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PhD Thesis: University of London

Making the Local:

Anthropology & the Suburban Citizen

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Declaration

I, David Jeevendrampillai confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Through anthropology at the edge, this thesis looks at how social projects form in dialogic relation to the 'other' as they meet and contest the meaning, values and forms of the material world. This PhD emerged between two social projects who aimed to make *better* suburbs. One, the Adaptable Suburbs Project (ASP) aimed to release the "untapped potential" of suburbs through a methodology of architectural analysis that combined different data sources. An online mapping platform aimed to collect oral testimonies from residents to reveal the "meaning, values, symbols" of the built environment. The location of a mountain, destroyed by a giant, was added by a group of local enthusiasts - the "Seething Villagers". Playing with notions of history, myth and "fact", Seethingers create events and "stupid" stories to create meaningful communities which "allow people to shine". The story was refused by the ASP as the historical "fact" compromised the communicative ideal of deliberative democracy that underpinned the mapping project. Both social projects, one making *better* through academically informed planning policy at a national level, the other through forming "resilient" communities at a local level, met again in a council meeting. Here one social project, - Seethingers, as local citizens - articulated the values and meanings of the built environment through the framework of the other in order to object to planning application. It is here where the effects of the refusal were felt again. Producing efficacious knowledge and articulations about the world takes "work". This thesis asks what sorts of subjectivities emerge at the edge of social projects, in moments of contestations, and what is lost in this process? Subjectivities emerge, not from the centre of a social project, but from the edge where it is always meeting the other. This thesis examines (and is) the material transfer of knowledge of 'the other' and its social, ethical and political implications.

For my Mother

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Preface

Using our bodies to help hold up the bar in a favourite local hostelry my informant and I chatted our way through three or four pints of some fine local ale. We had been talking for most of the day, whilst walking around the neighbourhood, Benny had told me about when he first moved to the area, about his memories and what he hoped would happen to this building or that. He expressed his hopes and dreams and talked of the direction his life might go in. Stitched through these tales Benny talked of how the built environment was changing around him and what this meant for their intertwined relationship. Then, during a pause in conversation he said assuredly, "you know all PhD students study themselves?" A little taken aback I pondered the assertion. For sure, there is a curious question to be asked as to why someone would spend so much of their time and energy on a task for few monies or fame.

Benny was a key informant, and more importantly a close friend. We had exchanged conversation about love, life, friends and family many a time. Just as I knew of where he grew up, where his parents were from and his sense of local belonging, he knew of mine. I had recently returned from traveling and Benny and I talked through my visit to what remains of a war weary house in Northern Sri Lanka that belongs to my, long deceased, father. We talked through experiences of living in a small town which one gleely escapes upon reaching the age where cultural thirst demands a migration. We talked of our links to Irish, Sri Lankan and English pasts, thoroughly confused and intrigued by them, complicated further by the way the conversation inevitably led to discussions on racist political forms, nationalism and philosophical anarchy. "You don't know where you're from," he said. "Well you do, you're just not happy about it." This was turning into a four pint therapy session; these are to be avoided. He wasn't correct but he wasn't wrong either.

We moved to talk about the very form and prevalence of the question, "where are you from?" It is certainly one of the most common questions in the world, certainly more complex than "what is your name?" and yet it is one I have never quite known how to answer. At a recent art event by the "Sorry you feel uncomfortable" collective, Jacob V

Joyce, a friend and talented artist, stood at the door to the exhibition and asked all "white people" (his words) "where are you from?" Upon their answer Jacob would ask them again, "no! Where are you really from? Where are your parents from?" It reminded me of the countless times I have been asked these questions, happy to answer, but for a seemingly disappointed audience who really want to ask another question. This question was asked by a small child, around 3 years old, during a fieldwork interview with her parent: "Why are you brown?" she said. "I'm so sorry," interjected the shocked and clearly embarrassed parent. I didn't mind the question; in fact it's a very good one when you are surrounded entirely by white people in a café but for one brown man. The point is, "where are you from?" is a question that is not simply about geographical origins; it's about who we are, who we associate with, our ties, our bonds to others, to place and to ourselves. It can be emotive of collectives that are made, and also work to exclude people from them.

This PhD is about being local, a form of belonging in an age where geographical origin and kin links are no longer the sole bastions of belonging, but our intrarelationship[1] with the material environment – how is it us and us it – is as strong as ever. Being local matters in both the sense of noun and verb – it takes work, is constantly performed and sculpted by various groups with a differing array of values and interests who not only shape the materials of the built environment and the world we live in, but also shape the forms of subjectivities and types of relation that comprise being in the world.

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[1] I use this term following Karen Barad (2007), in that it is not a coming together of separate entities but rather the genesis of two forms which co-emerge, one cannot exist in the form it does without the other.

Introduction:

Making The Local Within A World of Other Projects.

This is an interstitial PhD. It is neither about one group nor another but rather about the gaps between "social projects". This term is borrowed from Elizabeth Povinelli (2011:6) and refers to the "thick subjective background effects of a life as it is lived", that is, the ways in which people go about being in the world. This PhD is about the gaps that occur in the ongoing establishment of a social project and the frames of moral conduct and ethical relations through which we live. It is about the gaps at the limit of discourse and understanding, and crucially, about the gap between the anthropologist and the other. It is these gaps, I argue, that allows newness to come into the world[2]. Using the notion of involution, where the link between meaning and material is always in flow and flux, this PhD looks at crafting the world from the gap. It is in the anthropology of the gap where a politically and ethically reflexive anthropology can thrive and find itself at its most illuminating, but also where we find the most at stake. Drawing on what Foucault calls "ethical substance", that is "the prime material of his moral conduct" (sic 1985:26), this thesis traces Elizabeth Povinelli's concern from Economies of Abandonment (2011) with the "gap [that] seems to open between those who reflect on and evaluate ethical substance and those who are this ethical substance" (ibid: 11). It traces the subjectivities and forms of moral conduct that emerge in late liberalism[3] in relation to modes of governance, such as the academic, the individual, the anthropologist, the policy advisor and, most specifically, the local.

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[2] If one could insert a footnote about footnotes then I would do here. Here I employ a style being developed by The Free University of Seething whereby footnotes are seen as a gap into which play can be inserted allowed other readings of texts, my footnotes are 'Seething Footnotes'.

[3] Povinelli's term will be adopted throughout the thesis. She uses it to describe a post-colonial form of liberal democracies which describes a form a governmentality which responds to forms of difference. See Povinelli pp25-42. However I also imply that it is a form of liberal ideology that is post-political, i.e. beyond a state of global ideological difference (following Mouffe 2005)

Povinelli (2011) has an interest in the "unequal distribution of life and death" through the agencements,[4] or apparatus, which construct, delimit and determine "social worlds". In this PhD a material culture focus sees the *plural* social worlds collapse at a point of ethical dilemma over a *single* material world. Povinelli is interested in the differential distribution of the "ease of coping" and the "the distribution of harm" (ibid:160) as she illuminates the lived conditions and effects of liberal governance for her "indigenous" informants. It is from within a Povinellian focus on "those moments, or those conditions in which a social project is neither something nor nothing. This indeterminate oscillation —the virtual space that opens up between the potentiality and actuality of an alternative social project" (ibid: 8) that this thesis sits. However, whereas Povinelli's informants posit a position of a "world otherwise", I suggest that my informants do not inhabit, or want to inhabit a "world otherwise". They see themselves as very much part of one world - but want to change what that world is.

I trace how different social projects articulate trajectories of possibility and spread and extend value (following Munn 1992) in crafting social "worlds" making material landscapes and subjectivities that are intricately linked. Social projects, committed to the practice of making the "world" are of the same earth - they work through the same materials in their craftings. I employ Karen Barad's notion of "agential realism", where the world emerges in a particular understandable and enduring form through the ways in which materials are imbued in the everyday practices of social projects[5]. Things are known and understood as coherent, bounded and stable through the very practices of knowing those materials. Knowing and being cannot only not be separated, but the forms that knowing and being take are deeply ethical projects. Objects, then, are always material-discursive, onto-ethico-epistemological (Barad 2007) and particular to a social project.

Forms of knowing and showing imbue particular materials with an ethical force, as materials hold a range of potentialities to make different social worlds come about. Where the episteme-ontological positions of social projects overlap they can ignore each other or remain intertwined, and radically or not so radically clash. This thesis looks at moments of incommensurability; the disjunctures where two projects meet. Here a contestation in the use, articulation and trajectory of materials creates inevitable loss,

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[4] Taken from Deleuze & Guattari (1987) referring to assemblage of mechanisms of power that produce social force, and also from Callon (2005) whose work looks at the role of market devices to structure market forces.
[5] In particular chapters 2 & 3. See chapter 2 for more on agential realism.

harm and differential conditions of care. Creating the visible and the invisible, making links and associations and the ways in which materials are discussed, known and moved are political matters (following Povinelli 2011:50).

This PhD emerges from a position of transfer where I, as anthropologist, move between the project that funds me and those that I was sent to study. My Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) studentship with the Adaptable Suburbs Project (ASP), based in the architecture department of University College London (UCL), aimed to "further develop understandings of the workings of below the radar economic activity in suburban areas"[6]. As anthropologist, I was tasked with gathering oral histories regarding how people felt about changes to their local built environment with the hope of adding a "social layer" of data to the ASP. These histories were to populate a public participation geographic information system (PPGIS) - an online interactive map designed by the project. I found some self-declared local enthusiasts in my given field site, Surbiton - the 'Seething Villagers'. Seethingers live in the 'State of Seething', a place that is not a place but rather an inclusive and participatory community of a large number of people (re)inventing myths, narrating stories and being "stupid"[7]. They aim to disrupt normative discourses of what a suburban life is like, who lives there and how it is governed whilst forming new and strong relations. The stories are inventive and play with common discursive tropes, such as the symbols of local government, popular ideas of suburban life and academic research. Seethingers added a story to the ASP's map, yet it was not passed by the ASP administrators due its "polluting" nature. The story was deemed unreadable, confusing and threatening to the coherence of the map, which aimed to widen participation in building academic knowledge around the use and value of the suburban material landscape which would inform planning and urban design.

It is moments of foreclosure in the meeting of incommensurate social projects that interests me. Notions of participation, the democratic ideal, the universal, the particular, policy-facing academia and emic anthropology permeate this PhD. It has a similar positional dilemma to that of Povinelli's. In showing a "world otherwise", however, I argue that there is no "other" world - just one material one, which is up for grabs. This "up for grabs" status, in the gap, is where a politics of representation, knowledge,

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[6] This is elaborated upon further in chapter 1 of this thesis.
[7] This is an ethnographic term that I use to build a theoretical argument.

representation and knowing the "otherwise" makes the world and its relations, including the form of 'the other'. The anthropologist is deeply imbricated in this ethical process.

