a part of, the community. She is a type of Foucauldian non-productive body incarcerated within a hallowed/hollow institute (the home), prescribed by the constructedness of community. In the few times she ventures from the confines of the domestic space of the relational into the transactional spaces of society

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her supposed deviance is interpellated by the community members and 'arrested', or as at Muriel's wedding, her difference leads to 'complete' invisibility.

Muriel, the Heterotopia and the Two Castles.

The notion of visibility and invisibility displayed so prominently in <u>The Truman Show</u> is reworked in <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> in the notion of seeing and being seen. This trope suggests the two positions: the active surveillor and its passive counterpart, the surveilled. Whilst the recipient is also a 'seer' this ocularity is somewhat blinkered with only a limited (and given) range of sites to see. In the following I would like to expand on the notion of the heterotopia and vagrant space by remotivating Hetherington's notion of the 'Two Castles' (Hetherington, 1997, chapter 3).

In his chapter Hetherington cites de Sade's castle in <u>One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom</u> and Kafka's Castle in <u>The Trial</u> as being exemplary models of heterotopic spaces. He argues that because they operate at opposite extremes to each other, the former addressing unlimited freedom born out of its total and absolute *control* of its victims, and the latter as a control mechanism granted total and absolute *freedom* in its mission of control, they should necessarily be invoked as superlative models of the Other to each other. I would like to argue, in the spirit of Foucault (whom Hetherington calls upon repeatedly in his work) that by utilising these models of *extremis* the concept of the heterotopia of the mundane and everyday is being lost. Hetherington notes that the two main accounts of the heterotopia that Foucault gave as examples were in the introduction

to The Order of Things (1989) and in his Of Other Spaces (1986). In the former Borges' 'Chinese Encyclopedia' is invoked. This wonderful piece of listing in juxtaposed categories of the mundane, the unusual and the nonsensical whilst buffeting them together in disunity offers a deep insight into the nature of the heterotopia in Muriel's Wedding. What happens when reading the list is that there is seen both a coherence to it and a disjointedness. It seems to be comprehensive but there are absences, but those that are absented (and for which we have no name or even inkling of what they might be) are present in their absence, like ghost words in a palimpsest. But the categories listed also seem to be out of place with each other and in themselves; it seems ordered with a certain rationale to it, but its disorderedness challenges both its disorder and its order. All of these categories illustrate its flux and fixity, but also suggest a certain *jouissance*, a sensitivity, generosity and pleasure in the ambiguity and 'border crossing' of, and within, the categories and the list. Hetherington suggests that:

> The important part to remember when considering heterotopia is not the spaces themselves but what they perform in relation to other sites. (p. 49)

The list in the Chinese Encyclopedia, then, changes how the categories or examples both prior to, and after each, individual item is perceived. Some might follow naturally but even those that seem completely unrelated and even oppositional fall into a unity because, or in spite, of their unrelated qualities.

The individual categories and items are both marginal and central to each other. They marginalise and centralise themselves within their centres and margins so that each item becomes both a margin and a centre, of and within, itself. In this way it becomes, to

paraphrase Hetherington, a 'point of passage' for itself and all the other 'Others'. But most importantly it, as individual item and as a (in)complete list, is either (an individual item) or both (list and item) or an an-other (neither, but all). In this we have the makings of the lived, fixed thirdspatiality and the point of passage which is the fourth- or vagrant space. Within the Chinese Encyclopedia then are categorical differences, obvious in their juxtaposition. But this juxtaposition point uncontestably to a uniform sameness in both how the juxtaposition operates and how, by defining the difference, difference makes for a coherent, if not comprehensive, sameness.

Foucault (1989), in the first passage of the preface to <u>The Order of Things</u> states:

> This book first arose out of a passage, *out of the laughter that shattered*, as I read the passage, all the familiar land marks of my thought - our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography - breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which *we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion* of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction *between the Same and the Other*. (1989, p. xv.)(my italics)

In this we see the first semblance of the uncomfortability of a confrontation with something that is more than just an Other, but is an *an-other*. In Foucault's nervous laughter - is it hearty? I doubt it; complacent? even less so - we see a forerunner to Muriel's touchy 'wiggle and giggle', where the 'Looks like I'm next' (as a community member via marriage? as an aberrant or deviant category outside of, but within, the community? as a member of the communisphere?) seems to be unequivocally close. Muriel's assertion echoes Foucault's fears of a 'language' that cannot tame, 'the profound distress of' a 'loss of what is 'common' to place and name' (p. p. xviii, xix).

Thus Muriel's position of 'next', her liminality, has nothing to do with her desire for authentication as a community member via marriage and a husband but infers her position as being in the interstitial *be-coming* spaces between these desires and an another type of desire. For Muriel this space is both outside of, and within, the twin castles of community. She is not alarmed because she is unaware of them, embedded as she most certainly is within these community desires. For her the gap between both/either and an an-other has yet to be revealed, and in its final self-exposure lies a fourthspatial livability. For Foucault it is what might lie, what insinuates 'itself into the empty spaces' within the 'interstitial blanks separating...these entities from one another' (p. xvi). This is what breaks up his, and 'our', 'familiar landmarks' and in so doing draws attention to the extremes within the topography of the twin castles and also the narrowness between these extremes displayed in Muriel's liminality. Thus what makes for Foucault's nervous 'wiggle and giggle' is: 'the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*' (p. xv). The *that* here is the alternative to the prescribed and controlled spatialities of the first and second; the perceived and conceived spaces of community. This alternative is the communisphere the *that* which is 'another system'. And what tends to threaten, what causes the 'laughter that shatters' is the vagrant space, that which Shurmer-Smith and Hannam (1994) might suggest is:

> [T]he release from petty surveillance associated with
> *community* living, the feeling of being responsible for one's
> own life, and the ability to move in the public domain...the
> sense that one is the centre of things. (p. 123)(my italics)

To be the 'centre of things', to be at once, like Shurmer-Smith and Hannam's individual, outside of surveillance (to be in the margins) as well as in the public domain (to be

centred), is the position 'devoutly to be wished' and yet Foucault titters, tensely, at the idea:

That passage from Borges kept me laughing a long time, *though not without a certain uneasiness that I found hard to shake off*. Perhaps because there arose in its wake the suspicion that there is a worse kind of disorder than that of the *incongruous*, the linking together of things that are inappropriate; I mean the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry...(p. xvii) (my italics)

So what is this glittering (booby?) prize that so threatens Foucault, the destroyer of scientific discourse, the hero of the heterotopia? A closer look at the categories of the Chinese encyclopedia, cited by Foucault may offer an explanation or at least a way into the disorder. Foucault reiterates Borges' list as:

> animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (I) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies. (p. xv)

Here in the simple (postmodern) trope of listing is witnessed an Aleph-like quality of spaces that butt up against, in frottage, other spaces, while changing each space (and its own). Thus a *hierarchy* is demonstrated which is both horizontal (a two way line which moves from a centre which in, and of, itself is not centred but always already there. As each category is enunciated it is *centred,* however, the preceding category and that which follows becomes an essence and is 'valued' by, and in, its juxtaposition), and vertical (starting with that which belongs to the Emperor, which becomes a lord to, and of, the

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flies). Thus category (j) the innumerable, is linked both to the either (three times removed to the left) of (g) stray dogs, or the (twice removed from the left) category (l) *et cetera*, which is centred within a point on the line marked by the other in either direction. But it is also in juxtaposition with these, that an an-other, entirely within the list but marginalised, exists. This marginalised, but centred, an an-other is what Foucault refers to (and which is part of his nervous dilemma) as that which is 'impossible to name as this *and* that' (p. xviii).

Each category can then be thought of as a community' in, and of, itself, whether transient or fleeting (the discontinuity and fluidity of the margin) or fixed and stable (the permanence of the centred). But Foucault is grasping for more:

> When we establish a considered classification, when we say that a cat and a dog resemble each other less than two greyhounds do, even if both are tame or embalmed, even if both are frenzied, even if both have just broken the water pitcher, what is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification with complete certainty?(p. xix)(my italics)

What Foucault is denying is the concept of a communisphere which is made up of the disparate differences of otherness which whether sequestered or consolidated describe a unity of sameness. His inability to come to grips with the list and the juxtaposition is simply because he seeks to isolate and 'communify' the categories instead of accepting and taking pleasure in the *jouissance* of the difference within sameness and the sameness of difference the juxtaposed listing allows, and, in fact advocates. Put simply, this is the disorderedness of order (or the order and the relationality of disorder) of fluid (and fluent?) *ordering*. He is seeking an 'order in its primary state' (p. xxi) instead of

recognising an an-other 'order', 'both revealed and excluded' (p. p. xx, xxi) which grants

the either/both orders of the two castles - 'the next to and also opposite...[which]...hold

together' (p. xviii). The heterotopias of the communisphere are the very thing that hold

together and enable 'community' because they extend the alternative of an an-other,

whether conscious or not. They exist simply because there are either/both; the sameness

of difference and the difference of sameness. The vagrant space of the communisphere is

the narrow empty (but always filling) spatiality that permits, and holds together, the twin

castles of community. In its essence fourthspatiality or vagrant space should, or could not

be named or enumerated because it is, for Foucault, the impossible, that which escapes

thought.

So what of the communisphere and the two castles in <u>Muriel's Wedding</u>? How does the

Chinese encyclopedia translate to this text and what does it reveal about the poverty of

participation? Borges' listing can be thought of as a 'touristic marker', a monument, at

once without meaning (except in its *given* one - the notion of community) and with all

meanings (that which is *taken from it* - the conceptual communisphere). The list is thus a

site (a space) and a sight (a visualility) of a 'set' (of tropes; of a spectacle) which

delineates both a speaking-for and a speaking-as position, with the former as the

preferred. But in its performance as 'monument as utopian', that which Foucault calls

the: 'fantastic, untroubled region...[which] afford consolation' (p. xviii) the Disneyesque

spaces of the faux of the speaking-for position is revealed. There is, in the list, and as has

been remarked upon above in <u>Muriel's Wedding</u>, the fake in the real and the real in the

fake. The markers of the list's (and Muriel's) community are the false back region

presented as an0 authentic front one and authenticated by the community members (the tourist guides or the Disney 'actors') themselves. This then is Thomas More's *ou-topia* meaning no place and *eu-topia* meaning good place (see Hetherington, 1997, p. 11) wherein the two are conflated into a some place of the spoken-for of comm(on)unity. The 'utopia' of the touristic set/site within the list places all things of the emperor as fixed and at the head, and relegate the various discontinuous 'communities' as other(ed) markers/sights which make up this set. The categories, therefore, operate as a whole. They are (to paraphrase Foucault's discussion on the 'subjects...of scientific discourse') 'determined in their situation, their function, their perceptive capacity...by conditions that dominate and even overwhelm them' (p. xiv).

In the final analysis the two films discussed above are about the visuality of difference and how this may usurp the comm(on)unity of sameness. In The Truman Show difference is hard to establish, or define. So complete is its immersion within the fabric of the community of sameness. The reality that Truman seeks is to remove t himself from the fixed, lived, space of the comm(on)unity of a community of homogeneity and move into the livable communisphere. Truman recognises his difference because, even in his role as *true-man* there is a seed of difference within him and with the recognition of difference the seed starts to germinate.

In Muriel's Wedding the liberating moment of the communisphere is attained when Muriel finally *sees* herself and Rhonda and the difference they each embody and extol. She is able to finally see *through* the polaroid 'wedding' snapshots and the mirrors and

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windows of the bridal shops which have been the markers and sets of community sameness, and see in herself difference. If Truman's difference is hidden and cloaked in the simulacra of normality, then Muriel's and Rhonda's is celebrated in the display of their visuality of difference – Muriel's large body and Rhonda's affliction and wheelchair. The final scenes of the film have them *seeing* the town of Porpoise Spit for the (first and) last time. As the taxi pulls away they yell goodbye, in a celebratory fashion, to the fixed dead spaces of the community as they head for the (unspecified) space of the communisphere. This final frame sees them seeking to inhabit the liminal space of fourthspatiality. – a device which is echoed in the final frames of The Truman Show and Pleasantville.

Chapter Nine •

Bringing the land to life(style)

In part one a brief account of an archaeology of what might be called the suburban ethos was articulated. As a consequence of this perspective it was easy to trace via the various models which led to its formation the rise of the contemporary enclave estate. From this discussion it can be argued that these prototypes, which included such diverse topographies as Haussmann's Paris project, Godin's *Familistere* at Guise, Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement, and the 'new towns' of Radburn, Letchworth, Hampstead and Welwyn, as well as the 'fantas(cit)y of Disneyland, helped restructure the notion of community from that of the (imagined) congenial affinity of the village to one of the (imagineered) commodified affiliation of the leisured colony. All of the examples can be seen in a 'utopian' light: illuminating the restructuring of old centres (purportedly) to revitalise them in the interest of efficient modernity and aesthetic mechanical conformity (as in the example of Haussmann and the Boulevard Saint-Michel); the introduction of the notion of architectural space as liberating place witnessed in the example of the Familistere, a singular instrument of autonomy for the workers of Guise (see Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984) or even that of the 'organic' Amana communities of Iowa (see Mumford, 1961); the colonising of the peripheral open spaces of the countryside initially for the benefit of the upper classes and subsequently for the utilitarian leaders and petit bourgeoisie who in turn were replaced by the urban workers of the industrial mass conurbations, the original rural dwellers; and, finally, shedding a light on the space for the community as a place of the pleasure principle epitomised in

Disneyland and portrayed in the leisured suburb and the sport-specialised enclave estate where the pursuit of happiness is rehearsed in the irreality of the retreat.

But the utopian aspects of these rationalised spatial practices of community *techne* work to uphold the imagined and imagineered aspects of the first- and secondspatial technologies which result in, not a community of 'consideration' but a poverty of participatory practice. These perceived and conceived spaces whilst offering, in the main, a design for the installation and/or preservation of effective community, in fact propound a hollow procedure for its illusion. This chimera offers a dead (third)space of a 'lived' place - a bordered space of (in)vested identity based upon the tenets of order and a confident certainty - but in the final analysis found wanting in participatory performance. Thus the first-space of the perceived space of the community, in this case the *eu*-topia or the 'somewhere' of the topography of the enclave estate, and the secondspace of the conceived, the ideational good life of the *ou*-topia, the 'no-place of the now' brought about by the conjoining of the nostalgic impulse and the promise of the future, the urban complexity of the neighbourhood and the rural simplicity of the family, and the pre-modern (or medieval) notion of the local with the modern concept of locality (the conjunction of feudalism and capitalism) works to offer a conjured community somewhat lacking in mutual (or mutable) sociability.

All of the concepts noted above have as their central premises the Euclidean notion of structured space as ordered place and the Heideggerian notion of *Dasein*, (Heidegger, 1971) which can be read as a way of life focussed on and in harmony with the land. The

notion of 'dwelling' is cogently attached to both ideas with the term *Dasein* suggesting, not only 'home' but territory and membership where '..people, space and material environment are perceived as contributing to one another's identity in a process of mutual 'ownership' and 'where there is a strong attachment to the things and people of the past, where the present does not represent a dislocation' (see Shurmer-Smith & Hannam, 1994). Here is witnessed the relationship between spatial expressions and spatial exchanges - the perceived and conceived spatialities - the spatial play which is encoded in the textual representations of the 'place' of the master planned communities (and to a certain extent the shopping malls) and the virtual places of the televisual and filmic communities. This play of place is drawn from the expectations of the physical space coupled with the conceptual factors derived from the entrenched qualities inherent in the expression of this space - the embodiment of spatial form and practice - to describe, if not a utopian ideal, then at least an idea of a utopia.

Whilst it is important to look at certain aspects of the manipulation of the built environment itself and how this might inflect notions of neighbourhood and community it is equally important to discuss the *expression* of community found in its representations in the various media. In this expression is found the 'sleight of space' which posits the spatialities of the timelessness, or more correctly, *timefulness* of the nostalgic impulse with that of the 'spaces of security' of the small-town imperative. Hence one of the prime sites available to trace the conceptual community emerges in the advertisements for the enclave estates found in the real estate sections of the newspapers.

'Picture Perfect': The Enclave Estates and the Ads

In the section that follows a sample of the advertising/marketing material for the master planned communities will be discussed. In the discussion it will be noted that the majority of sites, no matter which section of the market they are appealing to, have many factors in common, with life-stage and life-style being the most prevalent. Other shared categories include the emphasis on landscape whether natural, natural-*ised* or 'man-made'; the proximity to 'natural' features such as the ocean or river, bushland or parks, and/or wild-life (whether flora or fauna); the proximity to 'specialised' structures, for example, boating complexes or golf courses (if they are not part and parcel of the estate itself), shopping and entertainment centres (such as water-parks or cinema multiplexes); and the 'essentials' of the everyday: schools, technology parks and, of course, the city itself. In all the cases cited these elements, it is suggested, make for 'community' in the utopian, polysemic discourse of the advertisement. What is being offered is that 'community' as utopia can be 'represented' by a collection of artefacts or elements. What must be accented here is that although the advertisements stress the idea of a utopia they refrain from stating that these sites/sights actually create one, in and of, themselves. What in fact they set out to achieve is to *imagine* for the consumer (as reader or buyer) ideas about the realisation and fulfilment of the 'good society' (with its salutary emanation in self, family, neighbourhood) via the *imagineering* of this society in the production of a sympathetic and sound social space.

In essence the engagement and tension of the conjoining of the perceived and conceived spaces - the first- and secondspatialities - within the walls of the estate seeks to remove the paradoxical spaces outside (the spaces of difference) and install the interior as a 'paragonical' place of sameness - the illusionary third-space of community. Thus the advertisements, using the strategy of the two spatialities, attempt to eradicate the spaces for, and of, the 'stranger' (as outsider, otherness or difference) in a self regulating (but builder/entrepreneur initiated) philosophy of order, goodness and reason which is rehearsed in the physical properties of the site (the buildings and furniture) and reflected in the ideational properties (the neighbourhood and community). Thus the reader of the advertisements (as prospective purchaser) is invited to 'buy' into the notion of shaping - or ordering - social space (into a self constructing homogeneity) in an effort to remove the anxieties of a heterogeneous social order. In this way the reader sees nothing of the clique – but more of the cliché - they are buying into (whether virtually or physically) other than some selected elements displayed in the text. And these selected elements described in the advertisements, are nothing more than simple stories which, to paraphrase John Berger (1972), show people how something is to be seen. This discourse thus promotes a monosemic articulation that denies other utterances.