Further, I differ from Povinelli in the way I conceive of my informants. While a parallel should not really be drawn between her "indigenous" informants in northern Australia and my largely white middle class informants of suburban London, it is important to note that where she sees her informants as mute and enduring harm in regimes of late liberal governance, I see my informants as able to scale-shift, move and re-arrange their articulations, giving them an un-muteness. However, rather than conceive of them as in or out of a "world" or "social project", I see them as engaged, yet on the threshold of an alternative world. They push at the boundaries, they play and they create gaps within which newness can occur. It is this position between social projects, in the moments of contestations that make particular material and subjective forms in the present tense. People invest in multiple social projects at multiple scales. They are constantly meeting other social projects, other trajectories of making the world, and walking the lines between them, building, breaking down and re-building, and in everyday acts of being as becoming. I conceive of an anthropology where, rather than think through frames of in/out, mute/unmute, other/non-other, I wish to draw attention to the gaps. Here the losses and the gains, the endurance of harm, the conditions of care, can be illuminated through an anthropology of the edge, where worlds, or rather social projects, meet. The material landscape, from body to boulder, is where these meetings occur as worlds that are not otherwise but that are of the same earth.

Emerging from a body of theoretical work on space, the city and power[8], this thesis asks after the material detail of how social projects establish jurisdiction over controlling the material world across a range of scales - from the individual to the social, from the local to the city or nation. It asks how notions of the city and the state mix[9] with everyday phenomenological interactions in the production of social worlds and their material form[10]. It asks how categories such as global, local, place and democracy work as both symbolic operators and organisational devices within economies of certainty and their associated values, morals and politics. In moments of contestation things become de-

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[8] Developed from the tradition of (Levi-Strauss 1963; Bourdieu 1973, 1977; Giddens 1984a; 1984b; Ucko et. al. 1972; Clarke 1977; Refrew 1972, 1977; Hodder 1978; Soja 1989; Gregory & Urry 1985)
[9] See Amin & Thrift 2002, Massey 1999, Latour 1992, 1999: Farias & Bender 2010; Anderson & McFarlane 2011; Legg 2011; McCann 2011; Urry 2007; Dewsbury 2011; Sheller & Urry 2006; and Benjamin 2002; Deleuze & Guattari 1987; Foucault 1975, 1980, 2007a, 2008 for the influence of post-structuralism. David Harvey 1973:14; Tilley 1994; Pickles 1985; Pile 1996.
[10] Following Lefebvre 1991; Harvey 2006.

stabilised. I am interested in what tactics and forms of rationality, from expertise to being local, are used in creating or maintaining order. I consider multiple social projects, which take different forms but have the same telos - making *better* place, *better* democracy and *better* living which is why I prefer 'social project' to other terms such as culture or ontology. Through these multiple projects, localised, particular, affective and phenomenological forms of knowing are able to move from the local, are scaled up and are made commensurate, or not, with other forms of knowing. In this way this thesis looks at walking, sharing stories, mapping, analysing space, playing and researching as forms of knowing and making the world. These forms always occur in relation to other forms with various degrees and scales of efficacy.

The Mute Other

The gap which most concerns anthropology occurs between the anthropologist on the one hand and the represented on the other. This constant source of anxiety over representing the "other" in many respects *is* the discipline of anthropology, which, at its best, illuminates the processes of harm and suffering that occur when one social project impacts upon or erases another way of living. This is an enduring problem for anthropology typified by the "crisis of representation" in the 1980s (see Clifford 1988, Clifford & Marcus 1986), where a disquiet with the reified "othering" (Eriksen & Nielsen 2001:146) of classical modernist anthropology led to questions of whose voice was being heard in the authorship of anthropology, who it was working for and what was the role of the discipline in enduring constellations of power and representation. Further to these dilemmas, this thesis also engages with the problematic of representing the other as a distinct whole, whereby a holistic community with shared values (as outlined in the concept *Gemeinshaft* by Ferdinand Tönnies' (1963 [1887]) can be talked about neatly and distinctly without foreclosing difference within that community (see Otto & Bubandt 2010). In exploring these issues, this thesis stands on the threshold of the anthropological discipline and its place in the ASP, asking why it is and in what way it might be productive to talk about a "community", an "other" or a "whole" at all? What do such framings do, how do they circulate and what does it produce?

The ability to speak on behalf of the other remains a taut subject. This tension was highlighted in discussions on various anthropological blogs and social media channels

after Elizabeth Povinelli's European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) conference keynote speech (2014). Povinelli aimed to show a film for which she "wrote the script", where her informants, "indigenous" people of Northern Australia, would talk via the collaborative film project, however it suffered from a technical failure. The film moved from shot to shot without sound, making her informants appear as mute projections in a serious of selected and edited frames, over which Povinelli talked. Describing her own work on intimacy, she elaborated on the process of film making and how the numerous translations and alterations were "good" or useful as a form of ethnographic learning. Using the popular anthropological web forum *ALLEGRA,* Sylvain Piron wrote a review of the event on which Brett Dwyer commented:

> If we cannot understand the use of language – technical or otherwise, or indeed the nuances of gesture, the contexts of action, how can we make these contesting subaltern voices heard?[11]

Numerous comments and reviews gave a sense that Povinelli's talk was as abstract in language as subject, difficult to penetrate and unconvincing in its portrayal of the people of Northern Australia to the audience of social anthropologists. A week later, the post by Piron had sparked a heated debate that echoed in the halls of many departments, on the one hand being described as unduly personal and missing crucial aspects of Povinelli's work, whilst on the other hand sparking agreements and discussions around anthropological relevance and the ethical position of the anthropologist as translator. Mia Halme-Tuomisaari and Julie Billaud followed up a week later with a blog post under the title "Persistent Point of First Contact - Povinelli & EASA 2014" asking:

> What was the fundamental problem? To us, quite bluntly, instead of helping our beloved discipline to break free from a European/North-American legacy that has tended to exoticize the 'other' and make him/her become the silent object of the anthropological gaze and Western knowledge consumption, it resonated, even strengthened this troubling legacy[…]This discussion resonates with the hordes of anthropologists who have concretely moved away from the remote and the exotic, conducting fieldwork instead 'at home', in settings where 'radical difference' cannot be found but rather 'radical sameness' often prevails.[12]

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[11] http://allegralaboratory.net/why-povinellis-talk-at-easa2014-was-a-failure/ accessed 1/3/15
[12] http://allegralaboratory.net/persistent-point-of-first-contact/ accessed 1/3/15

Their claim that anthropologists are moving towards settings of "radical sameness" echoes Ghassan Hage's talk; *Critical Anthropology as a Permanent State of First Contact*[13]. Hage argues that we may rest too easily if we assume the radical potential of anthropology, with its pursuit of ontological multiplicity, is an "anti-capitalist act". He argues that once attention is drawn to dominated and often-overshadowed modes of existence they are pulled into a public arena inherent in the democratic ideal, "democracy as the existence of many points of view" (ibid). Within this arena, Hage states, you can:

> …have as many points of view as you like as long as capitalism and nature as the fundamental realities on which everything else stands are left alone and unchallenged[…]Minor realities offer new spaces of possibility but, nonetheless, such realities are merely arenas of political struggle rather than counter-hegemonic modes of existence in themselves.

There are two simple but important points to draw from this discussion. Firstly, the problem is not just one of translation and how to represent the other, but concerns what the way we go about such practices means for the ways in which we conceive of life and develop more equitable modes of existence. Secondly, perhaps we can find "first contact" everywhere, in every act, lived every day. Perhaps every act holds a potential to deliver newness, alterity, to challenge the normative. Perhaps Hage's "Permanent State of First Contact" advocates a form of anthropology whereby, through applying the anthropological method to ourselves, we are able to perform an anthropological involution, exposing the contingent aspects of normative everyday live and thereby creating a gap in which to conceive of the "other" within. The need for this form of anthropology could be seen to emerge from a particular *'entfremdung'* (following Marx 1927 [1844]), or alienation of the self in late liberal capitalism (see chapter 3), where late liberalism increasingly seems to be the global universal ideology with no ideological outside. Returning to Povinelli's mutes, I was reminded of a paragraph that struck me whilst reading *Economies of Abandonment*.

> The social projects that interest this book may not have the force to act in the sense of making anything like a definitive event occur in the world (becoming a counterpublic is an achievement), but they exist, nevertheless, in the Spinozan sense of persisting in their being. And insofar as they do, these alternative worlds maintain the otherwise

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[13] AAA 2013 23/11/13.

that stares back at us without perhaps being able to speak to us. (2011:10)

Here the "being unable to speak" or the inability to create a "definitive event" interests me. Seething Villager's literally created events. They ruptured the threat of the culturally imagined position of a suburbanite becoming true, working against the dominant normative discourse in the UK cultural imaginary of suburbs being dull and life sapping places (see chapter 3). They are articulate, however in another way they were denied voice as part of the ASP mapping exercise, in response to which they simply turned away and did something else. This turning away forms the first major pivot between the two social projects (chapter 1) - that of the ASP (chapter 2) and that of the local (chapter 3) - that form the basis of this thesis. The second pivot between the two social projects occurs in the last chapter (5) where my informants, now in the form of the local citizen, meet the ASP again in the abstracted, but linked, form of planning policy. It is here where the turning away comes to matter (in the sense of both verb and noun) - where the effects of the turn are felt[14].

In the moment of a local government planning decision, a meeting of "worlds", or social projects, occurs whereby they are unable to turn away due to their investments in the future of the built environment. The local, as a social project is forced to translate the values and meanings of their socio-material worlds via the epistemic frame of planning law. In this sense this PhD engages government, governance and governmentality in interlocking ways. Chapter 5 deals with the corporal and affective engagements with government, where I sit with my informants at a local town planning meeting. Further it deals with governance, referring to policies rather than politics (Urbinati 1995) where the local, as citizen, is managed as a bio-political body. This clearly comes through in the work of the ASP, whose algorithms aim to predict the movement of bodies through "systems" that can be understood and managed. Further, the PhD deals with governmentality in the Foucaultian (2008 [1978-9]) sense, whereby particular subjectivities emerge through the frameworks of value, rationality, normativity and strategies (following de Certeau, 1984) of governance.

The ability for the community to "work" in the second moment of meeting, in the council planning meeting, emerges from the productive elements of the first moment of

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[14] This PhD, in its very materiality, is the other place where the turning away comes to matter - the PhD is the Fetish (following Peitz 1985) between two social projects. I have already received a PhD certificate from Seething, and hopefully I'll receive another from the academy.

meeting and the turn away between the ASP and the local. In the first turning away my informants (both ASP and Seethingers) are able to construct their own "world". That is, in their ability to form allegiances, understand and articulate value they were able to form "a community that works" (see chapter 5). Being a "community that works" comes from an ability to "scale shift" (following Humphrey 2008), or translate, their values (following Graeber 2013) to other social projects that work through different epistemic grids, yet overlap materially and socially. Their "world" however does not come from a *terra nullius*, which is why the term social project is preferred, but rather is in constant dialogic relationally with other social projects. It is on the edge, it occupies a threshold position. I argue that one social project is always in relation with others through its ongoingness; it is ever unfolding and always meeting other social projects. This ongoingness requires maintenance - a policing and crafting of the project and therefore of value and meaning which occurs through socio-material sculpting. Social projects are always outwards looking, aiming to mask contradictions and delineate exclusions and inclusions. They are deeply involved in the politics of affect, which penetrates from the carnival to the everyday, from the drunken night in the pub to the halls of academic departments.