Enclave Estates: The Days of 'The Vines' and (Range) Rovers.

The master planned community of 'The Vines' is an up-market, leisure-based enclave built around (literally) the concept of two 18 hole golf courses and the membership-only Golf and Country Club. This specifically positions the estate as a 'resort' which carries connotations of exclusivity: the absenting of work suggesting a life-style of independent means which in turn suggests membership of a select group who have access to extensive leisure time and/or protracted holidays. The estate's marketing copy which announces and promotes itself as being 'Arguably the Best' further advance the focus on exclusivity. Although omitting to offer other options which might be judged the 'best', one of the initial advertisements for The Vines juxtaposes the double import of the estate's 'duality of nature' (beauty and 'peacefulness', in this case of the golf course and its 'bush' setting) and the 'technologies' incorporated into the site (specifically 'Telecom and new coaxial cabling for all present and future TV channels') with the understanding of the particular 'status' of golf in contemporary western(ised) society (in this case the 'celebrated' - and celebrity oriented - Heineken Classic which is held annually at the resort). Thus the copy for this exclusive enclave which accents its prestigious position within the hierarchy of similar estates in the region draws upon the 'past' and 'future' in the shape of a nostalgia for the pre-industrial (nature) and the promise of the post-industrial (virtual technologies) combined in a *present* of the prestigious product - Heineken.

How Heineken (a European beer) and 'The Vines' (an antipodean enclave) complement each other relies upon an understanding of the *virtual community of the secondspace* of the individual (advertised) product. Heineken has long been conceived, via media and point-of-sale advertising copy, as being associated with a 'distinct' life-style, as well as life-stage, of, and aimed at, a certain category of male. This emphasis on the male is not merely coincidental in the advertisements for 'The Vines' where the father/husband is 'representative' of the successful family/community. The gendered spaces acknowledged in the advertising copy rehearse the domain of the male: leisure (sport) and property, with the adult female as either absented or relegated to an auxiliary role. (Berger's (1972) notion of men act and women appear can be applied here). Thus the notion (and meanings) of both Heineken and 'The Vines' offer a distinctive aspect of a particular life-style imagin(eer)ing which is directed by the perception of a type of sensitivity for familial relationships based upon European understandings of the familial structure: the (perceived, architectural) firstspaces of property and privilege (the mansion, the villa, the trattoria, the plaza), and the (conceived, *virtual*) secondspaces of refinement and romance (the family legacy, the historical title and patriarchy). All of these draw upon notions of nostalgia which rework and transform issues pertaining to the concept of the colonisation of space.

This life-style is promulgated as being leisure-oriented, principally of the 'cafe-(or bar)society' ethos, which is dependent upon appropriation by the attainment-driven, prosperity-achieving, consumer-satiated 'young upwardly mobile male'. This image incorporates notions of designer-label exclusivity which has been built by, and from, the

success of the product itself: Heineken has repeatedly been voted one of the world's most 'popular', as distinctive from 'best', beers. (This 'popularity' is problematic in itself in that it is hard to discover if this success is image-based and media-driven, or deserves to stand upon its espoused merit as a 'quality' product.) The exclusive spectacle of the classic *world* of Heineken takes the form of the exclusivity of the 'spectacular home of the Heineken Classic', 'The Vines'. Thus the image of the Heineken imbiber is an 'attitude' (attainment-*driven*, prosperity-*achieving*) and is *re*-presented (and represented) in the advertising copy as 'The Vines' inhabitant as an 'accomplished' male: You can settle for land around yet another forgettable golf course, or you can buy at the spectacular home of the Heineken Classic' [...] Golf-course frontage at the only golf course worth fronting. The Vines Resort...

The notion of accomplishment 'isolates' 'The Vines' resident both ideationally and palpably. Ideationally 'The Vines' enclavite display their 'beliefs and values' by buying into a lifestyle 'package'. This package utilises the second-spatiality of the conceptual to invest the collective inanimate matter of the bricks and bitumen, mortar and metal of the house, walls, roads and pathways with meanings. These meanings are then shaped into beliefs that are re-presented to the enclavite (and the 'other' of the outsider) in the advertisements. For example an advertisement printed in the real estate section of The West Australian newspaper (January 23, 1999) offers a checklist for the prospective buyer. The checklist comprises a comparison of 'choices' between 'The Vines' and three other sites (naming only the area where these sites are located not the names of the enclaves themselves). The choices on offer are: large range of homesites up to 1 acre;

established community; two 18 hole international standard golf courses; home security included; exclusive resort lifestyle; within 35 minutes of the city; surrounded by natural flora and fauna; close to Swan Valley wineries and restaurants. The copy itself then offers:

> The Vines offers a lifestyle other suburbs cannot even promise. Just 35 minutes from the city, yet far from the hustle and bustle...in a well established community. Some of the states finest schools, shopping centres and service centres are just a short drive away. Take a leisurely drive to The Vines this weekend and you'll see there's no comparison.

The prioritising of ideational aspects of the enclave (and its surrounds) work to attract (and repel) certain types of people (read men) via visions (and notions) of a homogeneity and sameness in identification. Difference is alluded to but absents itself (to the other sites?). In this case the people identify themselves via a distinct category: white-collar worker (35 minutes from city), monied (size of homesite) with plenty of leisure time (resort lifestyle and two golf courses). It also suggests that they travel a lot (home security), enjoy the 'finer' things in life (note: restaurants and wineries - not pubs!) and appreciate other things than the material aspects of life (natural flora and fauna). Behind all of these 'images' lies a certain, not very veiled, symbolic discourse which describes a system of meanings and beliefs inherent, not only in 'The Vines' resident, but also in the developer and even the advertising agency and rehearsed in 'The Vine's 'landscape'.

Citing an excerpt from Donald Horne's book The Intelligent Tourist (1992) can further an understanding of this understanding of the imagineering of a community. In one

section he discusses what he calls Magical Landscapes (pp. 24 - 27) and how they operate

on the subject to 'place' them. Thus:

> If you saw yourself in terms of the soft tones and mists of
> Lake Baloton, you were a Hungarian; if you seemed part of
> the land of the ox-cart lumbering along a quiet country
> road, you were a Romanian; if you lived in a land of
> perpetual harvest where women worked in the fields, you
> were probably a Bulgarian. (p. 25)

Thus a certain type of touristic consciousness is invoked here and the real-and-imagined

landscapes of 'The Vines' turn into Disneyesque 'monuments' to describe who the

residents think themselves to be. Horne suggests that:

> One should understand that in any case 'landscapes' are
> entirely a human concept, created out of the conventions of
> our senses and from the meanings and habits of particular
> cultures. There are no landscapes in nature... (p. 24)

Any moment from a Constable country painting to Disneyland's Main Street USA, from

a postcard to a snapshot, relies on a sense of perception and framing so that, as Horne

puts it, all of these become objects that stand for something else. Horne's remarks above

are pointed and what I am suggesting is that they apply equally to the case of 'The

Vines'. The 'landscape' of any enclave estate is invested with certain meanings which

work upon the beliefs of the resident. The developers and advertisers *imagineer* these

meanings into being as beliefs which the enclavites *imagine* for themselves. The

postcards offered by the advertisers become the snapshots for the viewer. Thus the

advertising copy becomes, as Horne would have it: 'a set of designated snapshots' (p.

237). Within the imagining/imagineering process resides the notion of sameness which

outlaws the dichotomous concept of the 'vagrant space' where difference may intervene

as the viewer is shown not only what to see but how to see it. Hence otherness is

dismissed. Roland Barthes states that: "to select only monuments [built or otherwise] suppresses at one stroke the reality of the land and that of its people" (cited in Horne, 1992, p. 24)

The notion of sameness (as self-segregating) is advanced in the physical site of the estate mentioned above. In the advertising copy describing the choices being offered to the prospective purchaser it states that the enclave is approximately thirty-five minutes from Perth (by the owners reckoning) surrounded by 'natural flora and fauna'. It is in fact located in an area of relatively virgin scrub and wetlands which tends to situate this suburb as being less than an ideal landscape in the terms of the European landscape convention. Be that as it may it is an isolated 'settlement' which colonises a certain space. The promotional literature and brochures for 'The Mews' and 'Taittinger Grove' include a map naming the major roads leading to 'The Vines' estate. These maps describe the peripheralised aspect of the estate but the copy works to centre this 'marginalisation'. Like some colonial outpost the site promotes its centredness via the naming process. Just as early explorers engaged in an act of appropriation via naming so the developers 'colonise' and 'centre' the site through the use of epithets with high culture/class associations. For example street names to be found in 'The Mews' include Moet Terrace, Bollinger Close and Chandon Terrace. Even the names 'Taittinger Grove' and 'The Mews' offer (English) connotations of wealth and position.

I suggest that this moment of isolation and the centring of the 'margin' also carries with it connotations of what can be called a 'colonial mentality' which is reiterated in the

advertorial copy via the exclusivity of the 'country club'. Echoes of The Raffles Hotel in Singapore with its colonial architecture, the Long Bar and The-Sun-Setting-on-the-Empire nostalgia do not require a great deal of imagination to be invoked here! This infers a type of 'siege mentality' which Jean Hillier and Phil McManus call the 'fortress mentality' (cited in Gibson & Watson (eds), 1994, pp 91-101). They suggest that these types of enclaves 'pull up the drawbridge' which argues for a certain type of exclusivity built around shared ideas and beliefs. In the very fact of its separation from the city and other enclaves/suburbs the monosemic voice of homogeneity is raised. This voice automatically speaks for sameness which describes a comm(on)unity but not necessarily community. As Hillier and McManus argue:

> Walled suburbs then, represent both fortresses to which the drawbridge can be raised, cutting off contact with those outside, and asylums, segregated communities in which difference is reduced and irregularity eliminated. (p. 95)

But within these fortress mentality communities they suggest that:

> The traditional slight movement of net curtains suggesting women's eyes covertly surveying the street has been replaced by the automated movement of overt electronic eyes. In many ways this symbolises the failure of trust that neighbours will perform the basic functions of community. (p. 98)

This notion would tend to restate what Foucault (cited in Rabinow, 1984) discussed about Godin's *Familistere* mentioned elsewhere. But Hillier and McManus then go on to offer:

As one enters, the drawbridge is pulled up against the abject others who reside outside. In turn, individual houses look inwards, excluding the outside world unless viewed through hermetically sealed glass or an electronic surveillance system. (p. 99)

Thus the segregated space of the homogenous 'colony' may isolate the resident within their own houses making nonsense of the notion of community whilst describing a poverty of participation of the comm(on)unity.

As has already been addressed the advertisements for 'The Vines' play upon the impression of what is regarded as the signifiers of 'good taste' and these are invariably built upon the ideas of financial success which are reflected in the choice of recreational and leisure activities and invested with a sense of the 'good life'. This notion of good taste equated with the good life is reiterated in the advertising and marketing copy for the estate and a subtle acknowledgment of it is even found in the nomenclature and the enclave furniture on the site itself. An easy example, mentioned above, is the designation of the major roadways and avenues of the site that are all identified with expensive champagne: Moet Terrace, Chandon Terrace, Bollinger Close and Taittinger Grove. However, a more dense reference can be discerned in the name of 'The Vines' sub-division mentioned above: 'The Mews'.

The epithet of 'The Mews' given to one of the sub-divisions found within the estate suggests what Gottdeiner (1995) in his discussion of the semiotics of the real estate sign calls, the 'English gentrification code' of the suburban estate. This code he states: '[s]ignifies status/class using signifiers from the Golden Age of the Bourgeoisie' (p. 153). I would add that the codified appellation of 'The Mews' is in fact a more refined and involved signifier than Gottdeiner suggests. In its simplest terms it is a pun on the word *muse* suggesting, on the one hand, meditation, and on the other, inspiration (usually

associated with the 'finer' artistic pursuits - which in turn are associated with status and class). It also suggests, as Gottdeiner points out, other assumptions dealing with class and status. I propose that these assumptions are established in relation to the nostalgic impressions of class and the 'family' in the era of pre-Victorian England and specifically the country estate of the landed gentry. I suggest that the conjoining of the notions of land and property (specifically the rural-ised) with those of familial bliss are at the heart of a pre-lapsarian idealised epoch which is deeply embedded in western (urban) folk-mythology, and that these sentiments persist, as some form of 'morphic resonance', into contemporary times.

This notion can be illustrated in an example gleaned from the pages of The History of the Family (volume II, 1996). In this exemplar Andre Burguiere and Francois Lebrun point to an engraving by C. Knight (circa 1792) entitled The Landlord's Family which portrays a family unit of father, mother and four children (all female?) ranging from a babe in arms to what might now be known as a teenager. Three of the children are clustered around the father as he sits on a sofa beside what appears to be a fireplace. The eldest of this group sits at her father's feet gazing up at him, whilst the youngest of the three stands behind him with one of her hands resting on his shoulder. Her other hand is clasped distractedly in his. The mid-aged child is at his right hand side working at her needlepoint and a rather corpulent cat sits sleeping contentedly at his feet. The intimate family group is completed with the mother standing to the father's left clutching the babe in her arms. Although she is turned away from him it is evident that he is very absorbed with his wife and youngest child. Burguiere and Lebrun in a comment on this scene state:

> This picture celebrates conjugal bliss and the simple joys of intimacy...[I]n Lawrence Stone's view, this *new family ideal*, founded on conjugal love, first found expression in the English aristocracy. (p. 96)(my italics)

The interesting factor to note, and one that underscores the family as a (loving) unit is how they are linked intimately together through touch. Thus the child behind the father has her hand on his shoulder and his right hand clasps her as his elbow rest against the arm of the sofa. The child to his right, although seemingly engrossed in her needlework, is linked to him by the proximity of her left arm and his right elbow. The oldest child rests her back upon his right leg while her left elbow rest upon his other knee. The mother and smallest child seem to be removed from this intimate group but on closer inspection it can be seen that the mother's voluminous gown is gently caressing the father's left hand which is resting by his side. In an effort to complete the picture the father's foot rests lightly upon the back of the feline family member thus enclosing the circle.

The description above presents an 'aura', in the Benjamin sense of this family as being an *authentic* harmonious household. That they are well to do is demonstrated not only in their clothes - both in style and cleanliness, but also in their captured moment of 'leisure'. The idea of the advantageous admixing of wealth and property with that of the leisured 'family ideal' is acknowledged in the title of the engraving. Thus this image could well be thought of in terms of an eighteenth century advertisement for what may be the ingredients for a happy and successful family state of affairs. That this image, in a slightly different guise but with all the elements (wealth, land and family togetherness) brought into play, can be carried forth into contemporary times might seem a slightly

improbable hypothesis...but images of this type (admittedly with an ironic twist) are still being reiterated in the newspapers and magazines as well as the real estate 'lift-outs'.

Before addressing the examples to be found in the various journals I wish to return to John Hartley's 'forensics' in his The Politics of Pictures (1992) and in particular one specific example which is, in form if not content, similar to The Landlord's Family: the Royal Family picnic (p. 77). As the title which Hartley gives to the photographic image indicates, it is a photograph of Prince Charles and Lady Diana and their two sons Wills and Harry 'snapped' by 'Uncle Tony' (as Hartley will have it) supposedly enjoying an intimate family gathering in the park. In formal approach the group is posed in an uncannily similar fashion to that of the Knight engraving, with even the family 'pet', in this case, the pony, being included! As with the eighteenth century family there is more than a modicum of formality in their arrangement as well as their appearance. Both families are grouped around a long piece of furniture. In the engraving it is an ornately upholstered sofa whilst in the Royal photograph the item in question is an equally ornate garden bench. Both have the youngest child standing behind the piece of furniture and both have a formidable backdrop. In the case of the engraving this background is a pictureless wall covered with intricately designed wallpaper the colouring of which varies from near black at the left of the scene to a lighter wash toward the right-hand edge. The Royal picnic is posed before an impressive tree the shading of which mirrors in reverse that of the engraving. A similar reversal is mirrored in the standing figures of the images with the parents swapping positions. Thus in the eighteenth-century family the eldest

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daughter sits at her father's knee whereas in the contemporary situation the eldest son is positioned at his mother's knee.

In the engraving a fireplace is positioned on the periphery of the group - a signifier traditionally associated with simple values of hearth and home. In the contemporary scene an ornate table stands in for this hearth. This table holds a platter of fruit and a wickerwork flask, presumably containing a liquid refreshment of some sort. Again the simple values in this image in the shape of simple, wholesome fare are reiterated. Even the carpet seen in the engraving is restated in the picnic scene in the form of the tartan picnic rug. But the most important resemblance is the fact that: 'the relaxed family shown in Snowden's photograph are all touching' (p. 79). So:

> 'Charles' hands rest on a shoulder apiece, and Harry holds the horse: 'As the last link in the chain, the youngest prince holds the reins in a clever compositional device which links all the figures in the picture together'. Actually the last link in the chain is Diana's jodhpurs; a 'clever compositional device' indeed, which draws attention to those 'fabulous legs' even as they unite the 'happy family' by touching Prince William'.(p. 79)

Thus it is clear that the two images, the engraving and the photograph, are very similar in their *imagining* of the family ideal, or in the case of the more contemporary Royal family, the ideal-ised family (the marital problems of this couple are surely well remembered!). In the latter case there are two things of note. The first point is that the photograph was taken to commemorate a tour of Canada by this family and, possibly due to its overt *imagineering* of 'togetherness' it was thereafter dubbed the 'happy families' tour by 'Buckingham Palace publicity' (p. 78).

The second point, and I am undecided whether this was an unconscious choice by either the Royals or Uncle Tony, or if it was merely serendipitous, is that Charles' family snapshot is taken *outside* of the family home, in the grounds of the family estate. Hartley referring to John Berger (1972) points out that one of the comments made by one of the journals reporting on this family picnic is its similarity with a Gainsborough picture, painted in 1748, of a portrait of a 'Mr. and Mrs. Andrews in the park of their house' (p. 79). Hartley reiterating Berger states that 'the Gainsborough portrait was one of the first paintings to show land as possession' and, I would suggest, that this scenario (the 'family grouping' in the 'grounds' of the home; the gentleman's park estate as an extension of the manor house) and disposition (the family that plays together, stays together) are echoed in the advertisements for the contemporary master planned communities. Thus in the advertisements for the enclave estates it seems family unity has nothing to do with the *home* as a edifice of family togetherness, but is reliant upon the *activities* found in the enclave, in the 'publicness' of the privatised, enclosed spaces out of doors. It could be argued that the old adage quoted above should actually read: the family that is *seen* (by other 'enclaved' families themselves being seen) to be playing together, stays together!