The politics of affect refers to the ways in which interjections into states of being are made. Following Spinoza (part III, p II, 2001 [1677]), affect derives from the Latin *affectus* - to be affected - and refers to ways "the active power of the body is increased or diminished". It is pre-emotion, pre-representation or pre-expression (see Pile 2010) [15]and the ability to "affect" creates a gap through which the indexes of meaning can be re-aligned. I work from a Gellian (1998) interpretation of a Peircian mode of semiotics, but emphasise how the on-going, performative nature of becoming allows for re-alignments and reworkings of relations through the malleability of the index. The politics of affect refers to the ways in which potentialities within networks of relations are re-aligned to release new or re-orientated value, forms and ways of being similar to Massumi's 2010 discussion of "metaphysics of feeling" (2010:63)[16]. Here, affect is at work, making people making world(s).

This PhD argues for a focus on *moments of meeting,* where anthropology has been concerned about representing "worlds otherwise" through inhabiting them, I argue that we should look at what is *almost,* through a forward facing anthropology that considers

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[15] See chapter four.
[16] Affect is discussed much further in chapter 4.

that which is hoped for but does not come to be. I ask, as people aim for a world, how do they involve themselves in it through the dealing with, obviating, resisting and the building of social projects. In a world of persistent first contacts, it is in these "moments" that the conditions of ethical substance, that is "being a subject of certain qualitative kind" (Foubion 2012: 72) is decided. In focusing on "edge-ontologies" - that is, how the conditions of legitimacy are defined - an anthropology of how certain forms of life do, or, importantly, do not endure, is hoped for.

The Search for The Edge

Hage asserts we should be careful to ensure that when we think we have escaped the confines of our ontological framing[17] we are not, in fact, still within it. The relativistic trap of ontological positioning is worked through in Henare, Holbraad & Wastell's 2007 edited volume *Thinking Through Things,* in which they analytically work outwards from the objects discussed ethnographically by their informants. In using a form of comparative analysis, they seek to see how such objects are embedded into networks of relations in different contexts. Such a position builds on the Science and Technology Studies (STS) framework of Michel Serres and Bruno Latour (1995), but emphasises an anthropological context[18]. This "ontological turn" in anthropology[19] is a development of the work of authors such as Roy Wagner (1975, 1979), Marilyn Strathern (1991), Alfred Gell (1998) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004), amongst others, all of whom have contributed to developing a post-structuralist perspectivism. For their part, Henare, Holbraad & Wastell (2007) propose a methodology in which "things themselves dictate a *plurality* of ontologies" (ibid: 7, original emphasis) opening the way for new theoretical constellations to be thought through. They argue that we don't have the terms in our vocabulary to work through the significance of objects in radically different contexts when we use a standard representational semiotic framework. They argue a radically Emic position where:

> The mysterious-sounding notion of 'many worlds' is so dissimilar to
> the familiar idea of a plurality of worldviews precisely because it turns
> on the humble – though on this view logically obvious – admission

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[17] Brought to the fore by Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974).
[18] See Tsing's (2010) critique of STS for its lack of context.
[19] See Heywood 2012; Holbraad, Harare & Westell 2007, Holbraad et al 2010; Holbraad 2012; Paleček. & Risjord 2012

that our concepts (not our 'representations') must, by definition, be inadequate to translate different ones. This, it is suggested, is the only way to take difference – alterity – seriously as the starting point for anthropological analysis. One must accept that when someone tells us, say, that powder is power, the anthropological problem cannot be that of accounting for why he might think that about powder (explaining, interpreting, placing his statement into context), but rather that if that really is the case, then we just do not know what powder he is talking about. This is an ontological problem through and through. For its answer is patently not to be found by searching 'in the world' – maybe in Cuba? – for some special powerful powder. The world in which powder is power is not an uncharted (and preposterous!) region of our own (cf. Viveiros de Castro 2005; Ardener 1989). It is a different world, in which what we take to be powder is actually power, or, more to the point, a third element which will remain ineffably paradoxical for as long as we insist on glossing it with our own default concepts – neither 'powder' nor 'power' but, somehow, both, or better still, the same thing. (Ibid:12)

Looking for a radically Emic position in order to think through concepts, such as power/powder, inherently involves seeing objects or "things" *as* "other". That is, to understand the object and the subjectivities it is involved in, one must understand the network of productive relations it is embedded in and is brought about through. This way of seeing has at its philosophical centre a belief that concept and material are inherently tied. Using Alfred Gell's example of the consideration of Moari *Taonga* figures, thinking through things, moves us from saying *"taonga as hau"* to "the *toanga is the hau*" (Henare, Holbraad & Wastell 2007:18). An emic position allows a greater understanding of the social agency of materials, which requires an ontological jump into 'the other'.

I wish to take the Emic position espoused by the "ontological turn", where we push our own theoretical concepts and create new ones, and think through Annemarie Mol's multiplicity, where things are enacted in multiplicious and fractious ways (see Mol 2003:152). In *The Body Multiple* (2003), Mol looks at the various versions of atherosclerosis being discussed and by doing this finds that what atherosclerosis *is* varies in different medical departments. Moving away from perspectivist approaches (see Viveiros de Castro 2004), Mol asserts that atherosclerosis is constantly (re)performed or enacted. This enables incommensurate ideas of the disease to work with each other as patients and practitioners shift their understandings, their co-ordinations of

understanding and their enactments. It is the multiplicitous ways of making flows of relations work that allow atherosclerosis to be treated. For materials to flow, for things to *work* a full understanding of the other is not required, it simply has to align in a particular, if partial, way in order to work.

Mol drops any sense of a unified object and rather sees atherosclerosis as something partially coherent, partible, and fragmented, which coheres as it moves through the shifting enactments of itself in different contexts. I argue that how we *see* - that is, how some flows of relations are made visible and others not - can occur with greater or fewer degrees of alignment between social projects. It is not enough to just see 'powder as actually power' (Henare, Holbraad & Wastell 2007: 15), or rather that isn't the anthropological point as the question remains to ask, what if two people want the powder to do different things? The question then is not - how are things opened up to re-alignments? - but rather how are things closed down so that the ethical substance of being is delimited, and so that particular social projects can expand? Just as Mol asks, what are the tools that open up the body to new configurations and understandings - the microscope, the lab and so on - we can also ask, what are the tools of erasure, that close down otherness in the pursuit of totality? I ask not after poly-ontologies, but rather after the configuration and relation between multiple, overlapping ontologies. I ask after that which is almost, but not quite, on the outside; that which is not brought in; that which does not overlap; that which is in the gap; in the world which is hoped for, but does not arrive, suggesting a negative anthropology of what forms of being do not endure.

I do this through a focus on the moment in which two projects meet and then turn away, each erasing the trace of the other (chapter 1), but not its presence. This turning away allows the continuation of the social projects in building and extending different socio-material meanings and values, but the touch between them allows a form of dialogic relation, at the edge[20]. I work through the crafting of those social projects in themselves (chapters 2 & 3) and the ways in which they work in dialogic relation to the other (chapter 4). Finally I work through how these projects, in a more general sense, (and here I set them up as a dialectic between policy and people, local and trans-local), radically meet through the material world (chapter 5). The focus on the process of objecting to a planning application draws attention to the ways in which both social

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[20] Influenced by William Pietz (1985) 'The problem of the fetish', Res,9:5–17.

worlds are constantly in dialogic relations over the sculpting of the singular material world. It is through the ability of people to scale-shift conceptions and articulations of the potentialities of the material world, to be able to talk through another epistemic grip of socio-material value, that the "community works". However this "working" is not the outcome of a prior local person working to protect an priori vision of landscape but rather the local person and landscape emerge from a dialogic relationship in which forms, ways of being and ethics of multiple socio-material projects unfold.

The notion of the dialogic relation emanates from Bakhtin (see Morris 1994), in that social projects are relativistic to one another in both their articulations and their form - which is constantly becoming. The ASP has, as part of its commitment to the democratic process, a need to include the citizen, the members of the population its knowledge affects through its place in networks of planning discourses. The ASP developed techniques and procedures to maintain that commitment, including participatory maps and the tensing of its potential (placing the ability of the map as being able to facilitate a democracy to come through its future use - see chapter 1). The non-academic informants (suburban residents) become citizens by developing a sense of moral community through being 'stupid' (chapter 3). They form a coherent local body that is able to articulate the local notion of value to local government, speaking, as they must, through the terms set out by that local government. The dialogic relation sees each social project develop its form in relation to the other. However whilst a Bakhtinian dialogic may see a certain recursivity, where openness to the other is paramount to communication (following Sennet 2010), in my case the need for a social project to account for the other, that which is outside, recognise it and yet negate its ability to foreclose the social project, produces a dialectic form, whereby the power to foreclose, close off and impose, appears to be in play. However this need to recognise the other yet protect the social project sees social projects discretely recognise and relate to 'the other'. The 'other' is always in view, on the threshold, on the edge. This tension is accentuated when both social projects aim to control the singular materiality of the local built environment (chapter 5).

Whilst similar to a Bakhtinian dialogic, the dialogic relation between social projects in this thesis emerges through the materiality of the land, not linguistics. It is because of the material relationality that it matters not just how the material is understood - "powder is power" - but who has the jurisdiction over its use and what form of being

this allows. I work from a similar theoretical position to what Karan Barad calls the "material-discursive", where matter and meaning are not separate elements but are rather deeply entwined. This position emanates from the work of de Certeau (1984), Lefebvre (1991) and Foucault (1977, 2007, 2008), in which representations of space are considered as part of the practice of spatial production - as stabilisations and instantiations of order and associated value that selectively forget possible "pollutions" of this order. I consider language and performance as productive of the materiality of the situation (see chapter 2). I am interested in the notion of an agentive "cut" whereby language, practice and performances (such as walking, parading and mapping) cohere efficacious objects such as "city", "community", "suburb" and "place"[21]. This develops Strathern's notion that a form (meaning/object/value) can only appear with its appropriate properties, or else it has not appeared (see Strathern 1991:pxxi; 1999:15). I also examine the apparatus of knowing, such as choice of scale, notions of expertise and being 'stupid', to trace how historically contingent concepts such as place and the local citizen, are mattered, in that they are made material and come to mean something (following Butler 1993), through "infrastructures of certainty" (Castoriadis 1987).

This performative understanding, where meaning is in a constant process of unfolding or not unfolding, is where I locate this thesis, on the threshold of possibilities[22]. The Manchester School's re-orientation of anthropology from functional coherence to an emphasis on the "performative and conflictual basis of social action and reproduction" (Bubandt & Otto 2010:54), brought attention to the potential socialities that stand on the edge waiting for a "way in", via discussions of liminal positions in ritual performances (see Turner & Turner 1967, 1969).

I wish to understand the performative in an everyday sense, through movements and ideas, materials and bodies[23], and the ways in which "geographies of heterogeneous associations" (Edensor 2003:167) are opened up[24], but further closed down in an ongoing political performance of affect[25]. Rational subjects are able to deploy tactics - such as rhythm, pace and route, thinking and acting with the body (see Bissell 2011) - to

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[21] See Barad 2001; Joyce & Bennet 2010; Butler 1993:9-10; Morphy 2003; Castoriadis 1987; Otter 2010; Graham & Marvin 2001; Anderson, B. & Wylie, J. 2009; Frow 2010 of the production of knowledge.