Sharing activities and being seen together does not emphasise the notion of family or community. In fact when enclaves which fall within 'The Vines' economic strata display images of (family?) groupings they invariably show incomplete or fragmented 'sets' such as one 'parent' with the 'children'; children playing on their own or with other children; parents indulging in sport or relaxation activities without any children being present at all; or even a singular image of a palatial house with human figures being absented from

the frame. Thus when these (incomplete) 'families' are displayed they are not shown as a unified whole. Unlike Knights' engraving or Uncle Tony's photograph customarily these groups have one thing in common: the (physical) distance between the various 'members'. A perusal of a number of the advertisements for 'The Vines' and a second estate, 'Ellenbrook' throughout the year January 1998 to January 1999 will offer some insight into this phenomenon.

The first advertisement under discussion is taken from The West Australian newspaper's real estate lift out (17/1/1998). This is an interesting example because it is almost a rarity within 'The Vines' advertising copy: a full page. It seems to be that 'The Vines', never over-committed to extensive marketing within the newspaper oeuvre, prefers to begin each new year with this size of copy. The advertisement comprises of eight small 'images' symmetrically placed around a single, central, large one. All of the images, including the main image are ellipsoidal in shape, a configuration that echoes that of 'The Vines' logo. Although there is a short descriptive piece, about a 'bonus offer' accompanying the images, it is the images themselves which are of greater import here.

The eight small images are positioned in pairs, four above the main image and four below. These pairings are further separated two to each side of the page. All of the small images on the left side of the page display the 'natural' environment or aspects of it such as plants and shrubs. These images offer representations of both 'native' and exotic, or imported, plants in what might be deemed a constructed 'second' nature. On the left side of the page above the main photograph, the first of the two images is of a 'green' and

fairway bunkers of a golf course. This scene is set against a background of a large group of lush, mature trees and a pale blue sky. The image immediately below this is of part of the restaurant complex at the Houghton winery (the double swans of the vineyard's logo being prominently displayed). This image also incorporates lush green growth, with the 'nature' being manifestly foregrounded. The two images to the left and below the main image consist of, in the top image, two kangaroos grazing beside some fairway bunkers, and below this a long shot of the 'entry statement' for 'Taittinger Grove' (one of the various sub-divisions of 'The Vines' estate) 'framed' by four native plants known colloquially as 'blackboys'.

The corresponding images on the right side of the advertisement and directly opposite all of the above comprise of: on top of the main image a woman sunbathing by what appears to be a 'public' (as opposed to a 'back-yard') swimming pool; and below this a close up of two males (presumably a father and son) on a tennis court with the younger one of them striking a ball while the other looks on. The images in the lower right hand side of the advertisement show: two children of primary school age riding bikes in what appears to be a park; and the photograph of the front elevation of an established house and garden. In this last image three women and a (female) child are seen walking past the house. (This image has been cropped for use here as a succeeding advertisement uses the unedited version which includes a second child, a boy, on a bicycle as part of the group).

The dichotomy of the vignettes utilises certain similarities and oppositions which in conjunction act as 'snapshots' of (and for) community. In these similarities and

oppositions there is a formal arrangement of the images, which offers a symmetrically balanced view to the overall depiction. But within this formal symmetry the juxtaposition of the elements of the individual images offers another 'balance' to the representations of community. For example the image of the putting green, the fairway and the surrounding wood (the combination of pristine nature and the 'vacancy' of the nature-alised) in the top left-hand image is diametrically opposed, relationally and in content, by the image of the house, garden and women in the lower right hand image (the inhabited, occupied 'busy-ness' of the built environment). Similarly the same image of the golf course can be put against that of its immediate neighbours: the al fresco restaurant image immediately below it, the swimming pool image directly opposite, or the tennis device displayed in diagonal juxtaposition. In the first of these images the predominance of the 'greenery' (nature) expunges the notion of the 'man-made' environment of the restaurant and as a result the human element, the couple seated at the table, fades into the background. This subtle use of the notion of the proper power of nature draws and plays upon, a 'nostalgia' for, and of the rural, embedded in the urban mythology of the suburb. In this case the community (human/social) is seen to be beneficial and sustaining if indistinguishable and inseparable from nature.

In the pool image a secondary aspect of this connection between nature and the built environment is highlighted. The natural, in this case the crystal, blue water is the backdrop for the enabling of the harmonising and restorative elements of 'nature' within the community. Thus, the almost electric red colour of the woman's swimsuit suggests a volatility and intensity that belies the notion of relaxation suggested in her reclining

figure. However, the diaphanous garment although equally vibrantly bright is draped in the gently rippling waters signifying the *imagineered* harmonious accord between the societal and the natural.

In the final illustration in this first group of images the 'social' is forefronted over nature displayed by implying that the active is preferred over the passive with the human element privileged over the natural environment. Thus, in this image, nature is harnessed, delineated and demarcated with a subtle signifier of this being that the trees in the background are seen to be giving way to a built environment. Significantly, here, both the trees and the building are in silhouette with heavy shadows falling in the foreground virtually obliterating the features of the tennis players. This shadowing, in fact, removes any indicators of individuality positioning them as the homogeneous 'every-man' community member.

The four images in the bottom half of the advertisement could almost be a mirror of the images discussed above. In the latter, with the eye scanning down and up from left to right, images of nature are privileged, with the societal being secondary. In the former however, moving *up and down* and from *right to left*, the built environment is foregrounded with the inference of 'family' and 'community' being pinpointed. Thus the image of the house, garden and 'neighbours' (the community), gives way to two children riding their bikes in a ('man'-made) park (family), which in turn gives way to the 'entry statement' of the walled enclave with native plants positioned as 'sentinels' (inclusion and exclusivity) The final image of the group of four is that of two kangaroos grazing on

a golf course with the fairway bunkers as backdrop - a reworking of the image in the first group of pictures and one which reinserts nature into the master planning/ed (of) community. Thus as the engraving and photograph discussed above linked the family members via other elements in a unity so do the pictures link all the elements in the enclave estate to offer a notion of comm(on)unity which is complete and stated. This operates to belie the notion of the poverty of participation because all elements, nature included, link together in unison. However, on closer inspection it is seen that each vignette speaks of a variety of spaces that are segregated either via age or gender or the binary opposition of the nature/built environment dichotomy. There are no large mixed groupings on display with only the (incomplete) 'family' or individual family members being highlighted.

All the images discussed above draw upon the precepts of the first- and secondspatialities - the perceived and conceived spatialities - to address the 'third (lived) space' of (and for) this master planned community. All the positive elements of these spatialities come together in the main image of the advertisement - as does the negative aspects of the 'dead' third space of the enclave estates. Absented from these images, and by extrapolation from the enclave itself is any notion of the fourthspace of the heterogeneity of the livable communisphere.

The second advertisement to be addressed concerns an image used to promote the highly successful and oft award-winning enclave (a fact mentioned in the written piece which accompanies the image) called Ellenbrook. This advertisement is garnered from The

West Australian newspaper's real estate section (May 9, 1998) and is primarily a montage photograph consisting of a backdrop of a 'babbling' brook with the foreground taken up with the images of a dog (a red setter) and a frog. These two animals appear to be looking at each other at close quarters, with neither of them, seemingly, in the least perturbed by the other's presence. At the top of the image a headline reads: It's Hard To Tell Where The Community Ends And The Natural Environment Begins. At the foot of the page the planner's slogan is (re)stated: Ellenbrook. It's What You're Missing. The informal tone suggests that the target market of the owners/planners differs from the preferred 'Vines' resident as being a young, middle-class, possibly newly married couple. The written piece, sandwiched between the image and the slogan, proposes how the image is to be read and how 'nature' is conflated with harmonious community and, it is alluded to, success.

The written part of the advertisement seeks to set up the dichotomy between 'nature' and the city; between the rustic *region* and the business *district*; the periphery and the core. The first paragraph reads:

> Flanked by the rustic beauty of the Swan Valley and
> Gnangara and Whiteman Parks, Ellenbrook sits in peaceful
> harmony with nature, just thirty minutes from Perth's
> bustling Central Business District.

The *harmonious* 'nature' here is that of the inscribed and (re)*worked* nature of second nature: the constructed parks and productive vineyards are seen as being complementary. They are both in harmony with each other and offer a harmonious ambience via this unity. It is also the *peaceful* that is in direct opposition to the bustling urbanity of the city. This peacefulness belies the constructedness of these 'natural' sites/sights, whereas the

city, represented by its Business District (note use of capitalisation), speaks of its highly

constructed 'nature'. The city (as business) is situated as Central, whereas Ellenbrook,

and its inherent natural environment is distanced from this core. It is 'just thirty minutes'

away; just far enough to be divorced from the hustle and bustle but not too far as to be

completely marginalised. This notion of distance as beneficially isolating or segregating

works to make the 'community feeling' stronger via insinuating a comm(on)unity is an

oft-used axiom of the enclave estates.

This notion of a common unity between the residents, the residents and their

environment, and this environment and 'nature' is heavily implicated in the rest of the

written text. It is therefore particularly helpful to quote at length from the written text

before addressing the visual representation in the advertisement. It states:

> The multi award-winning residential development has
> successfully married a large, *sensitively enhanced natural*
> *environment* with the features and facilities necessary to
> provide a richly varied suburban lifestyle.
> Wherever you look within the first two very different,
> *superbly landscaped villages*, you'll find impressive
> evidence of the *seamless mix* of natural and man-made
> features and *attractions*.
> Already over 250,000 plants and rapidly maturing trees
> flank the *many green active recreation areas.*
> Come and take a stroll along one of the many *bush walking*
> *trails or parkland paths* and feel why Ellenbrook is already
> by far the state's biggest, most diverse and successful new
> community.(my italics)

There is a strange attitude at work here with the 'natural' environment and 'natural'

nature as being thought of as somehow lacking in its essence. In a Foucauldian sense

nature needs to be seen to be, not just 'there' it must also be imbued with beneficial

qualities that enable it to have merit. Therefore it must be seen to be *productive*, whether

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as a bush walking trail or parkland or scopically and aesthetically *profitable* as a 'feature' or 'attraction'. Here is demonstrated the Disney- and touristic consciousness' of the enclave environment: nature can only be valued if is part of a 'set'; a *site* for seeing nature (walking trails and pathways) or the *sight* of the 'nature' site (250,000 plants and *rapidly maturing* trees). The value judgment of the aesthetics of nature as being beneficial to the community, as a whole, and the individual in particular has been culturally assigned and comes with a long history (see Barrell, 1972; Williams, 1973; McKibben, 1990; Hall, 1992; Gibson, 1995). But, as with the gentleman's park ethos, nature was to be valued only if it was enhanced (sensitively) with the *natural* space giving way to the space of 'second nature'. This is doubly the case for Ellenbrook. Its site was once a pine plantation, man-made and managed, with a small part of the plantation still flanking the enclave. In a strange twist the sensitively enhanced 'nature' in the enclave works to *magnify* the regimentation and constructedness of the plantation which is then singularly removed from any form of 'nature status'. In the way that Disneyland *is* America and that the 'real' America does not exist outside of Disney's Main Street so too is the notion that 'nature' only can be found within the walls of the enclaves. But this nature is the second nature of the simulated, a conjured nature for the conjured community. As Umberto Eco says of Disney's worlds: 'Disneyland tells us that faked nature corresponds much more to our daydream demands' (in Soja, 1996, p. 251). In the enclaves the first- and secondspaces the perceived and conceived spatialities come together in an imagineered third fixed(up) (animated-ly)dead space of the walled (and well-watered) community.

These notions of the fixed(up) and (animated-ly)dead space are rehearsed in the photographic image of the advertisement. It is a montage of three images each one representing a concept of nature. That the elements in this representation would be difficult to find in combination in 'reality' suggests the imagin(eer)ed aspect of nature in the conjured community of the enclave. A closer reading of this text will enable a deconstruction of these imagineered concepts.

The backdrop for this photographic image is a small waterfall/babbling brook. This type of aesthetically engineered idiosyncrasy is part of the environment of Ellenbrook. As the enclaves name propounds watercourses and lakes are major features throughout the enclave, with one 'village' The Bridges utilising this trait to great effect. What is of concern within the photographic reproduction of the brook is the way the two concepts of nature shown and how they are displayed. In the right hand side of the image is to be seen what seem to be an indigenous fern. Also on the right hand side but in the bottom corner there is the image of a frog. This flora and fauna are 'natural' nature carrying the cultural baggage of the connotations of 'wild' and the wilderness. On the left hand side of the image and removed from the right by the 'brook' are witnessed, at the top, some flowers growing between the rocks, and beneath these the superimposed image of a dog (a Spaniel). The flowers and the animal here represent tamed nature; an aestheticised and useful nature of display. This is a commodified (and codified) nature which inevitably suggests a certain type of lifestyle. They are therefore the secondspace, the conceived space, of community. It is also a 'dead' space witnessed in that even though the animals are (represented) as facing each other there is no curiosity or animation at, or in, either of

them. That they merely stare blankly at each other without any outward appearance of interaction suggests a poverty of participation which is a reproach to the ethos of the way the enclave community is supposed to be. The final point to be made is that the watercourse is the unifying (but dividing) aspect of this image. It divides the differences of the 'nature' of the flora and fauna, the wild and tamed, but brings them together under the umbrella term as 'nature'. Thus difference is clothed in a sameness with disparate types brought together as a comm(on)unity.

The Palpable Place of Participatory Poverty.

It has been noted in the earlier chapters that the topography of the contemporary master planned community whether in Australia, America, the United Kingdom or Europe is invariably surrounded by a wall leaving only one entrance (sometimes gated) for the residents to negotiate. This entrance opens to a long, narrow, (usually) straight dual-carriaged roadway defined by little more than low lying shrubs located in two thin ribbons of slightly sloping grass borders. Houses are notably absented from this singular stretch of street, as are footpaths, park-benches and shady knolls - examples of the types of 'furniture' found in the enclave proper. Even bus stops are banished from this 'no man's land' and they are invariably located at various points around the peripheral streets of the enclave itself. This is the territory of the car and the enclavite is discouraged from loitering here or traversing this space on foot. In fact any 'pedestrian' within this area would be looked upon with suspicion as being an 'outsider'. It can be argued that the

topography of this strip, its linearity and open-ness, is to aid surveillance and to detect the displaced and excluded.

Unfortunately this artifice could work against the owners of the enclave by discouraging prospective purchasers from perusing the estate. In the formative period when the estate is little more than a few show homes, the odd occupied dwelling and a handful of houses in varying states of completion the entry statement may be of little consequence and in fact is little more than a prime selling factor with its inherent notions of security and surveillance. However, as the estate 'matures' and more and more homes become occupied this device comes into its own, operating as a visible and effective barrier, a kind of gate-keeper, in which the outsiders self-regulate their actions. The entry statement (like the walls around the estate themselves) seek by display to distinguish the type of inhabitant (in terms of financial and life-cycle) of the enclave. Other factors such as proximity to shops, schools, the city etc. as well as the 'leisured activities' within the vicinity of the estate, will also come into play but it is whether the prospective purchaser feels as if they (because the buyers are invariably couples) might 'fit in' with the life-style perceived in the style of house and its setting which is a major factor. The *firstspatiality* of the enclave walls and entry statement offer a type of judgemental declaration for the prospective resident to negotiate. If the response is favourable, if there is a 'pleasurable perception' the drive from entrance to estate - the traversing of the liminal zone - could be the 'point of no return'.

If the walls and entry statement are the display *in situ* of the 'community' aspects of the enclave there is another manifestation, possibly more powerful, which operates upon the prospective purchaser before their visit to the site/sight. This is found in the advertisements for the estates that incorporate and demonstrably display the secondspatiality of the aspects of the 'conceptual community'. In the *in situ* situation the community is 'imagineered' for the visitor via the stylised 'furniture' (including the styles of display homes) and the 'engineered environment' found on site. In the advertisements the community is 'imagined' by the conjoining of certain myths generated by the copywriters, the owners and the prospective purchasers themselves. As has been mentioned in previous chapters these myths resurrect notions of what may be deemed as unreal, but true, in a transcendental, or intuitive, sense - notions of the prelapsarian, preindustrial 'village community'. The myths imagined in the advertisements 'speak-for' the community - a certain type of community - which is predicated upon notions of the ideal(ised) family grouping, the nexus of the rural and the urban, and leisured consumerism usually of 'natural' aspects of the environment.

The style of the imagin(eer)ed enclave estates leaves very little room for the speaking-as position of the fourthspatial vagrant space. In their stead are sanctioned spaces where a type of 'itinerant' practice may be undertaken. These spaces are the parks, lakes, bush-walks and other 'nature' environments that the enclave owners/planners build into the topography of the space. They are Disneyesque in performance and are mapped onto the environment where they act as the 'sets' for a type of artless *touristic* 'flanerie'. These spaces are highly regulated and are invariably spaces of, and for, surveillance. This

panoptic notion instils in the enclavite a self-policing mechanism that leaves little room for acts, or moments, of vagrancy. Here is witnessed the case that the 'cop in the head is more powerful than the cop on the street'. But moments and spaces of, and for, vagrancy do arise, usually at the inclination of the most marginalised group within the enclave – the teenagers.

This group is, in the main, ignored and neglected by the planners/owners in the planning stages of the enclave estate. Although young family groups (with pre- or primary school children) are the preferred models for the new enclave, the planners/owners seem to forget that young children have a tendency to grow into young adults. The slides and swings and other 'play' areas become the heterotopic sites of random, vagrant acts of petty vandalism such as graffiti tagging or the mis-use and destructive abuse of the furniture of these 'sets'. Quite often the parks and playgrounds are ignored with the younger children preferring to play in the streets or in the watercourses which become polluted with their debris or suffer de-vegetation. The parks and 'nature rambles' are also the sites of heterotopic mis-use. At night the older children gather roam around these areas and, hidden from the view of the adults gather for illicit sex, drinking and drug taking.