[22] ethnographic encounter and the role of the anthropologist are then considered part of the unfolding.

[23] Here my work emerges from literature in Cultural Geography (see Ingold 2007b, 2011; Spinney 2009; Sheller & Urry 2006; Cresswell 2010; Urry 2007; Edensor 2003; Dalakoglou 2010).

[24] See Walter Benjamin 2002; Reed 2002; Ingold 2007a; Sheller & Urry 2006.

[25] see Tuan 1974, 1977; Relph 1976; Seamon 1977; Amin & Thrift 2002; Adey 2008a, 2008b; Allen 2006. Dewsbury 2003; Lorimer 2010

manage affect and make buildings and things cohere into actors, or into objects which are then able to "act" (see Rose et al 2010) or 'work'.

In focusing on the ways in which these unfolding socialites are deeply imbued with the materiality of everyday life, I build on the deep history of material culture studies that have long been the focus of UCL Anthropology.

Material Culture

Early attempts at understanding the "other" such as Lewis Henry Morgan's typologies of savagery, barbarism and civilisation (1978 [1877]), were based on racist, linear evolutionary perspectives. Functionalist explanations saw materiality as symbolic functions within a particular cultural whole, binding cultures within specific geographic regions (see Darryl Forde 1934). After this, material culture studies faded from anthropological endeavours until a rising interest in semiotics and structuralism affected the ways in which material culture was approached by anthropologists (see Miller 2005, Buchli 2002 for a history). Claude Lévi-Strauss's work moved away from functionalism through a re-evaluation of the work of Franz Boaz (1896) and Radcliffe Brown (see Lévi-Strauss 1962), as anthropology focused on the underlying structural systems behind local manifestations of culture. Whilst the discipline has since developed and moved away from structuralism it leaves an enduring legacy in its ethical implications. Seeing all human societies as manifestations of the same cognitive mind promoted a universal humanity with different manifestations opposed to the previous anthropological conceptions of seeing humans as more or less evolved, or as merely products of their environment.

Within structuralism, the focus on the sign/signifier relation reduced the material culture under study to a largely background element in the creation of order around semiotic binaries such as nature-culture (see Lévi-Strauss 1962). Pierre Bourdieu (1977) turned this into a much more contextual theory through his ethnography of the Kabyle house of the Berbers in Algeria, emphasising how the placement and use of objects within the home reflected the categories, orderings and cosmologies through which people lived. These binary orderings - light/dark, man/woman and so on - provided a grounded empirical example for the structuralist principles espoused by Lévi-Strauss. Structuralism was concerned with logic and reason, with semiotic structure at its core,

and Marxist anthropologists built on this to illuminate the ways in which the material world re-produced the capacities of people in an array of uneven power relations (see Leone 1984). Material forms were considered mediators of relations of power and networks of agents. The work of Bruno Latour (see 1992, 1999, 2005) has exerted much influence in the consideration of agentive force and has drawn attention to the inferred intentionality, or the embedded agency, within objects. His work, and the STS field more generally, has been at the forefront of focusing attention on the network of relations into which objects and humans are embedded. They trace how things come about to have force and have increasingly problematisatised the subject/object dialectic that much social science sees itself working within (Miller 2005:12).

Alfred Gell's 1998 book *Art & Agency* stands as a key text in the development of a theory of the relationship between people and things. Gell develops his theory of abduction using the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, where reasoning is felt through a logical inference from form and vison. Gell worked through the ways in which a viewer can be "enchanted" by art in its complexity, or dazzled by its "brilliance", asserting that, through an aesthetic, a relation to the form is elicited through its indexical link. For Gell, representation gives way to performance, where meanings are felt rather than read. Objects, forms and aesthetics can be said to have agentive force and work as active social agents, the Taonga *is* the hau rather than *as* hau.. This body of work (see also Kuchler 2002, 2005, Webb Keane 2003, 2005, Pinney 2002, 2005) owes much to Gell's use of Peircian semiotics, which can be applied in a more performative approach to meaning in a material world, allowing space for phenomenological and affective modes of explanation between people and materials. Gell's notion of distributed agency and affective force deepens the work of Marxist anthropologists in that power can be seen to work through crafting non-linear temporalities and relations that are more-than-human (see Witmore 2007; Webmoor 2007; Whatmore 1997).

Gell's use of Peircian semiotics recovers, to an extent, the dematerialisation of the sign so prominent in Saussurian analysis. This Saussurian gap, where language was set apart from the material conditions in which meaning was said to emerge, left a legacy in anthropological analysis. This separation, under structuralist models resulted in anthropological analysis being abstract from its context. Clifford Geertz brought a radical localness to the "webs of meaning" in which humans and objects are embedded (1973, 1983), but, as Gell showed, a radical re-contextualisation of analysis remained

necessary. Dematerialisation of the sign made understanding Taonga *is* hau rather than *as* hau almost impossible. Gell's rematerialisation returns the agentive force of material and aesthetic form to the foreground of analysis, noting not how materials should be read but how they perform, or work. For Webb Keane (2003, 2005), Gell doesn't go far enough. He states that Gell "seems to accept Saussure's (1959) structuralist model of language" (2005:183), in which sign is assimilated to meaning and meaning to language. Yet Keane himself comes back to this linguistic model in his critique of Gell in a later discussion of the radical indeterminacy of the sign. Keane pushes Gell further in that, by attempting to reclaim objects from linguistics in anthropological analysis, he reaches to reclaim language as not separate from objects. He draws more fully on a Peircian mode, where signs, or icons, and index have material consequences. Gell, asserts Keane, "doesn't fully explore the social and historical implications of the index and rather seeks a direct road to the transhistorical domain of cognition" (2005:186). However, in a return to Peirce, Keane notes Peirce's critique of Hegel, who "almost altogether ignores the outward clash" (Peirce 1958:43-44 in Keane 2003:413) where the materiality of signification gives rise to new and transformative modes of action and subjectivity. Keane draws attention to the processual nature of signs, stating that signs give rise to new signs. A Peircian semiotics offers an orientation of meaning from a static past tense to a more active, future-orientated "anthropology of possibility" (see Appadurai 2013). It is this non-abandonment of the linguistic model and the re-alignment of it as co-existent with the materiality of the world that is the key contribution I will draw on from Keane. I focus on the politics of the moment, by which I mean the investments in building, obviating and challenging flows of meaning through the sculpting of affective dispositions. I will, in this PhD, draw attention to people crafting puppets and looking at diagrams and assert that they make themselves, the world and the other, through their ongoing dialogue with anaphoric chains of association.

Anaphoric chains, the structure and flow of associations between meanings and matter, are described by Rouse (2002:202 in Buchli 2013:14) as enabling "a discursive performance to inherit the inferential commitment and entitlements of another performance without having to articulate its specific content". Through indexical links, social forms can be linked and relational through different material forms (see Gell 1998). Further parts can stand for wholes, an idea that, in relation to space and materiality, was also discussed by de Certeau in his notion of *"synecdoche"* - where a "thing" expands the spatial element of association beyond itself to make it stand for

more; and *"asyndeton"* - where fragmentation of "place" occurs through selecting, forgetting, creating "gaps" in the spatial continuum (see de Certeau 1984:101). This fragmenting and expanding between partial connections (following Strathern 1996) and contingent links in anaphoric chains allow the potential for what Althusser has called a "swerve" (2006b), whereby the ideological force of materiality can be re-aligned through a series of brief encounters which re-work both material form and its meanings. This ability to interject newness, via affective interjections, works in the contingency of aesthetic regimes, which is linked to the legitimacy of action over materials (that is, power). This thesis develops an anthropology of the gap via a performative development of Gell's notion of involution whereby the movement in the moment of transfer between meaning and material gives rise to a potential for new forms of association, value circulation and life (see below).

The Indeterminacy of the Sign

In attempting to understand how conceptual frames delimit the possible, Karan Barad (2007) works through an explanation of Heisenberg's famous double slit experiment in particle physics. In this experiment, if one changes the mode of observation it appears as though the behaviour of light, acting either as waves or as particles, retroactively changes. This Schrodinger's Cat-like experiment raises the issue of the precise nature of the collapse of the wave function, where observation moves the cat from a quantum super position, where the cat is both dead and alive, to a material position formed through the act of observing. To use a terrible metaphor[26], a radio in a room only tunes to one station, even though other radio waves still exist in the room as material and potential - they are just not presenced. The point of observation delimits the possibility of the visible (or rather, the sensed), and an object's properties depend on the determining apparatus of the available observational technologies (Barad 2007:19).

Barad, taking Niels Bohr seriously, moves primary ontological units within empiricist study from "objects" to "phenomena"[27], in which both concepts and materials intra-act[28]. This thesis studies the citizen, the suburb, democracy as emergent phenomena

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[26] Which was also Schrodinger's intention
[27] See Ingold's *Making* (2013) for a recent exposition of this position in anthropology.
[28] The term intra-act is a purposeful rejection of interact which presumes the distinct meeting of two different forms.

which move between social projects, gaining coherency but never becoming identical (following Mol 2003). Through bringing the process of knowledge-making into the ethnography, I have encompassed the work of the ASP and the production of this thesis into the writing of this thesis.[29] The thesis asks after the political efficacy of observations, or cuts as practices of knowing, in the reification of particular forms of being (see Barad 2007:67, Latour 1999). The PhD elucidates the process of measuring and of making visible and invisible as part of the process of developing a social project. This socio-material making is done in dialogic relation to other social projects being made at various scales. As such, this thesis simultaneously considers the ASP, Seethingers and the role of anthropology as forms of knowing at various scales.

Through disjunctures, incommensurable moments between the ASP and suburban locals, I focus on what suburbs and subjectivities are made through the tension and the outward clash of social projects and how their trajectories and values clash at a moment of meeting. This meeting sees foreclosures of social projects as the power to control the material arrangement of suburbs is contested. I ask how newness comes about through the gaps between social projects, between gaps in meaning and understandings. Through pushing at the conception of the possible through the constant moment of meeting the 'other', social projects work through a threshold position. My informants aim to control the terms of legitimate being in the world, socially and materially, by developing "infrastructures of certainty" (Castoriadis 1987) and delimiting the terms of "the real" (Hacking 1983). This decidability, this power, occurs by arranging the material conditions through which both concepts and subjects dialogically unfold. Knowing, measuring and showing are processes through which the material and the social coalesce to both create, and delimit, the conditions of possibility - shaping materials, ethics and socialites. It is the tension in the gaps that give rise to the sorts of subjectivities we feel *ought* to exist as we unfold in relation to the 'other'. Matter, with its enduring one worldness, is both produced and productive, simultaneously generated and generative, yet also gives rise to the conditions through which newness can unfold.