The adult enclavite has even fewer options to inhabit the vagrant moments of fourthspace. Because of the rules and regulations implemented by the owners/planners even the homeowner's backyard is heavily surveilled and policed to ensure no untoward instances or examples of difference can occur. These instances may include the mis-use

of the backyard as, for example, a 'storage' area for old furniture, a boat or even an old car that is being renovated. As was noted earlier in this chapter the owners/planners usually stipulate what types of plants may be incorporated into the property with 'exotic' flora being outlawed. Thus the homeowner has a limited capacity to add difference to the sameness desired by the owners/planners. The space becomes a dead space; a bland 'lived' space of similarity that seeks to deny the difference of the vagrant space. Only within the privatised space of the home itself, behind the walls and away from the eyes of fellow enclavites, may notions of the vagrant space be entertained – but as may be assumed even these are restricted in their performance. The architectural spaces of the enclave estates, like their fellow 'travellers' the malls, work to police, through the first- and secondspatialities the third or lived community space. The fourthspace of the livable difference of the communisphere is absented within the walls and in its stead are the spaces of a comm(on)unity of similarity.

Chapter Ten •

Touring the community: Its all in the mall

The ending of the film <u>Muriel's Wedding</u> which was discussed above sees Muriel and Rhonda 'tour' Porpoise Spit bidding farewell to the first- and second spaces which make up the 'community' of the town. The final place for their vociferous adieu is, not surprisingly, the mall. In most towns or regions the mall is seen as the *de facto* community centre – a notion that the mall developers and their associates go to great lengths to endorse. In this the penultimate chapter we tour the mall - the definitive space where the real-and-imagined, the physical and the virtual, come together exoterically – as a final leave taking in the search for community and the vagrant space. The choice of the term 'tour' is not an accidental one. It was chosen simply because the mall can be thought of as being as much a 'tourist destination' of a *set of destinations* as is a single site of 'sights' such as Disneyland, the Sydney Opera House or Stonehenge. Whereas the latter two spaces are, in the main, sights simply to see, Disneyland and the malls are sites that are to be *negotiated*. This act of negotiation assumes a certain participatory relationship between the site and the 'tourist' or guest. However, as will be seen, this participatory aspect is exhausted in the enactment and is directly dependent upon the real-and-imagined, the representational and architectural, spaces.

Throughout the journey through the real and imagined spaces it has become obvious that the sites under discussion are linked in a sympathetic symbiosis. Thus the photographic representations in the real estate advertisements are connected, in the historical moment,

to the filmic texts, with the still photograph being the precursor of the latter. These two virtual spaces are in turn connected to the more recent ocular incarnation of the televisual representations. The fourth link, and one that at first glance may seem unrelated by virtue of its physicality, is that of the enclave estates of suburbia. However, on reflection it can be seen that there is a relationship between the genealogy of the suburbs and the chronicle of the television (and by extrapolation the other two spaces). In fact, authors such as Roger Silverstone (1994) have directly linked the suburbs and television with the establishment and rising popularity of both occurring simultaneously. It is even suggested that the link between the two spaces may go further, with the televisual text being something of a pedagogic device to instruct people on how to live in the suburbs (see Silverstone, p. 54)). Whatever the case, there is a distinct relationship between the two sites (see Strathern, in Cohen and Fukui (eds), 1993). However, one final space of importance needs to be discussed, one that is even more intimately connected to the other sites and in fact closes the circle of this linkage. This site is the ubiquitous shopping mall. But before we enter and trek through this space we need to address the connection between the spaces of the advertisements, films, television and the suburbs with that of the malls.

Freeze Frame: There's (Still) Life in the Mall

The mall in its presentation and enactment is in essence an advertisement. Like the photograph which it more often than not incorporates, it freezes and isolates a mise-en-scene in a paradoxical moment of a 'utopian spectacle' of everyday life. This

photographic *snap shot* of the family barbecue, picnic or holiday gathering is a formalised informality depicting an event that is both contrived yet relaxed. It captures and *possesses* a unity that is an ideal but one which is transient in its presentation; a *re-*presentation of familial synthesis which *re*-enacts a spatiality which is both a good place (eu-topia) and a no place (ou-topia). Similarly the mirrored windows of the boutique shops in the mall echo these sentiments and rehearse, and possessively appropriate, the notion of the good place, a place of plenitude akin to the world of the mythological, utopian Cockaygne (see Kumar, 1987, 1991). This place is where there is a never-ending abundance of food and goods and little effort is required to acquire these items. But, paradoxically, the transparent shop window is also the no place of the no(w)here – a *present* place that is both real-and-imagined. Like the photograph in the advertisements, the shop window describes a virtual space of another place - an imagined (if not imagineered) space. But even though this space is in the present, with us here and now, it admits of another place in another attendant interval. In the case of the photograph this moment is the space of a past. The photograph is both tangible and actual, it exists in a tactile form, but it is also intangible and abstract in its virtual representation. We can entertain it as a concept but we cannot enter it. With the photograph we penetrate that space with our eyes and our imagination and for a brief second, it seems, when our imagination is mobilised, there is another reality – a reality akin to memory.

The photographic representations in the advertisements play with this notion of memory, especially in those advertisements concerned with the selling of the suburbs. It is as if a *future memory* was being offered to the viewer/prospective buyer, and this future

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memory mobilises the imagination into a virtual space that is both a future to the present and a past to *that* future. Thus the prospective buyer-as-viewer is imagined as using the advertisement-as-photograph as if it was one of their personal momentoes or souvenirs of the good times they have *had* since becoming a member of that particular community. The photograph/advertisement is therefore metonymic. It gives a(n) (anterior) small part of a(n) (prospective) (virtual) whole. It projects a(n) (imaginary) past from the viewpoint of a (possible, and wished for) future into the present. The young children displayed in the advertisement are the young children the viewer has (will already have) had. The photographic representation of the family at the beach, walking the dog or having a barbecue by the lake is, it is suggested, the photograph of these 'past' events the viewer-as-buyer keeps (in the future 'present' of the then/now) in their family album. In a twist on Foucault's statement about television and cinema, that 'people are shown not what they were but what they must remember having been' (in Friedberg, 1993, p. 8) the photograph/advertisement suggests that people must *remember* a be-ing which they have not yet (and possibly never have) been. Thus the photograph/advertisement is the space of the (always already) becoming.

With the mise-en-scene in the shop window (or even the project display home) a similar sort of experience is witnessed but with a few variations. The shop window is more catholic in its temporal 'setting'. Its representation is not simply a rehearsal of memory. It can relate a past, present or future with the latter being the more considerable, enthralled as it is within the notions of the driving desire of consumerism. It too is tangible and actual, but it also carries vestiges of the immaterial and abstruse. We are entertained by it

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as a spectacle but we are removed from it. It, like the photograph, mobilises our imagination but to paraphrase Anne Friedberg (1993), whereas the former transports us in time the shop window brings the distant (future as place) close at hand. If the photograph in the advertisement is a view of the (imagined) future-as-past, then the store window, especially that of the boutique shop, is future-as-present. Like Carroll's (1984) Alice through her looking glass, the mall guests have a desired future reflected back to them, a future which they can enter (or plunge?) into through the purchase of the object of that desire. The shop window is a mirror that reflects the contextualised real space in which the guest is situated but also one which offers an 'entry' into an imagined space of possession.

The window as mirror also reflects the cornucopian copiousness suggested in the story of the utopia of the Cockaygne. The myriad mirrors in the concentrated space of the boutique shops allude to an abundance that is seemingly endless and equally excessive. Krishan Kumar (1991) says that the Land of Cockaygne:

> Is a land of extravagance, exuberance and excess...Its master themes are abundance and freedom from work. Everything is free and available for the asking.(p. 6)

and

> At the most elementary level, as a primary driving force Cockaygne contributes the element of desire. It portrays a world of unrestrained enjoyment and pleasure...the absence of scarcity and the joyful abundance of all that is desired drive out..(the)..darker shades. If utopia is longed for, if it promises the escape from toil and suffering, then Cockaygne is the ingredient that supplies the essential instinctual charge.(p. 18)

Excess and abundance are suggested in the mall through the use of miscellaneous and specific reflective surfaces. Kumar's 'desire and design' which 'certainly go into the making of utopia' (p. 19) is witnessed here. Abundance therefore is described via the artifice of the many reflective surfaces reflecting not only the items on display but also the reflecting surfaces themselves. The mirrors mirror the mirrors in a type of sideshow alley display of distortion which can heighten, in an escalating carnivalesque manifestation of visual frenzy, appetite and desire.

The notion of reflection is remarkably resonant in the flaneurial spaces of the mall. The 'streets' which link the anchors of the large department stores with the smaller 'jostling' boutique or specialty shops also contain the mirrors and reflective surfaces which act to duplicate and double the images presented in the mall. This duplication and doubling adds to the sense of plenitude by fragmenting and isolating aspects of the totality of the spectacle displayed in the shop fronts. This then separates the distinctiveness of an individual consumer item and in segregation an awareness of the variety of difference is reached which assumes an abundance of choice. Fiske, Hodge and Turner (1987) in Myths of Oz make mention of this artifice of reflection found in the architectural use of mirrors in the mall. They state: 'they break up the image and disperse it over a bewildering set of vistas..(which)..work on notions of plenitude' (p. 101). But this plenitude is a false reflection. The variety on offer is not so much one of difference but that of a singular sameness. The fashion item offers deceptive difference, style mirrors style, a fridge is a fridge whether it is white or wood-grained.

The doubling effect of the mirrored surfaces also operates to 'increase' the crowd of 'guests' who window-shop as they wander along the 'avenues'. This secondary attribute of duplication and doubling works in relation with the concept of the shopper as 'malling' in an effort to see and be seen – or even to see themselves being seen to be seeing. Lauren Langman in her essay 'Shopping for Subjectivity' (in Shields, 1992, pp 40 – 82) suggests that:

> Being seen brings gratification through recognition of self.
> In amusement society we act not so much through taking
> the role of the Other but as if the camera is on us and the
> Other is watching.(p. 56)

This notion can be extended in that we see, in the reflective surfaces, *ourselves* as Other. Our identity in and for ourselves is valued in its difference through a negotiation of our distinctiveness, our separatedness from the sameness inherent in the consumer items we purchase and use. By isolating our difference through the act of looking at it we see our display of selfdom and singularity even though we are clothed in the commodities of sameness. In our reflected selves we see the total display of our (self) imagineered selfhood. The reflected display of our self mirrors the ideal of the image manifested in the mannequins in the shop windows. Just as the store dummies can 'stand alone' and be seen in isolation their effect in the mall as a whole is to unite them in a totality. The consumer items they display work together, not in isolation, even though each can be individually distinct. This is a scopic participation by purchase, which in essence sees the shopper as an advertisement for and of a comm(on)unity which is described by negotiation with the real-and-imagined spaces.

The notion of the mall as advertisement is further enhanced through the display of the manufacturers slogans and trademarks inscribed upon the shoppers 'bodies'. The mallers' clothes and caps carry a proliferation of the distinctive ticks, swirls, leaping panthers and white stripes that belong to trans-national companies such as Nike, Coca-Cola, Puma and Addidas. Everything from bags to boots, sunglasses to sweaters bear the mark of the marketing arm of their manufacturer. In the malls themselves can be seen the 'dots on the box', KFC's colonels, red and white 'targets' and Red Roosters. However, the mall itself has very little by way of distinguishing marks. The exterior is renowned for its blandness and dull expanse of brickwork. If the mall possesses a logo it is usually placed on the periphery of the car park areas. Here it can announce its presence to the highway which bring the visitors from further afield. Thus the mall simultaneously denies a sense of community while promoting participatory notions of it. Within its locale the mall isolates itself both architecturally, via its car-parks, and virtually, via the absence of any signifiers of neighbourhood connection whilst at the same time advancing a sense of community and the communal via the interior furniture and design – for example the large open areas and clusters of benches - and the internal promotional presence such as the neighbourhood school art and craft displays.

In a stratagem not far removed from the mirrors and reflecting surfaces found in the malls, in the electrical-wares stores banks of operating televisions are stacked nearly to the ceiling, while in the record shops and the fashion departments of the larger chain stores strategically placed video monitors reflect a different form of scopic abundance – the global televisual display of the rock video genre. Quite often a camera is hooked up to

a video screen and pointed at a busy section of one of the mall avenues. In this way the mallers can see themselves on the monitor as they pass by or stand and stare at themselves as if they are a TV star in their 'own' show. The conflation of the mall and the televisual inserts the mall into the world of excess and exuberance, which is a trademark of the televisual text. Thus the passing parade of the mallers reflected on the screen becomes something akin to the endless procession of advertisements and programmes seen nightly in the lounge room. Just as the networks present themselves as being part of the wider community and purport to be engaged in offering a visuality of community to its 'community' of viewers, the mall managers operate within similar circumstances offering a concept of community which is 'textualised' via the real-and-imagined spaces.

It's a (S)mall World.

If the mall were to be read as a text then its closest counterpart would be that of the television. The televisual text is comprised of discrete, unrelated, juxtaposed, episodic sequences. Thus advertisements, news bites, station promos and the programmes themselves make up the viewing spectacle. The programming of the various networks assumes a *flow* of interrupting and interrupted sequences which may be thought of as a type of inverted flaneurial exercise. In the case of the flaneur, it is 'he' who moves through the spaces taking pleasure in looking. However, with the televisual flaneurial experience, the watcher is fixed and the scenes, the snippets of the gaze, parade past 'him'. Both of these experiences are catered for in the malls with neither at any one time

being privileged above the other. Thus the maller at once constitutes the 'browser' which

for Fiske *et al* (1987) is: 'literally, eating casually round a meadow looking for the grass

or herbs that suit the taste' (p. 98). But whereas the animal suggested by Fiske et al is

actively consuming the site, physically devouring it, the shopper strolls the *sight,*

scopically digesting it. It is an act of ocular consumption, and in this respect the term

'window shopping' is an apt nomenclature.

The mall as both TV text and textual flanerie is rehearsed through the assumption that the

shops and 'streets' on display are not merely points of consumption but are conduits of

pleasurable 'viewing'. As Friedberg points out in her discussion of Baudelaire and the

flaneur, the *flaneur* was 'the perfect spectator' who desired: 'To be away from home, and

yet to feel at home; to behold the world, to be in the midst of the world and yet to remain

hidden from the world' (1993, p. 28). This, it is assumed, applies to the maller as (TV)

spectator and/or the TV spectator as (flaneurial) maller. The desire to be 'away from

home' is actualised in the act of televisual spectatorship where the gaze is mobilised to

enter(tain) temporally and spatially distanced territories. The mobilised gaze allows the

viewer to 'behold the world' while remaining removed from it; to be in the midst of it

while hidden; to gaze upon it without the gaze being acknowledged. Just as the flaneur in

his removed spectatorship aided in informing the concept of the 'community' of Paris the

televisual provides the spectacle of the community of the 'global village'. However,

unlike the flaneur, the spectatorship of this global community by the viewer incorporates

him/her into it. If the *flaneur* is being apart from and *alone* in the crowd familiarises the

crowd, the tv spectatorial flaneur is constituted as part of the *lonely* crowd of the global family.

But the mall is also a type of *mundus inversu*; a somewhat topsy turvy topos in that the maller in his/her parade can be seen as being the spectacle for the sightless spectatorship of the mannequins in the windows of the shops themselves. The mannequins become a simulàcra of the tv watcher with the flow of the televisual performance being replaced by the 'performance in passage' of the shoppers. Just as the TV audience are 'sold' to the advertisers by the networks through the popularity of a (virtual) text, then, in a strange twist, the shoppers (the TV audience divorced from their screens) are sold again but this time to the advertisers via the (material) embodiment of the 'advertisements' themselves; the mannequins and marketing devices on display throughout the mall. The real-and-imagined are concomitant and are displayed in the notion of the shoppers as text for the sightless mannequin. The television as the blind screen writ upon by the spectacle is echoed in the presentation of the mannequin as a sightless simulacra of the shopper - not so much a spectacle of display but more a spectator in display. The store window mannequin in its immobility witnesses a bricolage of shifting scenes in a display which mimics the so-called passive quiescence of the tv viewer who gazes at the textual flow on the screen.

In a similar vein the shop assistants and clerks reiterate this theme via their anonymity. They become in their blank ocularity the viewers of the spectatorial flow of the shoppers. However, in the shopper/clerk transactional phase the shop assistant enacts a form of

mediated quasi-interaction (Thompson, 1998) similar to that of the news presenter or talkshow host in the televisual text. The store assistants are an intermediary between the two 'selves' of the shopper – the real-and-imagined selves of the incomplete (before purchase) self and the (almost) complete self that is purchased. The shop assistant 'informs' the shopper; they connect the shopper and the item, which is an act which situates the shopper as product, the consumer. In a similar way the tv connects the viewer with the text, via the host/ess to make a product – the audience.

Just as the TV spectator is fixed, so to, at times, is the maller. The mall offers spectatorial spaces that accommodate the stationary scopophiliac. Fiske *et al* (1987) acknowledge this and state: 'Images need spectators; lookers need spectacles' (p. 97) and they go on to add: 'Most city and suburban shopping centres facilitate this. There are balconies and viewing hatches for people to lean on and watch the spectacle below' (p. 98). The maller as static spectator implies a type of voyeuristic regime wherein the fixed nature of both the watcher and the look suggests a hidden seer. By being removed from the mobile gaze the static spectator constitutes what Rod Giblett in his essay 'Watching TV, Watching Yourself' (1985) states is the 'scene of the Other' (p. 124) with the Other here being that of the collective 'community' of active mallers. He goes on to suggest that: 'when that other seems to look at me, I am a part of that scene, the other is no longer other' (pp 125-126). Thus the voyeuristic regime of the static mallers (temporarily) excludes them from membership of the mall community. This is witnessed in the shopper who seeks refuge in the sunken 'rest areas' - which are hidden by bushes and other flora from the view of the other shopper/community members - but who peer through the foliage at the parade of

participatory 'community' performers. Only when they rejoin the throng and become part of the spectacle of the scopic, part of the nexus of spectacle and spectatorship, seer and seen and seeing themselves being seen, do they feel a participatory member of the consuming community. To paraphrase Rod Giblett (1985) they too enter into that space and they can derive pleasure from seeing themselves mirrored in the Others (p. 125).