If the world of subjects and things is "open" as Webb Keane (2003) asserts, then the question needs to be asked; why is it that the world appears as it does - differently, for different people? Away from the scientific pursuits of determining the link between matter, energy, position and momentum in quantum physics, Barad leaves a more

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[29] By this I mean the thesis is itself a product of the ASP and Seething. It is at once an Ethnographic object and a result of Ethnography.

relevant question for anthropology. Why does the inherent instability that arises between matter and meaning, and between the sign and the signified (in Saussurian linguistics), or before the matter is read indexically or abductively (in Peircian linguistics), stabilise in a particular form? What exclusions and foreclosures are socio-material arrangements predicated upon? My emphasis on "the moment" at the edge draws attention to the production of a way, an aesthetic, a practice which is that very practice of foreclosure, of cutting, of making that which is real.

Certainty & Uncertainty

This process, in which meaning and matter come about through a mutual presencing or erasing, is discussed in Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* (with a deliberate double meaning left hanging over the term "matter"), in which she makes a call for "a return to the notion of matter" (1993:10), drawing attention to the productive possibilities of the gap between the sign and signifier:

> The linguistic categories that are understood to "denote" the materiality of the body are themselves troubled by a referent that is never fully or permanently resolved or contained by any given signified. Indeed, that referent persists only as a kind of absence or loss, that which language does not capture, but, instead, that which impels language repeatedly to attempt that capture, that circumscription—and to fail. (Butler 1993:67)

What, then, are the processes through which "a category which denotes" becomes established? For Butler, the normative is established through the iterative and regularised repetitions of associations which occur under the force of the taboo. Taboos, the necessary exclusions of social life, have a potential to disrupt social and moral order if confronted (see 1993:95; 2000). Normative gender arrangements operate through processes, or "radical erasures", which give some material-discursive arrangements greater "discursive legitimacy" than others (1993:8). It is the instability of the "gaps and fissures" (ibid: 10) opened up through re-iterations that produce the spaces of political possibility, where forms of minor alterity that resist easy symbolisation emerge. A re-articulation of the symbolic horizon is possible through the failure to re-iterate in accordance with social laws. However such a failure also risks the loss of epistemological certainty. In chapter 3, I unpack this purposeful loss of

epistemological certainty by looking at how a form of unintelligibility, being 'stupid', forms a *minor* resistance to the normative modes of re-iterability of the suburban subject. My informants perform this act of resistance in order to carve a position of life within a late liberal democracy, thereby keeping the telos, democracy, whilst simultaneously obviating the terms of it. Further, my informants work through a distributed sense of self via a moral community and the potentials of the material landscape. It is this that makes them local.

Working through a Freudian and Lacanian psycho-analytic framework, Butler discusses how the body becomes ontologically viable through the psyche, or via an "epistemic grid formative of a morphology" (ibid:66). The body is in a "known state" yet also in constant vacillation, a precarity where the body and its contours are not only *in* a constant tension between the psychic and the material but, further still, *are* that tension. That is, the body as known takes a form which is ongoing, in a state of, and the result of, tension. The local, both as citizen and material landscape, is made through the democratic ideology of late liberal governance and vice-versa. The tension between social projects, with different conceptions of materials and being is where the world is made.

Christopher Pinney builds on Daniel Miller's call for an anthropology that shows how "things that people make, make people" (Miller 2005:38). Following Strathern (1990), he asserts that if we over-focus on the frame of analysis - that is, the conditions of language that enable the discursive legitimacy around a form or phenomena - then we may again move away from the agentive force of that very form, or object. Evoking Leotard's "figure" as a zone where intensities are affectively felt in "radical exteriority to discourse" (Carroll 1987: 30 in Pinney 2005:266) Pinney moves beyond a demand for linguistic-philosophical closure and towards an anthropology of feeling. In thinking through the ways humans are constituted through their relations to the material world, Pinney cites Adorno's stress on the way technology subjects men to the demands of objects (ibid:269). Pinney's idea of a "figural excess" looks at the tension or "torque" between a material and its objectification, and further at its ability to subjectify a subject. Pinney draws attention to the productive tension of materials and meaning and the possibility that acts of pressencing have in aligning latent potentialities and thereby challenge re-iterated norms. This potentiality, inherent in the quasi-object (following Latour and Serres 1995), is affected by what Buchli might call the "anaphoric chains of

association it may follow" (see Buchli 2010). This "passing down a path of particular association" (Pinney 2005:268) attends to the depth of force that materiality may hold through its ability to affect. This appeals to Peirce's notion that any initial interpretation has first to be interpreted, and this comes from "deep within oneself" (see Peirce 1931:58). In their work, Buchli and Pinney open up the "deep within oneself" to a corporally felt deep and gripping materially-discursive sociality.

This thesis attends to the crafting of "chains of association", the production of value and the endurance of social projects. It examines mechanisms of stabilising or obviating chains of association around knowledges of the suburbs and the lives lived there. Materials partake in the ongoing becoming of the world, they can surprise and provoke new contextual meanings (see Yanevea 2008 on decay). Pinney's discussion of Hindu chromolithographs (2005) asserts that there is a limit to the extent to which discursive transformations can happen through social processes alone as objects, through their very materiality, bring to the surface deep histories and their phenomenological anaphoric chains of associations (see Buchli 2010). This materially induced excess of feeling can never quite fit into a "linguistic-philosophical closure" (Pinney 2005:266). I show how the efficacy of material intensities are both understood and used in presencing of objects, bodies and images and in bringing about the material-discursive forms of suburb, citizen, democracy, expert and local.

In drawing attention to the inherent tension between invention and convention, Roy Wagner asserts that culture is inherently linked to the ability to perform an act of significance (1975:4) and, as such, can be invented through a play on the "controlling context". Controlling context is similar to the "semiotic ideology" of Webb Keane (2005), where the discursive meanings available to the interpreter are thoroughly established into a normative culture. For Wagner, the controlling context is where the actor's intention and awareness are involved in the judgements and priorities of the conventional world (1975:45). The ability to control, then, is the ability to hold the fluctuating world of semiosis in an illusionary stillness so that any potential alterity that may arise from contradiction (following Marx 1996 [1875]: 1064), is *masked*. This masking enables the establishment of a social logic and normative belief systems, making them appear natural and universal (following Eagleton 1991).

Invention always occurs upon the current (controlling normative) context of meaning. Play gives rise to newness through re-territorialising meaning through an extension of

the already existing semantic background of intelligibility, through substituting links in the chains of association producing a re-alignments. Whilst Wagner's theoretical contribution has been vital, it is through the use of his work in materially grounded examples that I have found the most purchase. Morten Nielsen (2013), using Munn's discussion of value transformations (see Munn 1986, also Appadurai 1996), works through the ways in which the meaning of a wage packet is obviated through the purchase of a bag of concrete.

The transformative potential of the concrete bag is released when it is moved through networks of relations which enable new forms of agency to emerge in both people and object. Road workers in Mozambique were able to transform the power relationship inherent in their wage obviating, - that is "supplanting a conventional semiotic relation in an innovative and self-contained relation" (Nielsen 2013:83), - it through purchasing a bag of concreate. The wage packet, through "dropping the traces of its own origin" (2013:79), re-aligns from producing a subjectivity of a form of labourer antithetical to the Mozambican identity to a future-oriented identity of house builder, via the potential of the concrete bag. Nielsen demonstrates that value, object and social relations emerge and shift through the movement and frame of materials.

Similarly Shacklesford (2014) discusses the conceptualisation and use of the new Syrian Flag which, through a re-animation of an old design, allow Syrianness to be re-located from Assad's authority (during the Syrian civil war of 2011) to the enduring character of "Syrian people". In moment of refusal a protester with the old flag denies the authority of an Assad guard and ruptures the "mask" of authority, making a different Syrianness visible and rendering the future up for grabs. Here the invention or re-alignment (the implicit context) of semiosis feeds back to the controlling context to transform that culture into something new. Syria, then, endures whilst simultaneously being a very different thing. Similarly, Seethingers and the ASP do this to each other and, further, to the very idea of what late liberal democracy is. For Wagner the idea of inherent meaning is a "necessary illusion" (Wagner 1975:38) which one believes in order to make coherence within a culture. For this reason, invention plays back towards the controlling context in order to change it, in a minor sense, it swerves (Althusser 2006). Invention and convention are in a binding dialectic through which the process of semiosis is relativized (see Wagner 1975:38). This process is an ongoing pushing at the boundaries of the limits of the possible in order to change the whole - that is, the whole

buds a particular, in the form of an obviation, to transform itself through a momentary unmasking which allows new potentials to be enacted.

Following Nielsen, I take the idea of transformative acts as, the ability to shift the affective power of forms (as objects, but this also includes the ability to define objects), and, to further attempt to re-align concepts such as participation and democracy (see chapters 1 & 4). The use of Wagner in a performative sense enables a scaling down of the transformation of social process to the material circumstances that are imbued in that process, as in the above examples[30]. This materialisation of Wagner enables a view through to the ways in which an anthropology of the gap may be beneficial in understanding the conditions of living, or, as Nielsen asserts "what the obviational analysis affords is a quite different account where values emerge from the capacity to supplant history" (2013: 83).

It is in the gap between certainty and uncertainty that my ethnography (and maybe also the PhD) sits. I show how the craftings, showings, presencings and making absent, work within a relational dialogic to the already existing modes of power. That is, the crafting of localness, the surreal stories and the ways they are or are not allowed into participatory mapping practices all occur within other aspects of social projects at different scales (following Strathern 1991) in which meanings circulate and surround such practices. This involves terms such as "participation" and "democracy" (chapters 1 & 5), "expertise" and "science" (see chapters 2 & 5) and "localness" and "belonging" (see chapters 3 & 4).

Establishing the Context

Building from Wagner I ask how control is established, that is how is the ability to hold relations together built in a network of recognisable patterns that demands aligned socialities. If, as Karan Barad states, each moment is alive with possibility as to the configurations of what may be possible (a socio-material superposition), then how are these possibilities delimited, wave functions collapsed, forms made visible and invisible?

For Butler (in line with Wagner), "the Law" - which is the social law, the normative state, that which *is* and *is not* taboo - is the very place which provides the discursive

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[30] See also Carroll *The Shifting Ontologies of Fabric* Unpublished PhD UCL, 2014.

occasion for resistance, re-signification and the subversion of itself (1993:109). Disobedience to the law gives rise to the promise of the imaginary which, though perhaps considered a failure to adhere to convention in one social context, provides a form of radical re-alignment in another. As Butler states;

> the failure of identificatory phantasms constitutes the site of resistance to the law. But the failure or refusal to reiterate the law does not in itself change the structure of the demand that the law makes. The law continues to make its demand, but the failure to comply with the law produces an instability in the ego at the level of the imaginary. Disobedience to the law becomes the promise of the imaginary and, in particular, of the incommensurability of the imaginary with the symbolic. (1993:105)

If we take from this the question of politics, we can ask who gets to mark the boundaries of a liveable being - that is, "ethical substance". How does, in Roy Wagner's terms, the "controlling context" of the discursively legitimate become obviated so that an "invention of culture" can occur (Wagner 1975) and that which is ethical substance can encompasses new forms? For Peirce, a symbol is *"a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object"* (Peirce 1931:58, 2.249). We interpret symbols according to "a rule" or "a habitual connection" (ibid.: 2.292, 2.297, 1.369). As Rosalind Coward and John Ellis argue, any "fixing" of "the chain of signifiers" is both temporary and socially determined (Coward & Ellis 1977: 6).