Another aspect of the mall as television is that it is filled with familiar strangers. On the TV we are presented with names, voices and faces of people we can easily recognise and who are well known to us even if we have never, and more than likely will never, meet. Sports people and actors, news presenters and talkshow hosts populate our screens and there is established an easy and sympathetic, if somewhat limited, one way rapport with them. But this transaction is what Rod Giblett (1985) calls a 'fiction' (p. 120) which is constructed by the viewer and one in which the viewer is constructed as being a part of. He uses the example of the newsreader to investigate this fiction stating that the relationship between the viewer and performer is impoverished in its enactment. He states that: 'Although we seem to be staring at each other, our gazes never meet, can never meet' (p. 120). This vacuous tension between the viewer and the newsreader is echoed in the practice of malling. The maller recognises with familiarity the various 'actors and performers' which make up the drama of the 'fiction' of the community of the mall. From the shop assistants to the mall-rats and –bunnies, from the uniformed security guards to the uniformity of the trend-setting mall-jammers, from the track-suited house-wife to the business suits of the office worker all these 'stereotypes' take their place on

the set of the spectacle. They become an accumulation of the 'Other' or, what Langman

calls, the Other of the Imaginary (cited in Shields, 1992). She describes this other as:

In the age of television, we learn to see Others as if our eye were a camera. Role-taking

and –making are less based on words than images. Taking the role of the Other is now to

imagine that we are being seen via camera by the larger audience of home viewers. (p.

56)

The various 'actors' in the mall may all be staring at each other but it is into a lens that

they are peering. Thus their gazes never meet, can never meet because the imaginary

camera(s), the indiscriminate but, in the end, blind eye intercedes, reflecting private

visions of themselves back to their privatised selves. The eyes of the Other of the

Imaginary are just another reflective surface among the many in the mall, and unlike

Alice's experience the maller's glass can not 'melt away…like a bright silvery mist'.

Set(tling) for the Mall

One space where the 'bright silvery mist' is displayed is the so-called silver screen of the

cinematic apparatus. The mall is aligned with the filmic text in a number of ways not

least of which is that it is a 'set' which comprises a variety of other, different 'sets'.

These juxtaposed sets are the sights of the virtual flanerie of the mobilised gaze (see

Friedberg, 1993). Like the filmic text they present 'alternative vistas, a compensatory

escape from drab suburbia and the imaginative parameters of its inhabitants' (pp 112-

113). These alternative vistas are made easy to consume by the seeming absence of

borders or barriers. The shops and restaurants in the mall are usually without doors and, in some cases, windows. There are few impediments to the flanerie of the shopper who can move with alacrity from one space to another, sampling the 'delights' of other spaces denied them outside of the mall. The cinematic experience is similar in its rehearsal. The film spectator 'moves' via the 'optic nerve' to other spaces (and times). S/he, for the duration of the text, transcends the borders and barriers which, outside of the theatre, work to restrain and constrain. Thus in the filmic experience of malldom the spectator/shopper can enter a virtual Italian piazza or enjoy a pizza in a virtual 'Italy'; watch the Titanic hit an ice-berg while the 'experience' of it is replicated in 'sensorama' or eat a gigantic ice-cream in a sensory replica of a ships stateroom; take to the rocky road in the Rockies or eat a 'Rocky-Road' in the rockery.

The different department stores in the mall offer 'cinematic-like' sets in their display of various home furnishings. These sanitised and segregated manifestations of the lounge, dining room or bedroom are, it is suggested, the ideal settings for the real-or-imagined (actual-or-virtual, palpable-or-filmic) melodramas which make for family life. These sets invite the potential purchaser to write for themselves a 'walk-on part' within the narrative of the mall where they can rehearse their perfect(ed) roles as husband, wife, father or mother in a commodified and highly codified setting. Like the display homes in the enclave estates the different 'rooms' exhibited offer a complete package replete with bookshelves filled with books, wine racks holding bottles of red and white, a desk with computer and screen, and picture frames on a sideboard with portrait photographs in them. But this space is imagineered in the best Disneyesque tradition as a family space.

The books on the shelves are a simulacra of 'spines', the bottles are made of plastic, as are the computer and screen, and the photographs are pictures of models whose faces grace countless other frames in countless other 'sets' in countless other stores.

If the filmic text is explicitly written (often with re-writes) then the mall is equally, though less obviously, scripted (with its own form of re-writing). The most successful malls, like their cinematic counterpart the box-office hit, offer a mix of 'storylines' often blended with small doses of humour, melodrama and suspense to gain the largest spread of consumers/spectators. In the filmic text there may be two or three main storylines that anchor the text (or one or two actors who perform a similar task). The mall equivalent of this are the large department stores which also work to anchor the various spaces of the smaller shops and stores. These anchors stand at the main entrances to the mall itself and position how the mall is to be read socio-economically. For instance, the better quality goods found in the larger more expensive stores would be out of place in a suburban mall which services a blue-collar or economically 'depressed' area. Similarly a 'bare-bones' department store would not be found in an elite suburban mall. These anchors also dictate, to a certain extent, the other shops which make up the mix of the mall. In filmic terms this mix of department stores and boutique shops can be thought of as the 'casting couch' with the bit players vying to be selected by the casting director (or mall manager!). And as is seen in the world of film the major stars, the actor as anchor, often have a vital say in who the supporting actors will be.

The Smile of the Cheshire Cat: A Comment on Community.

'It [the Cheshire cat] vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone'.(Lewis Carroll, (1865), 1984).

Like the grin of Carroll's Cheshire cat the notion of community suggested by the malls lingers long after the tail (tale?) of it has been lost to view. The architectural space of the mall offers a narrative where 'the design and layout...attempt to create a utopia of consumption situated..[in]..a mythical past of the pre-automobile Main Street of Smalltown where one walked from store to store' (Langman, in Shields, 1992, p. 49). The referential recital of community in the mall 'stimulate communities of memory' (p. 49) which are 'nostalgic of neighbourhood and lost community, or at least Christmas-card images of a past abundant with goods and social cohesion' (p. 49). The 'grin' is therefore the 'gloss of community', the smile of safety and security, the simper of a simulacra whose claim to authenticity is (literally) displayed 'on stage' via certain dates in the calender (Christmas, Easter, Father's day, Mother's day) or by way of the (much loved by mall managers) exhibition of arts and crafts from the local schools or 'neighbourhood social groups'.

Just as the Cheshire cat has been multiply imagined, from the originator Dodgson to the appropriating Disney, so too is the community of (and in) the mall. Whereas Dodgson's work took Alice and the reader through a looking glass into an imaginative community

Disney imagineered this community and mirrored it in the virtual space of the film and the real-as-imaginary space of DisneyLand. Anne Friedberg (1993) in her book <u>Window Shopping</u> also uses the virtual texts to point to two extremes found in the imaginative world of the community in the film, in her cases George Romero's piece <u>Dawn of the Dead</u> (1976) and the Woody Allen and Bette Midler text <u>Scenes from a Mall</u> (1991). (A more extended discussion of the latter will be undertaken later in this chapter). In Romero's film, as Friedberg points out, the mall is an anti-utopian space, it is 'a runaway machine; its escalators, fountains, videogames, and automated voice-announcements continue in endless repetition...' (p. 116). The 'back-from-the-dead' community in the film are, inexplicably it seems, drawn to the mall. But there is a simple explanation for their actions and this is given by one of the 'living' characters: it is 'Part instinct, part memory, what they used to do. This was an important place in their lives...' (p. 116). The mall here is demonstrated as a space for community cohesion where even the 'living dead' yearn to return. The act of communal shopping ensures community connection with the mall being the authentic space for its enactment. In another article relating to the malls and the Romero film Lauren Langman (cited in Shields, 1992) states:

The graves give up their dead; zombies are born again to go to the mall to shop. This was the most important place in their earthly lives and what heaven is like in the next. (p. 68)

The notion of heaven on earth, a cornucopian utopia, is conflated with the notions of a comm(on)unity (albeit a 'living dead' one) and an equally heavenly space specifically designed for this community.

In Friedberg's second example the mall is described as being what Langman cites as the locus of: 'the good life, good feelings and good selfhood' (in Shields, 1992, p.46). Although this filmic text concentrates more on the experiences of a single couple who endure a marital crisis while shopping for their wedding anniversary presents, the suggestion is that the mall as *the* appropriate community space aids in their attempt to reaffirm their love and thus strengthen their marriage. Only in the mall, it is suggested, can a true communion take place. This notion of gratifying intercourse, both socially, in the rehearsal of the couple who come closer through consumption, and sexually, witnessed in their passionate love making and ecstatic climax whilst watching <u>Salaam Bombay</u>, are contrasted with the 'otherness' of the other shoppers in the mall. This is exemplified in the character of the white-faced mime artist who helps map the stages of their crisis and regeneration through a sarcastic silent 'commentary'. The 'difference' displayed in, and through, this character points to the 'sameness' (the white, middle-class, leisured strata of American society) perceived in the principal protagonists and the mall shoppers. The mall itself also reflects this notion of sameness established by and through the otherness of difference. The mall space in this text offers a variety of 'touristic sites' in the form of diverse boutique shops which the couple enter and engage with. It is as if they are (re)-enacting a type of honeymoon as they travel from one 'exotic location' to another sampling 'local' cuisine and purchasing 'souvenirs'. As Friedberg puts it:
The couple can visit Mexico and drink margaritas, toast champagne in a faux France (the Maison de Caviar), and buy Italian clothes that turn the couple into movie quotations. (p. 124)

But Friedberg neglects to mention the other sites of difference which are either explicitly displayed or simply implied. These sites of otherness range from the 'touristic' (Japan and the sushi bar or the beach at Malibu the destination Woody Allen decides is the place to test his newly acquired gift of a surf board), to the socio-cultural (the teenage rap group with their ghetto blaster or the 'Olde English' quartet singing Christmas carols in the mall's atrium). However, the most important exotic site and the one which brings about their reunion as a couple is 'visited' via their viewing of the neo realist film <u>Salaam Bombay</u> in the mall's multiplex cinema. As Friedberg puts it:

Inside the Beverley center's bounteous theater of purchases, *Salaam Bombay*...becomes a twisted tourist escape where the "life of the natives" serves only as an impoverished backdrop to excesses of passionate anniversary lovemaking. (Ibid)

The conjunction of the cinema space and the mall space here offers an interesting twist on the notion of the real-and-imagined spaces and of touristic and Disney consciousness. The cinema displays a neo-realist Indian text that uses as its backdrop and its narrative the poverty of the streets of Bombay. This text then presents a virtual space for the story of the reality of life in the third world. But Bombay as reality is negated as the cinema screen remakes it into a site/sight (or touristic marker or set) of a destination (just one of many in the mall) where an authenticity (a getting in with the natives) can be (vicariously) experienced. But Bombay as site/sight becomes de-differentiated in its display. Witnessing Bombay via the cinematic apparatus removes its *reality* equating it with other types of touristic virtual encounters such as the viewing of televisual travelogues, looking at postcards or reading tourist brochures. Thus through the virtual

mobility of the nexus of the filmic/tourist encounter Bombay becomes just another commodity experience no different from the products on display in the mall shelves.

The cinematographic process of filming and editing privileges a perspective that has a similar structure to that of the touristic or Disney experience. The cinema spectator sees what is offered from a certain vantage point that is selected for them. Just as the site/sight markers suggest how the tourist 'set' is to be read and the Disney actors narrativise the ride, then *the* Bombay on display becomes a Bombay, one among many. Thus the real-as-*imaged* comes together with the cinema being a material (imagineered) place which offers a virtual (imagined) space (the text) for the display of a real place (Bombay). By contrast the mall is an imagineered (material) place (the mall) which offers a variety of 'virtual' spaces (the 'manifestation of imagination' in the 'sets' of the shops) in a reality of virtual places.

The various displays of otherness attest to the unity of the couple, restating their 'sameness' against a backdrop of (impoverished) difference. The mall offers a range of differences to confront but in their display a common unity can be forged, the community of 'us'. The various spaces in the mall, the 'tourist' sites/sights and the common spaces of community help to bring the disparate groupings together under the coruscated roof of the mall's comm(on)unity. This is the case of turning the one and the many, *et unum et plura* into *e pluribus unum*, out of many, one. Thus the many spaces (and peoples) found in the mall work together to enact an idea of sameness – the sameness found in the notion of community.

The shops thus act as zones which unify in separation and the mall managers and designers allocate these selected spaces to various 'communities': the teenage mall-jammers and mall–bunnies who congregate in the segregated space of the video-game parlours (usually situated on the periphery of the mall); the more mature shoppers who linger for long periods on the benches located in the 'time-out' zones hidden behind an array of plants and bushes (the mall equivalent of the 'park' and 'park-bench'); the pre- and early-schoolers who slide and swing the time away in the play-zones, or sit on the floor before the raised stage in the entertainment zone enthralled by the latest imported 'extravaganza' presented as Disney-on-Ice or whatever the recently released movie from the Disney stable happens to be the in-thing. Still other spaces are on offer to serve the purpose of community legerdemain. In the larger malls of America there are official mall-walking times where mall-walking groups (a community by affiliation?) gather together and trudge the circuit of the various floors. At certain times of the year the various malls offer so-called community sales days, or side-walk sellouts (a misnomer if ever there was one – how can you have a side-walk when there are no roads?) where the shops spew their merchandise onto makeshift tables located in the 'pedestrian streets' of the mall and spruikers jokingly cajole the 'guests' in a parody of a village market day. Then there are the food halls or as they are commonly known the 'food fairs' where strangers are constrained to share tables whilst studiously consuming a mix of exotic and commonplace cuisine. Of course all of these spaces are offered to advance the reason for the malls' being – consumerism. But instead, or maybe because of this, the malls are both selling and being 'sold' as a perfect public space, market square and Main Street, park

and playground, theatre and fair of community participation. But like the Cheshire cat this notion of 'community' is out on a limb and only its fading false smile persists.

To pursue the analogy. The mall is just one branch of many attached to the tree of the public space with other branches being the aforementioned parks and playgrounds, market squares and main streets. This tree however draws its sap through the roots of the private sphere. In a paradoxical situation these roots themselves depend upon the 'soil' of the public purse strings for their anchorage. Most malls would not and could not have been planted without the public money supplied to them by way of the infrastructures of the state or federal road building and electrical power-grids which service them. Even more pertinent is the example of the more localised tax incentives or deferrals offered to attract and sustain them. So whereas most of the other examples of public spaces (market place and main street) remain as they are intended being seen as it were as higher in the 'canopy' of the 'public sphere tree', the malls are among the (increasingly flourishing) lower branches, much closer to the mulch of the mercantile environment. They are therefore one of the chief, but not the only, recipients of the unadulterated sap of privatisation. The prototypical mall is fast becoming the 'normal' typology for all other privatised public spaces. Thus although the malls are seen as being at one with the other branches – that is as being a purely public space – they tend to hide their true ownership behind the Cheshire cats of community sleight of hand who are nestled in the foliage. However, as more of the private sphere of the mall is revealed this feline starts to fade and the obsequious and ultimately sham smile of a pseudo-participatory community is all that is left. In essence the malls offer a total consumption experience within a private

enclosure of cleanliness, order and a spare Corbuserian aesthetic but they, however, neglect to consider that the shared feeling of comm(on)unity cannot be packaged for purchase.

Part of the reason for the persistence of mall managers in the creation of 'pseudo-participatory' community is that it bestows a neighbourhood identity on the mall as the hub of the local community. This works to overcome the impersonal nature of the architecture and the indifferent and dispassionate level of service usually encountered in the stores. An understanding of this spiritless service can be obtained in the intimation that the 'guest' and the sales assistant are invariably strangers whose paths cross infrequently and fleetingly. Coupled with this is the fact that the shops are more often than not an outlet of a trans- or multi-national chain and with this comes the awareness of the mobility and transience of both the guest and the sales assistant. The workforce within the mall changes quite as regularly as the small shops with the 'fresh' (and invariably young) faces behind the counters matching the mutability and transitory nature of the store itself. The life-blood of mall culture is that it seeks to alleviate the sense of 'aging' as the managers strive to keep the look of the 'new in perpetuity' by regularly changing the smaller (and often economically defaulting) boutique stores. The mall's feel of constant (and oft replaced) newness furthers the mall managers efforts to suggest their philanthropic sensibility toward the guest which in turn ensures a sense of safety and security within their enclosed space. In older (and often less popular) malls the listless nature of the life of the boutique stores coupled with their aspect of 'progressive immobility' often leads to a worn and shabby appearance both to the interior and exterior

which adds to the overall malaise of the centre and suggests a depreciated sense of safety for (and of) the shopper. The shopper therefore surrenders whatever meagre allegiance it had to that particular mall and moves to another.

Vagrant spaces and the mall.

The malls can be read as a synthesis of a number of spaces and 'movements' with the primary spatial sources of the mall: the bazaar or suq, the market and fair, the arcade and the department store being linked with, for example, the concept behind Ebenezer Howard's garden city. In the case of the *spaces* mentioned above a type of 'progression' can be witnessed, an impetus, from the old to the modern, from the periphery to the centre, from heterogeneity to homogeneity, from disorder to order, from risky to safety. Even the term 'bazaar', originally the Persian word for the Arabic suq, has been domesticated with its connotative notions of the perilousness of the Other being disenfranchised and incorporated into the 'rural, Englishness' of the country 'church bazaar' replete with scones, cream and jam and afternoon tea. Bernard Rudofsky (1964) in his Streets for People, says this of the suq:

> A suq represents the apogee of the pedestrian street, the
> maelstrom of life, or at least of its Mohammedan branch. It
> is agora, forum, and circus, all rolled into one.(pp 205, 207)

He goes on to describe one such space:

> Here the latest political events are broadcast by word of
> mouth;...mercantile gossip spreads, old feuds are warmed
> up or brooded over with never, or hardly ever a nasty word
> being uttered...No one will dispute the ever-present danger
> of fire; the wooden shops, let alone the merchandise,

certainly are highly inflammable. So are the overhead
canopies. (pp 207, 210)

The (romanticised) word picture Rudofsky (1964) paints displays all the elements of the

touristic notion of the otherness of the East: the gossiping and brooding, the old feuds and

of course the notion of jeopardy and catastrophe, in this case in the form of the 'ever

present danger of fire'. Coupled with this is the hint of the 'milling crowd' (p. 210), as

forum and circus. These two spaces stand in opposition, with the forum as the restrained

space for rhetoric and the circus as the carnival space of inversion. But they are not in

isolation from each other and exist, as John Docker (1994) states: side by side, but never

merged (p. 174). In an unusual twist however, Rudofsky's description of Fes, 'the

archetype of the Moslem city' (p. 210) suggests less of the 'maelstrom of life' (p. 205) of

the combined circus and forum which he initially insists comprises the suq and more of

an *imagineered* space of spectacle. He removes the dealers and customers from the space

and describes, from a touristic consciousness position, the scene as 'paradisiacal

prospect'. His description becomes not that of a thriving suq but of a utopian vision,

invoking aspects of 'nature' to suggest the rectitude of the market place in a similar vein

to how the virtutopias mentioned in chapter nine above invoke the value of 'nature' and

the natural setting within their textual communities. Thus Rudofsky offers this

prospective portrait:

> The lacy trellises of reeds and woven mats glow like so
> many chandeliers, transforming miles of streets into
> luminous corridors. There are no harsh shadows; gloom is
> absent even in the deepest shade. The Moroccans have
> *tamed the sun's fireworks* into noiseless fusillades of
> sparks, beams and sheafs of light,...In the south...where
> wood and shrubs are scarce, the street arbors are formed by
> layers of palm leaves that frame pools of sunlight like giant
> lashes. This is not the hot light that weighs one down like

solid matter, but scattered flights of luminous arrows...Canopied streets cast a spell upon the beholder. By the magic agency of the trellises, *associations develop that transport his [sic] mind beyond the confines of the town to a coppice, a grove*, and that is in effect what the arbor pretends to be. In places, *the streets resemble deep dark pools, their surfaces aquiver with sunlight*. The close similarity to water and vegetation suggests itself perhaps because both loom large in the education of our senses. Yet none of these optic sensations can satisfactorily explain the incantation produced by a street's fragile roof.(p. 210)(my italics)

This is not a picture of a market maelstrom but is more in keeping with a description of a

landscape...or even the description of a painting of a landscape. Here the forum has

folded and the circus has left town leaving in their stead an imagineered space of scopic

sensual spectacle: the suq as picturesque sleepy hollow.