But this "fixing" can be swerved (following Althusser 2006), changed and challenged through the assertion of sovereignty. In her discussion of *Antigone's Claim* (2000), Judith Butler considers the political possibility of the figure of Antigone, who refuses the conditions of both social and legal law. Antigone is questioned by the authority of Creon (her Father, ruler of the city of Thebes) over her involvement in the act of burying her brother, whose body had been left on the outskirts of the city to rot rather than be honourably buried. Antigone refuses the position she is forced into through the structure of the laws questions. Did she do the deed? She both did and did not (Ibid:24-29). Antigone articulates and frames her own position as a form of death by showing how it is that her love was not allowed under the existing social arrangements. It is the universality of the incest taboo, which stands as the pre-social rule, ontologically separating, as it does, humans from nature into culture, that is threatened in Antigone's love (see Butler on Lévi-Strauss 2000:15). As such, either her position of socially

legitimate love or the very fabric of social legitimacy, are threatened by the act. Through her refusal to give the desired form of answer regarding her love for her brother, Antigone stands at the threshold of the symbolic. Butler works through Lacan's understanding of Antigone's death as precipitated by the "symbolic insupportably of her desire" (ibid: 29), asking as to which social arrangements can be recognized as legitimate love, and which human losses can be explicitly grieved as real and consequential loss? Antigone then stands at the limit of ethical order, or of what Butler calls the "legitimating *Sittlichkeit*" - the articulated norms that govern the sphere of cultural intelligibility.

Antigone's claim positions her as the waste, the excess, the loss, that which is forgotten in the sittlichkeit; in Hegel's terms she is the *"eternal irony of community"*. However, Butler shows that Antigone is only criminal to the extent that she occupies one tension within an ambiguity of the law. Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet argue that *"neither of the two religious attitudes set forth in the Antigone can by itself be the right one unless it grants to the other the place that is its due, unless it recognizes the very thing that limits and competes with it"* (1984 cited in Butler 2000:84). In her act of neither refusing to dissociate the deed from her person nor confirming it "the social deformation of both idealized kinship and political sovereignty" emerge (Butler 2000: 6). Her autonomy is gained by responding to Creon's sovereignty with her own and as she appropriates the authoritative voice as the one she resists, leading to a "simultaneous refusal and assimilation of that very authority" (ibid: 13). In this sense recognition of one's sovereignty;

> begins with the insight that one is lost in the Other, appropriated in and by an alterity that is and is not oneself, and recognition is motivated by the desire to find oneself reflected there, where the reflection is not a final expropriation. Indeed, consciousness seeks a retrieval of itself, only to recognize that there is no return from alterity to a former self but only a transfiguration premised on the impossibility of return. (ibid:14)

Antigone will suffer either a symbolic (social) or bodily (through law) death. Butler asks if there is any room for a new form of relation outside of the position of the universal and hegemonic terms. Antigone refuses to obey any law that refuses public recognition of her loss, and as such has a socially ungrievable position[31]. However, does death have

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[31] Which Butler equates the social responses to ethical position of a death via AIDS (2000:24)

to be the only option? As Butler states, if kinship is the precondition of the human then Antigone's claim is the occasion for a "new field", or re-orientation, of the human. That is, the very form of human can be re-arranged through new arrangements of relations coming into the realm of the possible and being established as ethically legitimate. This thesis asks whether the position on the threshold is a useful and purposeful position. Through being 'stupid', pushing the limits of the discursive and re-aligning indexes, my informants recognise they are lost in the other, but refuse of accept it. Rather, they use their position to change their relation to it. I use my articulation of their threshold position and ask the same question of anthropology. Beginning with the insight that "one is lost in the other", what does a position on the threshold do for anthropology?

Through my position as ethnographer, I look at the oscillating relation between social projects which are trying to establish themselves relationally to other projects through an ongoing dialogic. This tension is productive not of "worlds" but of "swerves" in the terms and forms of life - that which determines ethical substance. Being local emerges through an ongoing unfolding of relations between the various social projects involved in the control of material. It is these multiple and incommensurable projects which are the "irony of community" at the heart of late liberal democratic processes concerning the material conditions of living. Espeland & Stevens state that "Commensuration [is] the transformation of different qualities into a common matric" 1998:314), making commensurate is a deeply social process of aligning bodies, practice, values and morals so that a social project can endure. Making commensurate is making shared ontic an epistemic horizons work (Povinelli 2011:236).

I trace how my informants aim to bring themselves into that which is considered life, by expanding the form of the sovereign. This leaves the question of how one constructs what Habermas would call an "ideal speech situation", (Habermas 1990: 44-49), or whether such a situation is possible at all. This PhD attends to the gaps and losses in a speech situation revolving around the use, meaning, value and crafting of the material landscapes of the suburbs. It aims to see gaps and contradictions as inherent in speech situations, with a politics that revolves around degrees of more or less visibility. It is this ability to define the ins and outs, to maintain intelligibility while at the same time swerving the normative and asserting one's sovereignty which forms the major focus of the thesis.

Democracy & Anthropology

Rather than establishing an *a priori* definition of democracy, this thesis contributes to the anthropology of democracy through a close ethnographic examination of the ways in which state and civil society are intertwined. Democracy is both an ethnographic term and a symbolic operator (following Verdery 1996), which works from and simultaneously produces an organisational reality (following Nelson 1999; also Schirmer 1998). I show the constitutive nature of struggles within the democratic ontology, following Derrida's notion of an "auto-immune logic". Derrida applies the biological concept of the immune system destroying the body it aims to protect, to the logic at work in democratic societies (1998:73). However inherent contradictions and incommensurability's do not destroy democracy as it is always "to come" (1993: passim), in the future, thereby allowing a social logic of working towards it in the present.

Through the ethnographic detail of the ASP and planning guidelines meeting suburban informants, through particular scales and contexts of operation, this thesis reflects on the role of anthropology in the operation of democratic ontologies and their constitutive struggles. Anthropology has a history of being involved in the advancement of the democratic principle. The "Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations" of 1959 advised on policy and carried out ethnographies of the "success" of making democracies. Julia Paley writes: "Participants grappled especially with how to integrate local identities - in the words of contributor and editor Clifford Geertz (1963) "primordial sentiments," - into a unified civil order and modem political system associated with democracy"(Paley 2002: 172).

In the 1980s and 1990s anthropologists, informed by postmodern analyses of democracy's circulation, constructedness, discursive nature, and implication in power relations, were interested in the ways democracy played out in multiple local forms. Universalist assumptions of Western democratic practices were themselves scrutinised (see Comaroff & Comaroff 1997), demonstrating the consequences of blending cultural difference into universalizing democracy projects. Ethnographies of forms of democracy demonstrated forms of self-understanding (see Sabloff 2001 on Mongolia) and re-workings of power (see Taussig on State fetishism 1992).

This has become particularly pertinent in a "post-political"[32] age where American ideology and global forms of governance seem to be inseparable (Boyer & Yurchak 2008). Here Nikolas Rose (1996) positions democracy and its terms - participation, inclusion, etc. - as motivating discourses whereby Neoliberalism does not abandon the "will to govern", but rather, in extending the power to rule to all people, it "conceive[s] of these new actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy and choice, and seek[s] to act upon them though shaping and utilizing their freedom" (ibid:54). At the same time, advocates of radical democracy engaging with political theorists, particularly Habermas (1990), consider the pursuit of an ideal speech situation – where clear communication between all parties and vibrant public discussions can take place (see Calhoun 1992) – with the aim of bringing "socially marginalized" groups (Gal & Woolard 2001:278) into deliberative democracy[33].

It is this Habermassian notion of an ideal speech situation (1990) which underpins the radical democratic forms of the ASP in its "auto-ethnographic" project[34] (see chapter 1) of developing a mapping platform through which stories could be shared. Similarly, my suburban informants wished to enact a democratic form of life whereby all were included. Both projects had the same *telos,* yet each had a very different concept of how to get to that *telos*[35]. This produced incommensurable moments (outlined in chapter 1) between social projects. Working through incommensurability's, on the edge of social projects, are felt and must be worked around, seen in chapter 5 where the suburban informants object to a planning application successfully. However, the work this takes results in stress, strain and forms of harm.

Democracy & Hegemony

For Derrida, the relation between the rule of the people (*demos* – people, *cratos* – rule) and sovereignty is a binding dialectic that suffers an auto-immune logic. It must at once hear all voices yet delimit the terms of communication. Democracy destroys itself through closing off and universalising - by essentialising - the very multiplicity that it

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[32] See Mouffe 2005; Ranciere 2001; Zizek 1999.
[33] See the work of Rosemary Coombe (1998) on "dialogic democracy" which aims to open up alternative social universes.
[34] The death of the Anthropologist?
[35] In this sense, democracy could be considered the fetish between the two spheres.

aims to work for. Without sovereignty[36], the *demos* would be compromised by conflicting powers and an effective rule of the *demos* would never be achieved. In striving to protect itself and guarantee its dominance through a co-option of sovereignty, democracy is engaged in the project of universals, which requires foreclosures. It is this auto-immunity flaw that places the possibility and conditions of hope for democratic ontologies in the future, always on the horizon (see chapter 1). This future tense is the condition that the ASP both arises from and address in its form of academic research[37]. Seething's hope comes from an imagined utopian past to which Seethingers, through community and a 'state of mind', strive to return to[38]. Both social projects work towards future participation in social political life, the ASP through the map, which will work, and Seething through spreading a community that "works".

In *Spectres of Marx* (1993), Derrida discusses Fukuyama's *End of History* and the universal ideal of late liberal democracy. He discusses the gap in Fukuyama's perception of ideal and actual democracy in "so-called primitive forms of government", asserting that rather than be antithetical to the ideal, the gap is the essence of democracy;

> But this failure and this gap also characterize, a priori and by definition, all democracies, including the oldest and most stable of so-called Western democracies. At stake here is the very concept of democracy as concept of a promise that can only arise in such a diastema (failure, inadequation, disjunction, disadjustment, being "out of joint"). That is why we always propose to speak of a democracy to come, not of a future democracy in the future present, not even of a regulating idea, in the Kantian sense, or of a utopia at least to the extent that their inaccessibility would still retain the temporal form of a future present, of a future modality of the living present. (Ibid:81)

I address this tension in chapter 1, where the establishment of a universal democratic ideal at a particular scale allows the ASP to justify the non-presencing of a story by the local enthusiasts. However this tension cannot be maintained in chapter 5 when the arrangement of the material landscape is discussed by different social projects with defined consequences specific to a defined area, a disused water filtration site. It is here where the social efficacy of materiality collapses the future into the present. It is where the terms of the world are worked out and where anthropology of the gap comes to matter. Democracy demands a resolution to conflicts over the meaning and value of

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[36] In Agamben's sense of the Sovereign is the one who decides the terms the exclusions (1995).
[37] That constantly needs funding and expanding.
[38] Similar to the Christian 'fall' in G.K Chesterton's Christian theology (see Zizek 2014).

the materiality of land. In the suburbs of late liberal London, a particular type of local citizen must be formed as an articulate body in order to have effective agency. This demand sees local enthusiasts skilfully scale shift, re-arrange and articulate meanings and values in order to speak in the correct terms. However this takes work, commitments and strains with its own distributions of harm.