However with a cursory glance Rudofsky (1964) does describe another side of the suq,

one which is more in keeping with the notion of the combining of the forum and circus.

> (t)he knowledgeable shopper prefers the least tidy street market to the air-conditioned morgue of the supermarket. Vociferous vendors do not gall him for he finds the age-old public address system based on the unadulterated human voice more trustworthy than a printed advertisement.(p. 201)

and:

> For truly feasting ones eyes...one ought to visit Italian fish markets...when the giant eels are in season. In enigmatic independence...they are swimming in wooden tubs from which a vendor will pull a few choice specimens from time to time, hold them up high for a moment before being enfolded in their slippery grip. They wriggle over his arms and chest – an alarming spectacle for eels are stronger than almost any other fish.(p. 203)

And in a last aside Rudofsky (1964) suggests that 'travellers' regard the suqs as 'impenetrable', 'enigmatic' and 'totally foreign' (p. 205).

The markets and fairs although devoid of the somnambulistic overtones found in Rudofsky's suq were, in the main, equally spaces of a type of Otherness – the other of the carnival. Although the markets and fairs, like the suq, were driven by economic forces (see Docker, 1994) and had as their raison d'etre the commodity principle they also had a circus element embedded in the festival. Ian Starsmore (1975) in his book English Fairs states: 'Historically speaking both economic and religious significance attaches to the fairs' (p.12). He goes on to stress the importance which trade had to the fairs.

> For many hundreds of years the fairs evolved as vital trade centres. From the 10th century onwards important trading festivals took place across the channel at major towns like Bruges and Ghent as well as in England, at such places as Nottingham, Colchester and Norwich…Eastern England grew rich through this kind of trade and the greater part of commerce…was carried on at fairs like Stourbridge, which became one of the most important in the world.(p. 12)

Starsmore goes on to explain that it was Henry I's jester who established a fair in London which became known as Bartholomew Fair, an important cloth fair in England (pp 12-13). He adds that after the Dissolution this fair grew into a centre for trade and 'drama of all kinds, mystery plays and puppet shows' until in the 17th century 'Bartholomew Fair had begun to present satirical theatre and *circus* (p. 13)(my italics). By the 18th century, Starsmore tells us, the fair was at 'its grandest' as it:

> Included many attractions to 'gratify the multitude in their wandering and irregular thoughts': Fire-eaters, Theatres, Menageries, Bellringers, Punch and Judy, moving Wax Works, Puppet Shows, Impersonators, Jugglers and Comedians. (p. 14)

Starsmore also discusses the contemporary fair in similar, if Disneyesque, terms with it

being a: 'fantasia of a genuine and intoxicating artificiality' (p. 10). He adds that:

> The whole affair is an artificial landscape, made without
> thought for what is comme il faut; in which there are
> creations of all colours and kinds relating to many
> aspirations and fears. It adds up to a synthetic adventure in
> unnatural movements and sounds...but despite its
> brashness it is permanently transient, disappearing as
> quickly as it came.(pp 10-11)

Apart from the last sentence this could be a description of Disney's theme parks and it is

no small coincidence that Disney's inspiration was drawn from similar venues. It could

also read as a description of the contemporary mall. This is even more evident when

Starsmore suggests that the fairs are:

> after all like foreign places which disconcertingly come to
> us, complexes of exotic architecture peopled by showmen
> about whom we know next to nothing and whom we
> therefore suspect of all kinds of hocus. (p. 9)

Apart from the idea that the shopper in the mall suspects the shop owner of 'all kinds of

hocus' (which should not be easily discounted) the description suggests the postmodern

mall with its juxtaposition of 'foreign places' (especially in the food halls and

multiplexes) and exotic architecture (indoor waterfalls abutted by high-tech laser shows).

The point is further underscored in Starsmore's assertion that:

> The fair is fundamentally 'against nature', expressing a
> desire to imitate, falsify, construct and distort for our own
> pleasure...Who hasn't stood in a fair surveying the
> enormity of the structures and suddenly wondered where on
> earth they came from? (p. 11)

Equally the mall is 'against nature'. It works hard to banish the 'natural' elements

homogenising the environment and absenting the vagaries of heat and cold, rain, sun or

snow. Thus what is being described here are the early *spaces of virtuality* and the simulacra as well as that *of vagrancy.* the 'wandering and irregular' which is a mainstay of the circus space of the mall and the fair both for the customer (guest) and the performer (shop owner).

This circus element took the form of the carnival which had become the space of fools, of the grotesque body and ultimately, as reflected in both, that of the spectacle. The fool, according to John Docker (1994) in his discussion of Bakhtin and the carnival: 'keeps alive ambivalence and ambiguity, the destabilising of fixed categories, leaps into uncertainty' (p. 218). These destabilising uncertainties speak of the speculative aspects of the fool within the carnival of the fair that was also a space of excess. The fool therefore enacts in the market-place as site/sight of business a spatial vagrancy and also is a vagrant space for 'community' carnival. Thus within the fairs and markets the vagrant space is allowed to co-exist with that of the controlled spaces of commerce.

However, it is important to note that it was not only the fool in its many forms which aided in the advent of vagrant space in the markets and fairs. Docker (1994) in his discussion on the carnivalesque takes Bakhtin to task for inferring that carnival was purely about the popular performance of pleasure:

> Bakhtin was not only 'surely mistaken' in seeing the fair
> simply as the popular festival of rural life, he also ignored
> the way fairs could disrupt local and provincial habits and
> traditions by introducing a certain cosmopolitanism into
> Renaissance life, arousing desires in ordinary people of the
> time for exciting, exotic and strange commodities. (p. 187)

It is obvious here that markets and fairs introduced in close proximity aspects of difference which permitted the spatiality of vagrancy through negotiation with the heterogeneity of the 'exciting, exotic and strange commodities' which must come from equally stimulating, wondrous and bizarre (bazaar?) spaces of otherness. But the markets and fairs of festival were short-lived events and as such this notion of difference being inserted into the sameness of everyday life was ephemeral.

The advent of the arcade tried to tame the heterogeneity of the noisy 'shrew' of the fair and market place. It offered another world, a public world but privately owned, and Benjamin (1978), the famous 'writer/flaneur' of the arcades, offers an excerpt from an *Illustrated Guide to Paris* which states:

> These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marble-walled passages cut through whole blocks of houses, *whose owners have combined in this speculation*. On either side of the passages, which draw their light from above, run the most elegant shops, so that an arcade of this kind is a city, indeed, a world in miniature. (see Kasinitz, 1995, pp 46-47)

Ann Friedberg (1993) in a section on arcades in <u>Window Shopping</u> discusses Paris' first arcade the Palais Royal (also known as the Palais Marchand). She cites a 'visitor to Paris' as writing: 'One could spend an entire life, even the longest, in the Palais Royal, and as, in an enchanting dream, dying, say "I have seen and known all"' (p. 68). Further down the page she quotes Charles Fourier: 'You think you are entering a fairy palace. You find everything you could wish for there – spectacles, majestic buildings, promenades, fashions' (p. 68). This is Disneyesque in exposition, but there is more Disney to be had in the Palais Royal as Friedberg attests: The arcade was a controlled world full of luxury

goods, sheltering one from the miseries of the street, from images of urban poverty (p.

70). This is the ideal of Disney who never wanted the 'real world' to intrude into his

'lands' going to great lengths to remove even the chance of a glimpse of the 'reality' of

the urban blight. But the Palais Royal offers even more Disney scenarios:

> In 1786, a half-sunken "circus" was built...with "an enormous colonnaded interior, lit from above by clerestory windows and a glazed roof, and terminated by apsidal arcades, it was used for spectacles and entertainment, balls and concerts. (p. 69)

Thus utterances of utopian consciousness are to be had here mixed with more than a

smattering of Disney consciousness. Kevin Hetherington (1997) further advances this

notion. He writes, and it is worth quoting at length here:

> (T)he Palais Royal was one of the places in Paris for people of quality, and those who aspired (to) be part of the cultural elite, *to be seen*. Strolling around its gardens, arcades and shops...The Palais Royal...also contained gardens with fountains, a masonic temple...theatres and an opera. It boasted cafes and restaurants, a stock exchange, and pavilions were constructed to contain the variety of commercial enterprises and entertainments that were open to the public...If the Palais Royal was a place where the enlightenment bourgeoisie came to mingle and promenade...for the common people *it was valued more as a site of spectacle*. Popular theatre, festivities and *all manner of circus entertainments* found their way into the Palais Royal...The Palais Royal was also a site of the *carnivalesque*. (pp 2-3)(my italics)

Hetherington (1995) goes on to add, citing Conan and Marghieri (1991): Regular and

occasional visitors to the gardens...*went there to see and be seen* (p. 3)(my italics). Thus

the description above could, without too much effort be applied to Disney Land or even a

space such as the West Edmonton Mall in Canada or even the Mall of America and on a

smaller scale the everyday local mall. All are utopian spaces of consumption and excess.

As has been mentioned before each utopia carries with it its antithesis of dys- or anti-utopia. So too does the Palais Royal. As Friedberg (1993) points out, citing Balzac who describes the Galerie d'Orleans 'an adjacent arcade' to the Palais Royal as a: "greenhouse without flowers", a "disreputable bazaar" and a "lewd hangar" (p. 68). Hetherington takes this theme a few steps further and describes a space within the Palais Royal of the difference of a type of otherness as well as the vagrant space. He states that the Palais Royal 'had another side to it in that the Galerie de Bois was also known as the Camp of the Tartar. The gallery:

> [B]ecame the hangout of debauched youths, thieves, petit-maitres, swindlers, prostitutes, and financiers...where libertines screamed indecent propositions at the women and rude youths jeered and taunted the crowd. (p. 5)

But there is more:

> In the newly built arcades prostitutes would rent small shops with rooms above, in order to be able to provide sex for their clients. Streetwalkers would mingle with the fashionable crowds and dress up, to disguise their intent, as 'mothers tending rented children, others grieving for husbands who had never existed'. (p. 5)

So the arcades not only housed the 'elegant shops' there was also other commodity spaces to be entered, other commodities to be had as well as a variety of 'spectacles' to see. Thus the arcades brought together under one roof and 'legitimated,' as it were, the conspicuous consumption of difference. Thus the prostitutes were just another item displayed in the shop windows of the passages. As Friedberg attests citing Aragon:

> In the changing light of the arcades, a light ranging from the brightness of the tomb to the shadow of sensual pleasure, delicious girls can be seen serving both cults with

provocative movement of the hips and the sharp upward
curl of a smile. (p. 70)

She goes on to add:

The arcades were clearly spaces in which the flaneur
flourished. But for the male observer in these public spaces,
the flaneuse was often no more than a mannequin, a fixture
in window display. (p. 70)

In an unusual twist on this notion Janice Williamson in her essay <u>Notes from Storeyville</u>

<u>North</u> (in Shields, 1992) discusses the inclusion of the representation of the 'prostitute' in

the West Edmonton Mall (WEM). She gives examples of these depictions and two are

worth repeating here, in full:

The figure of the prostitute is an important motif in WEM.
On Europa Boulevard, WEM theatre casts a statuesque
streetwalker in bronze. This fallen *femme de la rue* which
the PR blurb euphemistically calls a 'Lady of the Street' is
repeated in plaster figures of the prostitute on Our Bourbon
Street...the telling characteristic of WEM's mute woman as
prostitute is the commodification of her body and her
sexuality. (p. 227)

The telling aspect here is that the 'prostitute', even as bronze statue, is even allowed

space in the mall. The prostitute as 'vagrant space' is usually absented, along with the

other examples of vagrant space, in the strictly controlled environment of the mall. But as

Williamson goes on to describe, this vagrancy is quickly *re-ordered* and, in fact, could

even be seen as a pedagogic warning to the shoppers/viewers - a lesson against 'vagrant

acts'. Williamson describes this pedagogic scene as:

Woman-as-prostitute is the only representation of working
women in WEM. At the entrance to Our Bourbon Street,
life-sized mannequins depict the arrest of prostitutes. Two
female prostitutes are accosted by a white male police
officer...One female figure's arm is tattooed with 'papa';
metal handcuffs dangle from her wrist. Another woman,
eyes white with rage, shakes a clenched fist towards a

white male law-enforcement officer whose power is expressed through his uniform and inscribed on the woman's body through his handcuffs. (p. 228)

Prostitution as deviance (the tattoo, the 'arrest'), spectacle (the mannequins 'enacting' a scene) and warning (the 'power' of the policeman, the handcuffs) are highlighted and in their display the vagrant spatiality is absented through negation. That this spatiality as a potential space of threat is seen, as Williamson points out, in that: 'There is in fact a four-man publicly funded police force which patrols the streets along with WEM's private security guards' (p. 229). In this the movement from the heterotopic carnivalesque of the community meeting grounds of the fairs to the regulated 'dead' spaces of the contemporary mall is complete.

These spaces – from the suq to the store –has witnessed a movement from heterogeneity to homogeneity, from risky to 'refuge' and from disorder to order. In the malls, with their security guards, concierges, two way mirrors and surveillance cameras it might be suggested that the site of the vagrant space has been totally eradicated. But as has been mentioned earlier, if the mall posits itself as a utopian site then aspects of the anti-utopian are bound to be found. But these anti-utopian sites are but fleeting in enactment and are inherently a part of the fabric of the mall. The sites of the vagrant spaces are the dangerous or risque aspects of the mall found in the mundane spaces. In recent times there have been reports of incidents of bag snatching and robbery being performed in the carpark areas of the malls. Similarly, and especially at night, the mall toilets become sites for sexual encounters, brief liaisons between members of the same or opposite sex.

Therefore even though the mall is a controlled and controlling space fleeting examples of 'vagrancy' will always occur.

In the final section the enclaves and malls are revisited to discover if the vagrant spaces of the fourthspace can be incorporated into the controlled and controlling spaces of the third space to open them up to the livable, participatory community of the communisphere.

Chapter Eleven •

Community, place ma[r]king and the vagrant space

In the previous chapters we have traversed, in our quest for community, a circuitous route which took us from the dystopic city street to the darkened cinema seat; from the omnivorous television screen to the omnipresent mall dream. Along the way we passed the ex-urban exile in a beach-shacked town and the scheming surgeon in a M*A*S*H tented-shanty. As we meandered from golf and country club poolside to suburban bungalow lifestyle our search led us from the real-*as*-imagined of the textual simul- and virtutopias to the imagined-*are*-real sanctioned spaces of the conjured communities of the enclaves and malls. This journey has shown us the venal places of the carefully constructed and the vagrant spaces of the fleetingly heterotopic.

Like the tourist who has been a model for our search we left home hoping to find an example of the *authentic* – an organic community but instead we found the imagineered simulacra of the 'fellowship' of the prelapsarian, Golden Age of the village, the neighbourhood and the street. Wherever the itinerary paused we found faux monuments and contrived markers and, to steal from Umberto Eco (date?), a faith in fakes. In this final chapter we can see that the dilemma is that the community sites we traipsed through spoke of imagineered real spaces as being livable, but which were simply *lived* places that were 'lifeless' behind the artifice of a livability. Like the animatronical animals and people and the faux places in Disney's Lands and Worlds the simulacra is momentarily stimulating with the fake as being *more real than real*.

In a further act of theft we can steal from and paraphrase Bertrand Russell who might

suggest that from every perception community always seems to be elsewhere. The

inference in this comment is reminiscent of Dean McCannell's quote that:

> Somewhere, only not right here, not right now, perhaps just
> over there someplace, in another country, in another life-
> style, in another social class, perhaps, there is *genuine*
> society.(1976, p. 155)

In this we can substitute the epithet society with the more narrowly descriptive

appellation, community. Which-ever term applies it would seem that these two notions

above coupled with our 'experiences' (or lack there of) of community discovered in the

sites/sights we have sought in our journey suggest that community is, if not non-existent,

then endlessly out of reach – whether secreted in a far off country or residing in another

country of a past where 'they do things differently'. But this is a notion which can and

should be contested and we can utilise the notion of the vagrant space to enable this

contestation.

The vagrant space, as has been alluded to earlier in the discussion, can bring out into the

open the *livable* spaces that are sequestered behind the real-and-imagined, surveilled and

sterile sites/sights of the walls, malls and texts. These policed 'places' work to restrict

whilst seeking to reassure the composition and continuance of the appropriate and

essential community. The appealing thing is that these boundaries whether schematic, as

in the malls and enclaves, or pedagogic, as in the televisual or filmic texts, need not be

eradicated by this challenge. In fact they can help in the formulation of the vagrant space

in that they can make for a more focussed accumulation of the heterotopic attributes

which are an important part of the vagrant space. Of course the most propitious sites for the effective vagrant space are the sites/sights where these borders and boundaries are marked not by the physical but by the mental inscriptions of the community members. The mental delineation of this space makes for a more open play with, and of, other spaces – a type of, to call upon Hartley (1992) again, *frottage* which in this case is not devalued by its negative overtones but, I suggest, offers a notion of the ludic and carnivalesque. The overtones of the illicit, deviant sexual in Hartley's usage are replaced by a less overtly threatening, less (some might say) 'warped' meaning which contain concepts of mixing, difference and heterogeneity. This is not to say that the vagrant spaces are always safe or playful places. On the contrary, as has been discussed elsewhere above they always already have the notion of inherent danger embedded in them. But once they are less restricted, once the space is opened to difference – where exclusion is a factor of self choice more than a process of segregation - than the chance of violence or other forms of menace is disarmed.