In looking at the everydayness of suburbia, an anthropological *terra nullius,* where one would expect to find radical sameness - the anthropologically non-other, we can see in fine detail that there are ongoing struggles for plurality and indeterminacy in late-liberal democracies (see Laclou & Mouffe 1985:152). In this sense, this PhD is an archaeology of the promise of democratic ontologies, as Laclou and Mouffe articulate:

> 'Hegemony' has very precise conditions of possibility, both from the point of view of what relation requires to be conceived as hegemonic, and from the perspective of the construction of a hegemonic subject […] This relation, by which a certain particularity assumes the representation of a universality entirely incommensurable with it, is what we call a hegemonic relation. As a result, its universality is a contaminated universality: it lives in this unresolvable tension between universality and particularity. (Ibid:xii-xiii)

It is this unresolvable tension, between the universal and the particular, which is productive. It gives agenda and energy to forms, it requires a constant re-performance as social projects meet and thereby allows a shift in the macroculture. This tension and re-performance is what gives form to the ASP and to Seething in a dialogic relation.

It is through the inherent need of a social project to establish itself as ethically *in*volved in the overall project of democracy, that it becomes part of the sovereign power - it is always in the process of making *bios,* (a politically qualified life), from *zöe,* (a life outside of political efficacy or consideration, such as nature) (following Agamben 1995). It is always in relation to the sovereign, those who decide on the exclusions of life and through as social projects themselves constitute the sovereign through establishing the terms of the exclusion, the terms of life. This is the condition of ontological necessity found in democratic ethics that gives rise to contradictions and incommensurability. It is these moments that I seek, in anthropology of the conditions of ethical substance.

Sovereignty & Forms of Life.

Agamben (1998) asserts that the sovereign is the one who decides on the exception. The position of *Homo Sacer*, "sacred man" is a person in Roman law who is simultaneously banned from the *polis* but is also sacred in that they cannot be sacrificed. *Homo Sacer* is reduced to nature (*zöe*), outside of culture, which Agamben refers to as "bare life", expelled from the *polis*, the realm of the politically active subject or citizen - *bios*. This decidability on the condition of exclusion defines the sovereign (and, as such, also the outside or taboo).

Both social projects[39] in my ethnography are engaged in the ongoing making of *bios* from *zöe*. In making themselves political subjects they partially embody the power of sovereignty. On one hand, the ASP defines its sovereignty through its "expertise" and knowledge practices via its role in policy-facing-academia. It also includes the necessary "we" of a democratic society (following Mouffe 2005) through the tools of radical democracy, the map, extending their practices to the people of the demos. On the other hand, local enthusiasts assert sovereignty through not using the ASP's map, through being 'stupid' and through forming a "community that works"[40]. They include through expanding and spreading positive and 'resilient' communities.

The "community that works" experiences its own exclusions and losses, which are consequence of the demand for a particular type of "local" in relation to the planning application. The local, then, is never fully sovereign nor fully excluded, but rather is constantly on the threshold between two positions. The local is constantly making *bios* from *zöe* whilst aiming to minimise harm.

Agamben states that bare life, an abandonment of life[41], is defined by the law where there is an indistinguishability between law and life, a "threshold in which law constantly passes over into fact and fact into law" (Agamben 1998:71). This indiscernibility of life and law creates a condition whereby the body is the "rule and criterion of its own application" (ibid). People have to live a bodily life in a political, everyday sense - they have no sovereignty and their life is an instantiation of the law demanded of them and lived through them:

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[39] I suggest that there are many more social projects, however the ethnographic moment demands they be isolated for contextual analysis.
[40] See chapter 5.
[41] See also Elizabeth Povinelli's *Economies of Abandonment* (2011)

the living being has logos by taking away and conserving its own voice in it, even as it dwells in the polis by letting its own bare life be excluded, as an exception, within it (ibid:8).

Death, both social and bodily, "are not properly scientific but political concepts, which as such acquire a political meaning precisely through a decision" (ibid:164). It is this ability to decide that this thesis works through. How is *bios* is made from *zöe*, and how does the constant need to perform *bios* from *zöe* give life to particular forms - in my case the suburban citizen, anthropology, the ASP and late liberal democracies? The action of walking away, as seen in chapter 1, allows the conditions for forming a "community that works" in chapter 5, which in turn allows them to make *bios* from *zöe*. I argue that this happens on the threshold, in the gaps, by taking advantage of the potential in performative moment of the involutionary mechanism.

Involution

To elaborate on how my informants met my research - how the ASP was met by locals and how locals deal with late liberal governance - I invoke the notion of an involution, which I argue is the empirical detail of the obviatory mechanism. Alfred Gell discusses the notion of involution through examples of nail fetishes in the Congo region and through acts of iconoclasm in the UK. Here the "involute character of the index, which may objectify a whole series of relations in a single visible form" (1998:62) links art and agency. Before doing this, Gell lays out the indexical features of artefactual signs and the relation between art and agency, through the ways in which objects internalise (in) the agency of one and several people/agents, and also exteriorise (out) their internalised agency (power, meaning, intention) in the social actions that surround them. As Arnaut (2001:193) discusses, these two reconstructive gestures follow the parallel movements of involution and distribution. In this way Gell explains acts of iconoclasm, such as the slashing of Rokeby's painting Venus, which Buchli states invokes a form of "volt sorcery" (2013:167). The painting was imbued an excessive agency such that its slashing was a killing of the excessive oppression of women it came to symbolise to the slasher, Mary Richardson. A supporter of, suffragette leader and women's right campaigner Emmeline Pankhurst, Richardson acted towards Pankhurst through the painting as the involution links the two (see Gell 1998:65).

However, as Coupaye notes, the involution can leave the reader frustrated as it does not adequately work through the ways in which "the agency is *transferred* from the technician to the index" (Coupaye 2014:270 italics added) and it underplays "the technical process itself to the profit of an almost immaterial transfer of intentionalities" (ibid). This echoes Howard Morphy's critique of the "major gap between the theoretical positioning of the book and the methods of analysis that Gell employs" (Morphy 2009:6; see also Arnaut 2001:206). I therefore wish to take up Web Keane's call to focus on the "outward clash"[42] (Keane 2003:413) of the index, which gives rise to new and transformative modes of action and subjectivity. Where Gell invokes an involution where many meanings precipitate into a single form, I wish to focus on how that form remains stable through a mimetic repetition of the involutionary mechanism, of going in and out, or rather how it may not remain stable but change form through the potentiality involved in the moment of transfer within the involution.

In mathematics the involution is a function that when applied twice brings you back to a starting point, it is circular, constantly memetic. I argue, just as Richardson was conscious of the involute links in Rokeby's Venus, the involute mechanism can be used to make obviations and 'swerves' in the macroculture through an ongoing dialogic relation with other social projects. I argue that it is through the involutionary process that the application of the rule of "the other's" social project on one's own can bring about a demonstration of how those rules don't fully comprehend the complexities of life within that social project. I apply a potential through the performative moment of the involution (I) which happens in the moment of transfer, the back and forth (T) between two forms, be it meaning and matter, sign and signified, or two social projects in a dialogic relation (see figure 1). (A) and (B), in my case the social projects of the ASP and the local citizen, have the same *telos* - they are part of the same macroculture, a democratic ontology. Here there is no outside, no alternative ideological force[43]. Rather, the aim is to change what the macroculture (M) is through the potential of the involution. This allows either A or B to change, thereby changing the other and in turn making a "swerve" in the macroculture (M1). I argue this process is subtle, ongoing and material (figure 4).

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[42] Following Hegel.
[43] In a "post-political" age, following Mouffe 2005.
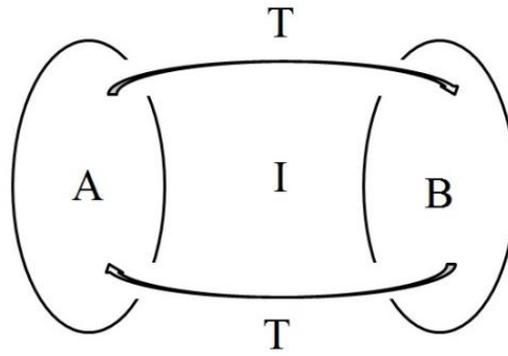
Figure 1: The involutionary mechanism

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In geometry the involute of a circle resembles an Archimedean spiral, but differs in that it is not emergent from a single central point. The process of involution between two emergent and related social projects in a dialogic relation can be visualised through the involute of a circle (T (a->b) + T (b->a)), whereby the circle represents the vacillatory dialogic relation between two social projects where there is no single emergent point. As such, if considered in a performative mode, there is a gap in the involutionary moment (I), which allows for a "swerve" (following Althusser 2006) to occur.
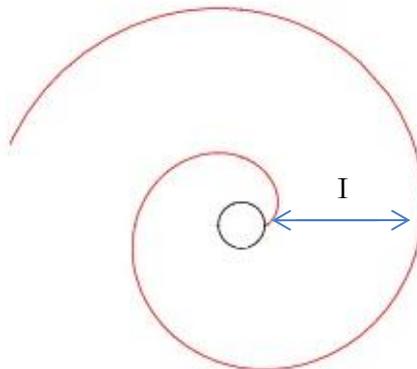
Figure 2: The involute of a circle

Here the terms of ethical substance can shift from state A to state A_1, at the scale of social project. At the scale of macroculture ($M \rightarrow M_1$), all remains the same but new terms for life are opened up in the gap (figure 4).

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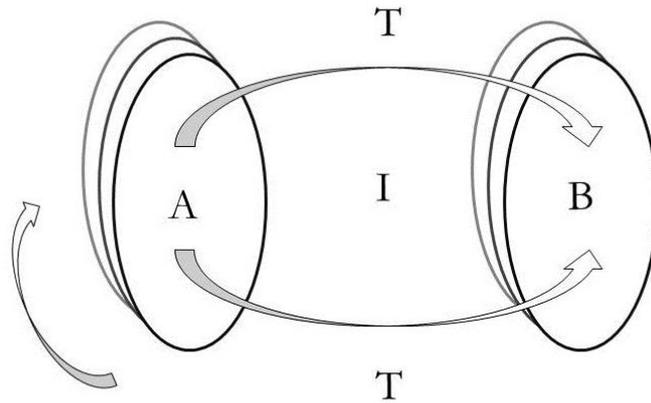
Figure 3: The ongoing performative potential of swerve in the moments of involution where A & B are social projects, I is involution and T transfer. The whole process, with minor obviations, creates swerves in the macroculture.
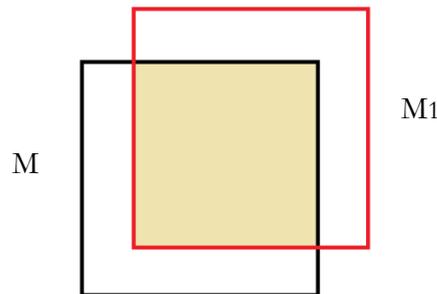
Figure 4: Gaps between macrocultures before and after an ideological swerve where all remains the same but there are new inclusions and exclusions to life in the gaps.