Of course within and around these spaces there are borders and restrictions, boundaries and restraints, centres and margins but in the main these impediments tend to be more fluid, more easily traversed - less confining, limiting or terminating. The form they take allow for mutual *spillage* – not just seepage as in the more restricting spaces for and of community such as the malls and the enclaves. The barriers can be thought of as free form allowing for a multiplicity of usage. These spaces acknowledge and to a certain extent encourage difference in such a way that they feed off difference which in turn feeds back into the space suggesting a spatiality of potential not only for the space itself

but for, and of, the actors within that space. They are therefore liminal spaces of *becoming* – livable in their 'livingness' and the way they are lived.

(Place) making a 'statement'

What has emerged from the discussion is that the concept of 'community' is not just about space as 'place' but as *place making*. The idea behind the first-, second- and thirdspatialities – that of the perceived, conceived and 'lived' spaces – helps to envisage a community through the binding of space with a conceptual notion of its meaning which in turn is displayed and rehearsed through its marker. Thus the community is interpellated in the enclave estates and the malls via the artifice of the physical segregation of these sites via the wall (the estates) and the car park (the mall). Other devices are also brought into play to endorse the notion of community not least of which are, in the case of the enclave estates, the 'entry statement' which suggests to the outsider the type of 'comm(on)unity' to be found behind the walls and which is usually linked to a sporting or leisure activity (the golf estate, the boating estate). The entry statement also acts as a kind of gate-keeper – one which via the (kindly) process of self selection signals to the passer-by or potential resident whether they will 'fit in' with the other residents.

Philip Langdon in an excerpt from his 1988 book <u>A Better Place to Live</u> which was re-printed as an article in the March 1988 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* touches upon the issues of master planned communities, 'community' and the aesthetics of space. In this article he looks at a number of, what he calls, 'planned-unit developments' and compares

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them to 'neo-traditional' projects. He points to one in particular Boca Pointe 'a 1019 acre

development in Boca Raton, Florida' which is made up of 40% 'parks, greenbelts, lakes,

and fairways' (p. 8). He states:

> Nearly every section of Boca Pointe sits behind gates
> supervised by guards. Throughout the United States gates
> are rapidly gaining acceptance...*In less expensive housing
> the developer more frequently builds an elaborate
> entrance*...So widespread is the trend toward impressive
> entrances and security checkpoints that *Builder* last year
> published recommendations on how to design them. "A
> project entry will have greater visual impact and feel more
> inviting to prospects if it's set back from the street" the
> magazine's "Design Workshop" advised. Embodying this
> sales-winning principle, the entrances at Boca Pointe sweep
> back from the street, often in the form of long, curving
> stucco walls embellished with fountains, waterfalls,
> flowers, and palm trees. The lavish landscape
> features...promise a community within.(my italics)

Langdon goes on to suggest:

> Certainly the landscape on view within the enclave is
> meant to project an image of community...[and]...All of
> this, Rhoda Charles says, 'contributes to a very secure and
> charming enclave versus a more accessible, open kind of
> community.

But he adds:

> Whether a genuine functioning community actually exists
> behind the checkpoints [and elaborate entrances] is another
> matter. (p. 8)

The entry statement also has another duty to perform in that it signals to the beholder the

'theme' of the estate. Increasingly the new master planned communities utilise an

orchestrated architectural design and aesthetic. For example, Bouvard Island at Port

Bouvard in Western Australia is themed as a 'Mediterranean island lifestyle' where, as its

advertising copy states "Two and three storey Mediterranean villas" make up the mix of

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the houses of the site. Thus Bouvard Island is what Paul Rodaway in his book <u>Sensuous</u>

<u>Geographies</u> (1994) calls a 'themescape'. He goes on to state:

> The theme is not a replica but rather a resemblance,
> equivalence rather than copy. It is rooted in a stereotypical
> image and adapted to the practical demands of the current
> environment to be themed. The street in Disneyland themed
> as a nineteenth-century European Boulevard is
> archetypical, not specific, and proliferates with references
> to stereotypical images from various European cities...The
> success of a theme is grounded in reinforcing widely shared
> place stereotypes and dreams...Without mass travel and
> mass media, especially television, much of the themescape
> culture would perhaps be lacking. (p. 166)

The themes then are drawn from the real-and-imagined spaces offered via mass travel

(touristic consciousness) and the virtutopias of the mass media (Disney consciousness)

and are homogenised via a type of morphic consensus into a stereotype. This, when

linked to the realisation that Bouvard Island is a canal type project with docking facilities

for each villa further advances the notion of a certain amount of homogeneity (of taste,

lifestyle and income) within this 'community'. Gerald D Suttles in his book <u>The Social</u>

<u>Construction of Community</u> (1972) suggests:

> Heterogeneity, when and if it occurred in some populations,
> should have removed any sense of community or any
> attempt to strive toward a community. (p. 15)

He alludes here to what is thought of as a disunity and fragmentation of community

solidarity within heterogeneous groupings. The assumption would be that allied-minds,

allied-tastes, and allied-socio-economic status, in other words *sameness*, should

automatically lead to an allied-community. However Suttles goes on to state:

> Well-planned suburbs with their...segregation...seem to be
> the most atomized communities and the least able to
> develop...a native identity apart from the one developers
> have given them. (p. 15)

then adds:

> Each of these new developments possesses a ready-made
> name and an image or identity even before it is occupied.
> For private developments owners and advertising men
> usually manufacture this identity. Nonetheless, the
> residents seem to fully accept their somewhat contrived
> identity. (p. 41)

Thus the image or identity of the site, its aesthetic and design qualities can be seen as acting as *markers* as to how the site is to be read and how the residents perceive themselves as being part of that process. The first- and secondspatialities – the orchestration of the aesthetics and the constructed (if not conjured) concept of community 'sold' to the residents make for a legible, encoded, coherence which arises from sameness. Thus there is a certain impression within the site of 'performance' of lifestyle – one which is heavily defined (and stage-managed) by the owners, designers and copy writers. This 'performance' is Disneyesque in presentation and calls for(ward) a Disney consciousness – it is seamless and neutral removing in its dramatisation the contrasts or the *rawness* of difference. The perceived and conceived spatialities seek to erase the *flaws* that make up the fluid spaces of the heterotopias plastering over them and smoothing them out. To borrow from Richard Sennet from his Flesh and Stone (1994) in this way (the pain of) difference could be erased by erasing the place(s) of difference.

This notion is akin to Freud's concept of the desire for comfort noted in his 1920 essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1961) where the screen against stimuli is desired over the encountering of it. Thus this desire for the screen sees people withdraw and disengage from difference taking refuge behind the walls of the constructed 'communities of taste'.

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But this withdrawal behind the barriers does not mean that the residents necessarily find community unity or solidarity of sentiment and/or comfort. Invariably they withdraw further seeking security and refuge behind the walls of their gardens and houses. The coresidents may find themselves amongst people like themselves (Richards' (1990) all in the same boat concept) often they pursue the solitary experience of the insular family life. This suggests a poverty of participation within the walled communities where a type of engagement is often only found in the vicarious relationship with screen communities via TV and films.

In *The Atlantic Monthly* article mentioned above Langdon notes this withdrawal and screening effect in the master planned community of Boca Pointe and then compares it to the more open style of development of Charlston Place, South Carolina. His observations are worth quoting at length:

> But what is immediately apparent is the scarcity of informal socializing within many of the enclaves. On a mild evening I drove through one section after another of Boca Pointe, where some 2,000 houses and apartments have been sold, and saw hardly anyone out walking or in conversation with neighbors. The landscape's beauty felt embalmed. From Boca Pointe, I drove to Charlston Place a nearby neo-traditional development that Duany and Plater-Zyberk...had laid out with orderly rows of townhouses closely facing narrow, straight streets. In this suburban development people were out walking in twos, threes, and fours, many of them chatting with their neighbors. Some were strolling along narrow linear walkways of brick which run behind the...back yards...The well-defined, pedestrian-oriented outdoor space helps Charlston Place generate informal community activity, not simply a community image. (p. 8)

What Duany and Plater-Zyberk have done when they designed Charlston Place was to build in, via the stratagem of 'rows of townhouses closely facing narrow, straight streets' and 'narrow linear walkways of brick' a type of vagrant space. By manipulating this public space through the machinations of 'density' and 'narrowness' the open-ness of the street is changed making this public space seem more like an additional 'outdoor room'. James Howard Kunstler in an(other) article gleaned from the pages of *The Atlantic Monthly* (September, 1996) called <u>Home From Nowhere</u> mentions this notion of the street as 'room' in his discussion of 'new urbanism'. He states:

> In the new urbanism the meaning of the street as the essential fabric of the public realm is restored. The space created is understood to function as an *outdoor room*, and building facades are understood to be street walls. (p. 8)(my italics)

Thus the street operating in its 'reasoned vagrancy' is seen as both 'interior' (an extension of the *home*) and 'exterior' (a conduit and connection to other *homes*), 'public' yet tantalisingly 'private' (and vice versa). The street is thought of as *reasoned vagrancy* because its design and usage challenges the notions of public and private, changing the open space of the civic space into a more intimate space of the individual. It also makes the intimate space of the family and home more public. Thus the neighbours use the front stoop and porches to connect with the street life and each other. The aesthetic of the porch and stoop and their vagrant use turns the interior of the home inside out and the exteriority of the street outside in. The private thus becomes thoroughly enmeshed with the public.

This conception of the street as 'private' suggests the notion of ownership that in turn presents another image, that of *concern*. This latter concept brings forth Jane Jacobs' (1961) descriptions of her street and the people who make up her neighbourhood. In The Death and Life of Great American Cities she points to how her street is both a public and 'private' space which is 'balanced' (p. 70). She also acknowledges how her neighbours use the 'reasoned vagrant' space as almost an annex of the home space using them as temporary social meeting grounds. Thus the work places of the local stores become extensions of the home and the storekeepers act as almost extended family members to the local residents. Jacobs cites the example of Joe Cornacchia the delicatessen owner who is the 'keeper of the keys' for a number of neighbours (p. 70). She points out that he is a trusted member of the community and speaks of him as being almost like family. Another whom Jacobs suggests acts as an 'extended family member' and whose store performs a social role as a meeting ground is Bernie Jaffe. She states that his candy store in her neighbourhood provided among 'a multiplicity of extra-merchandising services' an 'incidental forum for half a dozen conversations among customers who dropped in for oddments' (p. 72). His store can be seen then as an ephemeral and vagrant extension of the living room or parlour.

For Jane Jacobs, Duany and Plater-Zyberk, Langdon and James Howard Kunstler the streets need to be enlivened through designing into them a reasoned vagrant space. This vagrant space makes the streets active and livable and not the dead 'performance' space of a poverty of participation. As Kunstler in the *The Atlantic Monthly* article suggests:

> The everyday environments of our time...are composed of
> dead patterns...[which]...deaden us in the process. The

> patterns that emerge fail to draw us in, fail to invite us to
> participate in the connectivity of the world...Our streets
> used to be charming and beautiful. The public realm of the
> street was understood to function as an outdoor room. (p. 2)

The other, but connected side of the 'performance' abstraction are the spaces of

bricolage, juxtaposition and montage. These then are the heterotopic spaces that

incorporate the fluid and *becoming* spaces of the vagrant space. If the performance spaces

of the malls and enclave estates offer a somewhat seamless, single, 'corporate' identity

which seeks to eradicate (but only succeeds in restricting) the otherness of difference the

antithetical spaces display the *rich*, accumulating and palimpsestial spaces of reflexive

performance. These latter spaces are the *performative* spaces of the flaneur, fluidity and

frottage. They are the spaces of surprise and contamination, irregularity and imperfection,

otherness and difference.

The concept of the performance space carries with it certain connotations surrounding the

theatricality of this space. This theatricality suggests a staged, scripted and ordered space,

carefully managed and directed with *actors* given specific roles and a 'hidden' team of

designers, writers and organisers orchestrating the performance. This is very much in

evidence in relation to the master planned communities and the malls (and of course is a

major factor of the televisual and the filmic). The 'sets' of these performance spaces, as

has been noted elsewhere, are composed with the notion of spectacle in mind. Thus in the

enclaves the entry statement, the amphitheatre, lakes, waterfalls, bridges, clock-towers

and 'scenic walks and vistas' are carefully crafted to offer a mise-en-scene of community

which describes the bland, 'clean', fixed and ordered spaces of control. These disciplined

spaces depict and assign place makers as markers of certain notions of convivial

community. They also suggest through the aesthetics and design a concept of participatory community which in turn rehearses a comm(on)unity through an almost Haussmann like consideration of wide, open, neutral, seamless spaces where visibility ensures commonality and seeing (and being seen) suggests *being* - an extension of the notion of '*e pluribus unum*' (out of the many, one).

This seeing/being nexus suggests a healthy participatory assumption but demands little more than visuality to prompt it. It is therefore an impoverished state of community participation. In the malls similar aesthetic and design considerations are encountered with the wide seamless spaces being a prominent feature to 'conjure' the idea of community through conspicuousness. This sleight of hand is further enhanced with the introduction within the performance space of a multitude of mirrors that augment and multiply the individual shoppers into a 'mass'. This 'all done by mirrors' sentiment is echoed in the enclaves via the generic themescapes of the aesthetics of housestyles and environmental design. What resonates with the resident/observer is the 'image' - the simulacra of a community that in its archetypal resemblance seems to be more significant and substantial.

There are further differences to be discovered within the dichotomy of the performance/performative spaces that tend to revolve around the notions of the passive and the active as participation. The performative space as heterotopic vagrant space can be thought of as *active* in that it describes a liminal, soon-to-be-realised *becoming* space that is more 'loose' in its arrangement and perception. Thus the performative space

speaks of a type of self-selecting *livable* participation and negotiation of the space. This livability depends upon the display of difference, whether articulated architecturally or exhibited in the individual. The performance space, on the other hand, is *passive* in its rehearsal and can be seen to possess a duality in conception and perception. This passivity is entwined with sentiments of the 'past tense'.

In the enclaves and malls, from the owners/managers point of view, the space is a passive (past tense) performance space because it draws upon notions of nostalgia, the Golden Age, the village green and nature as nurture or ennoblement. For the residents/shoppers these spaces signify passivity through their physical aspects – architecturally, aesthetically and topographically. The leisure activities in the enclaves, such as golfing or boating, or even that of shopping in the malls might suggest active *participation* but are more akin to a performance which is commensurate with *active participation by appearance*. Thus the spaces of the fairway, canal or mall 'street' rehearse a passive affiliation by design and discernment. The passive act of seeing (and being seen) is augmented by the open 'public' spaces which while suggesting a conjoining as community describes a separation and singularity. What this suggests is that there is an impoverishment of participation which is a (pre)requisite when negotiating, and coming to terms with the notion of community.

The performative vagrant spaces are not as clearly defined or as *legible* as the physically bordered and demarcated performance spaces such as the malls and enclaves. The vagrant spaces of the performative are inclined to be more open and to contain more

contrariety and contrast. The boundaries between spaces blur and spill into each other which tends to see them as less constraining. Although not a fully participatory community (if ever one can exist) there is nevertheless a *potential* for a more encompassing conglomerate of concurrence. The topography of the space allows for a mixing of different activities and actors with none seemingly conspicuous by its prominence. This mixing and spillage makes for the activeness of the space. Of course the performative or active spaces are not separated from the performance or passive spaces and are often found juxtaposed with them or even embedded in them. But it is this juxtaposition which helps to distinguish difference which in turn destabilises sameness and pries it open to a livable liveliness.

Visualising the vagrant

The 'performance' and 'performative' spaces are also evident in the televisual and filmic texts – sometimes present in their absence as is the case in The Truman Show and, to a lesser extent Pleasantville. In the former the performance space, the seamless, neutral space, is Seahaven. This 'space for the selected' infers an extreme of homogeneity not only of socio-economic status but, as the text intimates, of lifestyle, taste and singular concern – in this case the maker/marker of community, Truman. The soothing, pastel tones of Seahaven also attest to the single identity of sameness which is a marker of this conjured community corral. In contrast the performative space of the outside world is a legible montage of socio-economic status, a bricolage of generations and a richness and rawness of differences. This mix also suggests the fluidity of the vagrant space of the

performative space. Thus instead of a single identity as espoused by the constructed world of Seahaven there is witnessed in the other/outside spaces a multiplicity of accumulated almost palimpsestial identities of difference.

In the sea-changing hamlets of the textual Pearl Bay and Porpoise Spit difference in, and of, the characters/residents is more pointedly displayed. It is this diversity, however which makes for the unity of community and not a comm(on)unity. Thus, for example, as SeaChange strives to assert, the mixing of different ethnicities, belief systems, lifestyle choices, economic status, occupation and age all add up to a more participatory fellowship. Even the never seen but often mentioned character 'Bucket', with his 'disabilities' and intellectual and emotional 'incapacities' can be seen as being (even in his absence) a fully participatory member of the Pearl Bay community.

The SeaChange space is both a performance and a (transitory) performative space. It, at times, describes an archetypal vagrant space – a liminal space of becoming. As with the 'On the Beach Motel' in Muriel's Wedding where Muriel-as-Mariel finally admits to herself that the notion of marriage as fulfilling her (by assimilating her into the 'normal' community) is a false one and where she 'returns' to being Muriel (with all her flaws) Pearl Bay in SeaChange is an equally ephemerally vagrant space for liminal people. This becomingness of the space and characters is prominently displayed in the major character of Laura Gibson who has come to the town to 'find herself'. However this notion is not restricted to her character alone with other characters such as Heather Jelly who finds her 'identity' when she discovers that her biological parents are prominent, aged (unwed)

members of the community. The 'hippy' Carmen returns to the town to 'get herself together' after her baby dies and the 'war journalist' Max, who has spent his life writing from and about the trouble spots of the world decides to stay in Pearl Bay (his birthplace) after the death of his wife. Similarly (in a reversal of the narrative of <u>The Truman Show</u>) the town clown Kevin returns to the community after the boat he built is shipwrecked during his long planned 'escape' from the town. All of these instances are, however, only momentary 'lapses' into the vagrant with the over-arching comm(on)unity of the fully participatory membership - the sameness of community - being re(in)stated (and pedagogically manifested) in each episode.

As discussed in Chapter 6 the vagrant space within the text is Diver Dan's shop/shack. It is noteworthy to mention that it is situated on the beach with the sea regularly washing directly beneath it. This positions it as being in a liminal, *becoming* space - part of the land and part of the sea. It is also located on the periphery of the town which situates Diver Dan as being not quite a fully participatory member of the community. However, the shack as vagrant space changes with the departure of Dan and the arrival of Max. That Max is a journalist who was born in the town and who instigates the production of the town's first newspaper (an act which unites the town in it's sameness) disavows the once active, performative, vagrant space of Dan and his shack. Whereas once the shack held a diverse set of roles within the town – general store and tackle shop, café, meeting place, band rehearsal hall and Dan's home - with the arrival of Max and the newspaper it's diversity and its role as a site of vagrant difference is disabused and it is reinserted into the passive, performance space of the sameness of community. With this reinsertion

the livability of Pearl Bay – the acknowledgment and 'celebration' of difference which rehearses notions of a communisphere is neutralised and a dead space of comm(on)unity is offered in its stead.

Max's paper has a second role to play within the narrative in that it seeks to unite the community into a comm(on)unity by displaying the (ugly or sordid) realities of otherness and difference which lie beyond the 'walls' of Pearl Bay. In his role as war correspondent, the text suggests, he was involved with bringing the harsh (and deviant) aspects of the otherness of the foreign (middle eastern, asian or african) war zones into the homes and heads of the residents of the various (safe) communities of the western world. Thus otherness and difference is kept beyond the walls - located somewhere else - but is allowed to enter via the TV screen and the newspaper page.

In the malls the vagrant spaces are conspicuously regulated and are therefore found fleetingly in the peripheral spaces of the carparks and lurking in the shadows of the blank walls of the periphery. The mall carparks with their position as being betwixt and between – the interstitial spaces linking the mall with the surrounding suburb – are reminiscent of the vagrant beach spaces mentioned elsewhere above. Like the beach the carpark can offer a space for brief sexual encounters and harmless youthful high jinks. However, the difference between these two liminal spaces is the inherent danger to be found in the carpark space that is rehearsed in the image of the bag-snatching thug, the drug dealing petty criminal or the 'joyriding' or more seriously committed car thief. In the mall itself sameness is constantly reiterated and difference is offered as a mere

cosmetic – the variety of the shops offer the assumption of variance but this type of

difference is restated time and time again in every mall throughout the country. The

constant reiteration leads to a bland sameness leaving little room for surprise or

imperfection.

With all these notions in mind the final section will address what might be done to

advance the livability of community and ask: how is the fourthspace to be realised? What

follows are only suggestions of what might be done and can only scratch the surface. It

may also be argued that some of the discussion is utopian in its assumptions. This may

well be but in the final analysis a major rethink about the everyday spaces of the malls

and enclaves needs to be addressed. But this is a big (t)ask.

The big (t)ask – the new (sub)urbanism

In her the introduction to her book <u>The Life and Death of Great American Cities</u> (1961)

Jane Jacobs advises:

> But I hope no reader will try to transfer my observations
> into guides as to what goes on in towns, or little cities, or in
> suburbs which still are suburban. (p. 26)

This advice is noted. However, what must be taken into consideration is the era which

Jacobs placed her study. This was an era when master planned communities were a rarity

rather than a norm. It was an era when people were arguably less mobile and more rooted

within their families, extended families and locales. It was a time therefore when the

notion of community was less dependent upon the sleight of hand of entrepreneurs and

advertisers and therefore it may be necessary to ignore her advice and look at the issues

through a 'Great City' perspective. A starting point for such a view (and one not too far

removed from Jacobs' 60s version) is the notion of new urbanism as espoused by 'The

Seaside Institute' which cites the definition used by the Congress for the New Urbanism

(on line) as:

> The built environment must be diverse in use and
> population; must be scaled for the pedestrian, yet capable
> of accommodating the auto and mass transit and must have
> a well-defined public realm supported by an architecture
> reflecting the ecology and culture of the region. These
> principles – diversity, human scale and a formative public
> realm – apply equally to public design, economic policy
> and social form. (p. 1)

The Institute goes on to add:

> New Urbanism communities seek to bring to their residents
> new opportunities to experience neighborliness in their
> personal lives and *facilitate greater participation in the life
> of the community*.(p. 1)(my italics)

Apart from its slightly evangelical tone an outline for a more livable community can be

seen embedded in the rhetoric.

Kunstler (1996) also rejects Jacobs' advice and suggests that New Urbanism 'principles

apply equally to villages, towns, and cities' (p. 6). He adds:

> The pattern under discussion here has been called variously
> neo-traditional planning, traditional neighborhood
> development, low-density urbanism, transit-oriented
> development,...and just plain civic art. Its principles
> produce settings that resemble American towns from prior
> to the Second World War.(p. 6)

Although in this statement the nostalgic impulse can be found – the implication of small

town, Main Street American as traditional is evident – it is removed from the nostalgia of

the enclave developers and mall owners in that it omits any sense of the glorification of pre-industrial, everyday, rural life. What is presented is the notion of human scale and the validity of the public realm. Thus New Urbanism seeks to address problems of 'sprawl' by developing what has become known as walkable neighbourhoods.

New urbanism follows Jacobs in that it suggests that the streets within the urban environment should be made more 'user-friendly' through the process of mixed usage. Within the neighbourhood fabric should be woven diverse small businesses, small parks and differing house-styles. With an emphasis on human scale and involvement in, and on the streets the community becomes 'organic' growing over time from the fusion and frottage of disparate interests, generations and antecedents – a concept which has been understood as the communisphere. With this comes the *life* of the streets. The space can no longer be seen as dead space but has within it a *becomingness* and livability. However it is the *urban* environment which is more amenable to this sort of change. The problem is writ larger in the suburban enclaves but the rudiments of Jacobs' idea coupled with that of aspects of new urbanism, if implemented in the master planned communities may just change and make them more livable.

Let us begin the discussion with an appraisal of the enclaves main feature: the enclosing wall, the *raison d'etre* of the enclaves, needs to be removed. The notion of segregation and isolation has to be replaced with an unrestricted space that is open to inspection, connection and engagement. This open space could contain a variety of small parks of mixed use for the differing generations within the community. These parks could also

comprise of paths and walkways but they should, in the main, absent roads with the open area given over to the resident/pedestrian. The parks should also 'bleed' into the built environment with housing fronting onto them.

In general roads should be kept to a minimum with major access being limited to the periphery where parking areas and lock-up garages may be sprinkled along the perimeter(s). The roads within the enclave itself should be more akin to channels, narrow lane-ways that can be used by service persons such as tradespeople. These lane-ways should service a cluster of houses (what might be called 'pods' or 'cantons') and be designed in such a way that they aesthetically denote a temporality about them. As such they should not be surfaced with bitumen-like materials which connote permanence but might be nothing more than a 'track' of flagstones with grass, moss or other natural vegetation growing alongside and between with this vegetation being an integral part of the design. Long term parking in these lane-ways should be discouraged with even the residents using them only as thoroughfares for the picking up and dropping off of household items or members. The set limitations of the roads and the concurrent restriction of fast moving motor vehicles may see the space being more actively used by the residents – especially by the neighbourhood children. The down playing of the domination of the car over the street will see the freeing up of the streetscape with it being used in a new and more user-friendly way for all the residents.

Once the enclave is open the peripheral houses of the estates should face outward in an act of acknowledgment of an 'Other' – those who are not of the 'community' of the

neighbourhood. In this way outsiders may feel less threatened by the estate and therefore perhaps a little less ill-will will be generated by non-residents toward the community. It may also be the case that non-residents will use the facilities and come to appreciate the qualities of the estate. This could also lead to a 'busyness' with the public areas being constantly in use which, as Jacobs has pointed out leads to a more safe and secure space.

The notion of busyness is coupled with *business* in the 'vagrant' estate. Again, with Jacobs in mind for every cluster or canton neighbourhood there should be a small selection of shops. These could range from the corner store/grocer concept to video stores hardware stores, coffee shops and small restaurants. The emphasis here is on the small and the human scale with each shop able to service two or three cantons. The second emphasis is that the shopkeeper/owner should live on the property and thus become a fully participatory member. Participation is also extended in that the staff for these shops can be accessed from the locality with teenagers and stay-at-home residents being the main pool. This has positive aspects with a more 'social' atmosphere being created as more residents come into contact with each other which leads to a more secure and open neighbourhood or community.

The notion of openness can be used in the estate proper. Boundaries of the houses should be either open or at least *porous*. The former suggests no demarcation whatever with each property blending in with the other and the borders being in the main a *mental map*. This is a notion that was, and may still be found often in the urban environment. The latter concept of a porous boundary is defined by the use of small shrubs or bushes planted so

that they have space between them making them penetrable. Very low picket fences or other such 'perforated' decoration could be used but the line should be drawn at chain-link or other similar fences because they infer notions of defended space. The natural topography and vegetation may also be used to great effect. Areas such as naturally occurring inclines, woods, thickets or environments such as wetlands should be left as pristine as possible. These actions may be seen as beneficial to the local environment and may act as a demarcation of spatial boundaries without the obvious intrusion of authority.

Following on from the above there is a need for less restrictions and covenants in relation to the household property. Similarly zoning requirements must be reappraised and become less segregationist. House-style, design and aesthetics should be more catholic with a mix of bungalow, townhouse, flatlet and family-style homes adding to the mix. This mixture of home-styles could encourage diverse generations and a variety of life-stages. This in turn may have beneficial effects which stem from the notions of extended families. The mixture of house styles and sizes would make for a better blend as far as the mix of income/employment categories with larger more expensive housing juxtaposed with small single occupier units. As stated above the major restrictions to the individual properties would concern the automobile which would be garaged separately away from the home (but within walking distance). For the owners/renters of smaller properties their boats, trailers and other like possessions should be kept in lock-up storage areas close to the garages. Smaller storage areas should be incorporated into the housing structure for secondary items such as bicycles, tools and prams.

Another space concerning the car versus the pedestrian that needs to be attended to in the 'vagrant village' is the style of the lane-ways, streets and major arterial roads. The width of the lane-ways has already been noted and is self evident in their nomenclature. The streets should follow a similar design strategy in that they should be narrow and as straight as possible terminating at a site of a major 'feature' or building. The former could be a public meeting space such as a civic square and the latter could be a public edifice such as a school, library or shire building. In the main the streets are to be given over to the pedestrian or cyclist. This will be of benefit to the physically disadvantaged within the neighbourhood as well as enabling people pushing prams or with young children to traverse the neighbourhood in relative safety. As mentioned above an important aspect concerning the street space and children is that by limiting the automobile speeds and movement within the street will enable children to use this space as a play area. Because the children are playing in direct surveillance of the shops/houses there is a further aspect of safety built into the space. The use of the street space by the children may have a knock-on affect in that it could draw disparate neighbours together as oversees/participants in the children's games and within the neighbourhood as a whole. This could lead to a rise in the quality of participation within the communisphere of the 'united' community.

The street length and overall neighbourhood size will be dictated by its walkability to the shops, civic buildings and other amenities. Kunstler (1996) suggests that:

> The neighborhood is limited in physical size...The size of a neighborhood is defined as a five-minute walking distance (or a quarter mile) from the edge to the center and a ten-minute walk edge to edge. Human scale is the standard for

proportions in buildings and their accessories. Automobiles are permitted, but they do not take precedence over human needs, including aesthetic needs. The neighborhood contains a public transit stop. (p. 7)

He also adds that in the large streets:

The street pattern is conceived as a network in order to create the greatest number of alternative routes from one part of the neighborhood to another. This has the beneficial effect of relieving traffic congestion. The network may be a grid. Networks based on a grid must be modified by parks, squares, diagonals, T intersections, rotaries, and other devices that relieve the grids tendency to monotonous regularity. The streets exist in a hierarchy from broad boulevards to narrow lanes and alleys. In a town or city limited-access highways may exist only within a corridor, preferably in the form of parkways. Cul-de-sacs are strongly discouraged except under extraordinary circumstances – for example where rugged topography requires them. (p. 7)

One point which may be contentious is that the 'community' must be encouraged to claim the space. Contemporary ideas of what may seem to be vandalism or anti-community behaviour may need to be rethought. The most obvious one that springs to mind is the notion of graffiti. What is meant here by this term is not what is commonly called 'tagging' but what might be classed as a 'mural'. If, in the estate, there are 'blank walls' people (and it should not be restricted to teenagers) should be encouraged to utilise these spaces in an effort to inscribe a feeling of unity. This graffiti may in time relate a *history* of the community further linking the residents. Over time with the palimpsestial nature of graffiti a record of the many *histories* of the community may be seen in one place.

An extension to this notion of 'history' and the community involves more (possibly contentious) concepts. One way to help bind a community is to discover the *hidden* history of the site. What should be discovered is what was there prior to the building of the estate – who and how was the land used in the past 50, 75 or 100 years. Once this has been established markers of these people, usages and/or events should be subtly incorporated into the design features of various building or worked into the fabric of the furniture of the estate. Thus a sense of prolonged belonging can be used as a means to draw the various parties together. This has been successful in other communities the most notable being the case of Grandma Biddy Mason (for a more in depth discussion see Dolores Hayden's (1999) The Power Of Place)

Akin to this idea of 'searching for a history' is the notion of 'starting' one. The residents should build a 'graveyard' for the deceased past members of the community whether prominent residents or not. Of course this does not have to be a 'real' graveyard for the mortal remains (the strict zoning laws do not care for the notion of death being on the doorstep!) but a symbolic one of remembrance. Included in this graveyard, in a separate and aptly designed building could be the 'history' of the person. Coupled with this the aspects of the life of the recently deceased resident could be incorporated into the community graffiti/mural. As time goes by a community 'feeling' for the site may arise – the first movement to the establishment of community roots.

These are only a sample of the vagrant spatial ideas which can help generate a more coherent community of participation. There are many other small ways in which the

vagrant spaces could be incorporated into the estates but space limits the discussion here. The time has come to see if these and other elements can be introduced into that most disciplined of spaces – the mall – to maybe make it more livable through the inclusion of the rudiments of the vagrant space.

Villagibility and the mall.

Unfortunately when discussing the malls the utopian sensibility is very much forefronted and no apologies are offered. However, this does not mean that more concepts of the vagrant communisphere can not be incorporated – just that they are unlikely to be. What needs to be addressed in relation to this space is the concept of the _heteromall_.

The first place to commence our discussion is with the size of the mall. They, as an entirety, need to be built on a more human scale. Instead of upgrading and expanding the malls as seems to be the trend (see Miller _et al_, 1998) they need to return to a concept of approachability or _villagibility_. In their present form the malls speak of and mimic an urban or large city environment with streets and squares covering many acres. These streets and avenues are often, like cities, in grid-like patterns and lead off and away from each other. Thus there is little room for visual connectedness. The village however was built upon the understanding of visibility and vocal vigilance with the size of the community being dictated by the notion of how far the human voice carried with the

placement of the houses on the outer edge being dictated by this concept. Size was therefore of a more intimate and human scale. This thinking about size and visibility could be replicated in the malls by removing the grid-like streets and avenues and centralising the shops along a single sightline in a return to the streetscape or arcade. Also (in a utopian impetus) smaller anchor stores could replace the large anchors, a move which might see the large departments stores return to the cities and thus help this environment to be reanimated. The malls could be given over to more localised or everyday shopping while the urban/city centres become the sites for purchasing the more expensive large scale items such as furniture and white goods.

A second move concerning the stores in the malls is twofold. First they need, like the houses on the periphery in the estates, to be made to face outward. This will remove the bland and blank exterior which confronts the shopper making for a more welcoming aesthetic. Also there should be a mix of covered and open spaces with the latter being open to slow moving traffic. By opening these spaces up it will promote movement through the mix of interior and exterior spaces and in addition the slow moving vehicular traffic being re-admitted with limited, short-term, kerb side parking being allowed would assist in further encouraging the continuous ebb and flow of movement through the space. Secondly the spaces between the shops also needs to be opened up making for a more porous space. The regimen of control is thus broken down and the spaces between may become more eclectic which in turn admits to difference and diversity.

In what might be seen as a bold move the notion of *villagibility* can be brought into operation by incorporating dwellings into the structure of the mall. Thus shops could contain apartments either above or behind them with these spaces being occupied by the lessees. This concept could be taken further with the roof of the mall being dedicated to a mix of small apartments or small homes catering for non-mall workers. Part of the peripheried mall carpark, a major area of the mall itself, could also be given over to townhouses and flatlets especially aimed at a variety of ages and socio-economical groups. Thus singles, newly weds, childless couples and the older generation could be incorporated into the fabric of the site. All of these types of dwellings when coupled with the mall would make for a *heteromall* that incorporates planned vagrant spaces, which addresses notions of the communisphere and the fourthspatial.

The problem of the overly large car-parks that the malls require to service the shoppers needs to be addressed and if possible return this space to the pedestrian. One solution as Kuntsler (1996) suggests is to have a better public transit system that carries people from the cantons/pods to the mall. These transit units would be smaller than the contemporary buses and operate from smaller carparks arranged a certain distance from the mall. Like spokes on a wheel the transit units can ferry back and forth along specified routes. By having the originating points on the periphery and at regular and overlapping intervals the large parking areas will be replaced by smaller zones which will be spread out alleviating the necessity for an enormous parking tracts around the mall. This area can then be put to use either as accommodation or for civic and sporting buildings and parks.

By making the malls more accommodating to pedestrians and more permeable and by removing the barrier of the car-park and substituting housing and other people friendly aspects there is a chance that in the mall an organic, *livable* community will grow from the dead spaces of the 'lived' thirdspace. Thus in the final analysis it is necessary to look at and revisit the sights/sites and note the influence that the first and secondspaces of the perceived and conceived aspects of the built environment have on the notion of community formulation. That these have an undue influence on the composition of the dead thirdspace cannot be denied. What is needed, and what I have argued for, is a rethink of the community space and the incorporation of the vagrant, heterotopic space in an effort to promote positive participation in a fourthspatial *livable* community by the community members.

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