This is worked out throughout the thesis but particularly in chapter 3 (and in relation to chapter 5) where being 'stupid' implies a form of irony or parody of dominant social forms. In the parody an excess is produced whereby the contingent nature of the social form is exposed. This was readily demonstrated through the ways in which my informants from the Village of Seething made a university and awarded me, and everyone else, a PhD upon my request that I conduct my ethnography with them. This applying of the rule to themselves demonstrates the ways in which the ASP conceived of locals as co-contributors to knowledge, via what the ASP called an "auto-ethnographic" project, yet this inclusion still contained the relation of expert (academic) to non-expert (local), which precipitated a moment of refusal (see chapter 1). This thesis, which has already been awarded a PhD through the Free University of Seething

(FUS) is then the materiality of the transfer, existing in the gap, the fetish[44], carrying meaning across borders. It is where Seething finds its way into the ASP, while the ASP finds its way into Seething through its outputs and effects on planning law (see chapter 5).

Being 'Stupid'

The ironic form of Seethingers being 'stupid' is reminiscent of Alexi Yurchak's notion of *Stiob*, a Russian word meaning parody or irony, which he uses to describe a form of ironic aesthetic which thrived in late Soviet Socialism. The term differs from absurd humour or cynicism as it relates to an excess, an "overidentification" (2008:250) with an object, person or idea, and as such it is often hard to tell if the relation and form is serious or not. Yurchak describes a performative play which enabled a move away from literal meaning via the excess, thereby allowing newness to come about. It was the recursive nature of socialist normativity that allowed for this play. Furthermore, *Stiob* is politically powerful yet does not require an abandonment of the dominant ideological force, thereby being able to work within the terms of Soviet Socialism.

Boyer & Yurchak (2010) describe the rise of *Stiob* in the US, where there is an increasingly monopolised media, an active orchestration of public political discourse by parties and government institutions, an ideological consensus in common media discourse and a normalisation of political performance and representation. The rise of "American Stiob" is a result of an acute ideological dilemma created by the evaporation of the external presence of an alternative ideological force (Socialism) on a geopolitical scale. This has magnified ideological tendencies toward discursive self-referencing and self-aggrandizement, as occurred under late socialism, allowing US political ideology to gradually consolidate its universalism. Under these conditions, ideological slippage between the political imaginations of "American life" and "human life" have become more drastic and we have entered what Mouffe (2005)[45] calls a "post-political" age where late liberal ideology is the only choice. In relation to these observations, this thesis aims to work out how newness occurs when there is no outside, no place to go[46].

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[44] Pietz 1985;
[45] See also Mouffe 2000; Laclau & Mouffe 1985; also Zizek 1999; Renciere 2004.
[46] In terms of a perceived alternative ideological place to base a social form by a culture.

However stupid' differs from "*stiob*" in the directness of its critique. 'Stupid' aims away from direct critique in order to be non-offensive and a-political (although it can be theorised politically), and in order to form *bios* from *zöe* - that is to show life in what has been, in popular discourse, considered the place of the living dead, the suburbs. In this sense 'stupid' seems to work as a particular suburban approach. In applying the "rule", for example, of historical tradition to themselves they show how they don't have tradition, but they do have a moral community. They don't have expertise but they are citizens. 'Stupid' differs from *stiob* in its refusal of the moral high ground, but it is similar in that it emerges in a context of seemingly ideological universalism.

Further, 'stupid' can be considered as a form of *détournement*, as whilst it contains forms of surrealism, I argue that this is a result of the memetic process involved in the "swerve" of an involuntary potential. 'Stupid' differs from *détournement* in that it does not aim to turn the capitalist system against itself in order to overturn power. Rather, it seeks to create fun and extend parts of that system to areas where life is under-considered. Seething events are attended by members of the local council and government, who fund some events. It is also distinct from de Certeau's notion of "tactic" (1984). Here de Certeau conceives of "strategies" as emerging from institutions and structures of power and "tactics" as the mechanisms of individuals to work through that power. Whilst 'stupid' negates the fascist imposition of a late liberal subjectivation, it does so through building a collective moral position and illuminating ethical inclusion. It creates a collective alignment around a recognisable and enduring moral position through play that pushes at the boundary; it creates a gap. 'Stupid' is more ambitious than a tactic, as it not only avoids a complete subjugation to the rules of the prevailing norm, handed down from power, but further pushes at its boundaries. In this sense, 'stupid' does not see itself as outside of the powerful but very much on the threshold, and therefore able to influence the directional force and subsequent manifestations of power, making itself part of the sovereign.

Further Seething events - the spectacular parades and fun and surreal festivals - are reminiscent of Bakhtin's writings on the carnivalesque (1929; 1941), however they differ from the carnivalesque in that they aim to promote an enduring form of moral community and new forms of moral relations, through trust, familiarity and fun. They do not aim to turn the world "upside-down", but rather to push at the boundaries of what is in the world. Being 'stupid' aims to shed light on new forms of ethical

substance by playing on a threshold position, pushing at the gap in the performative "becoming" of social forms. Where the carnival is a momentary "upside-down" where transgressions of the law are temporarily possible, Seething events are new forms of social law, where the old rules still apply but new forms of life are included in the social project, which in turn is swerved.

My ethnography of Seething events resonates with literature on the "invention of tradition" (see Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). Hobsbawn & Ranger attribute a perceived flurry of new traditions to shifting forms of political order in relation to the state, the church and the working masses in the late industrial period where new ritual forms emerge in order to cohere social life. Gellner (1983) asks after the line between invented and natural tradition, demystifying such things as nation states. The key aspect of my analysis is the ways in which using signs, symbols, meaning and performative practice have political meaning. Whilst I borrow from such literature, I position the performative re-working of signs, symbols and meaning as age-old, as do my informants. The tradition takes on a particular form in a particular political context, re-using and re-working symbols from the past in new ways (see Babadzan 2000: 150).

The Chapters

The ethnographic chapters of this thesis open with a moment of incommensurability. In this moment, the project asks for ethnographic data to be added to the map and then refuses it due to its polluting threat. This moment stands as an example of a brief vision of an "almost" - something that nearly happened but that was closed off. This foreclosure is understood as necessary for the continuation and extension of a particular social project's "space-time" (following Munn 1986). That is, the foreclosure allows a coherent understanding of meaning and value within that social project to endure. That project is intimately tied up in the sculpting of first and second order aesthetic forms which allow the material landscape to be seen in a particular socio-material form. That is, the aesthetics of maps - abstractions from the material landscape - are deeply tied to how the place represented is understood in its use and value. As such, maps produce legitimate action which in turn produces the material form of the suburb. An archaeology of the "infrastructures of certainty" (Castoriadis 1987) is the subject of chapter 2 and pertains to a Spinoza influenced ethical exegesis.

Chapter 3 is concerned with socio-material practices of the local enthusiasts in their practice of building the "State of Seething" as a moral community where being 'stupid' is productive of pushing the boundaries between non-sense and common-sense to make room for *bios*. Chapter 4 takes a more in-depth look at how the practices of obviation may occur through performing the showing of a material landscape when the Seethingers engage with the ASP. The Seethingers deliver a series of stories about the material landscape, yet re-align the tasks asked of them through their own modes of socially productive action. They challenge the project's basis of value and meaning and the relation it draws between the material and the social. This process is historical, corporeal and ongoing.

In chapter 5, a departure from both the ASP and Seething is taken. This final ethnographic chapter aims to scale out from both these projects and re-conceives them as parts of the regulatory regime of bureaucracy and expertise on the one hand, and local participatory citizenship on the other. Following the community's successful objection to a planning application they declare that they are a "community that works". Through looking at the stresses and strains involved in the process of blocking the application, I consider the conditions of ethical substance.

Returning to Povinelli's mute others, who stand on the outside looking in, I ask if the inside/outside analogy is the most useful. In having "worlds otherwise" we risk forgetting that we share the same earth - that is, we live through the same materialities. Even if the same sand doesn't flow through each other's fingers the castles we build with them are always made with the "other" in mind.

1

Moments of Incommensurability.

1.1 Ethnographic Moments: Points of First Contact

I was told before entering "the field" that I would "come back" to write up my PhD with a radically different set of notes to the one I was expecting to gather. This a "rite of passage", an experience of losing and finding myself in the immersive experience of ethnography. I also once heard, again in the halls of the academy, that anthropologists spend most of their time trying to understand the first two days of fieldwork[47]. This dazzling immersion, where all sense of normativity, assumed values and ways of doing and being are suddenly and dramatically re-orientated, gives rise to a "need to understand" (Strathern 1996:6). Reading Strathern's "need to understand", we can start to understand how "writing begins in the field" (ibid).

> The ethnographic moment is a relation in the same way as a linguistic sign can be thought of as a relation (joining signifier and signified). We could say that the ethnographic moment works as an example of a relation which joins, the understood (what is analysed 'at the moment of observation) 'to the need to understand (what is observed at the moment, of analysis) (ibid)

I can look at my thesis in its structure and focus and ask, what is it that informs this "ethnographic moment"? What, in my immersion into the field, out there, gave rise to a dazzling disjuncture of meaning that results in a moment? A moment that will be pulled apart, set out as a point at which values, meanings and ways of being are so different to the ones we are familiar with that it creates a disjuncture, a need to understand that is productive of "good anthropology".

Answering this question I can locate three points at which a disjuncture where a "need to understand" arose that dominate this thesis. Firstly, there is my immersion into the

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[47] This has been attributed to Clifford Geertz, but I cannot find a reference so I'll attribute the sound bite to Paul Twin (2013 per coms).

PhD programme itself as I regained the language and customs of academic practice after a few years away. I joined the Adaptable Suburbs Project (ASP), which based out of UCL's Architecture department, the Bartlett, used a particular form of methodological[48] analysis and approach which took some learning. However, whilst there was a jolt, in its very newness this jolt was simply a moment. It became ethnographic when I started to realise I needed to ask more pertinent questions of the project's aims in order to help answer them.

I will return to this later, but first I will introduce the second moment. This moment arose when I walked into the back of a pub in suburban London, in the first two days of my fieldwork, where a small group of people, who call themselves "The Seething Villagers" or "Seethingers", had dedicated their weekend to crafting sculptures of oversized lamps, fish and giants from wicker, crepe paper and other materials (Figure 5). I was welcomed but confused amidst an array of local phrases, jokes and stories that form a large part of this PhDs content[49][50]. However, before elaborating on either of these moments I wish to draw attention to the third ethnographic moment.

Figure 5: Crafting Seething

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[48] See chapter 2 and Appendix.
[49] Particularly chapter 3.
[50] I had the sense this would be the case on that day.

In this moment the ASP, of which I was a part, came to meet, through a map, the Villagers, my "local-enthusiast" informants. This moment serves as both an entry point to the thesis and as a key ethnographic moment from which the following chapters emerge. This moment reflected my ethnographic focus back on the ASP in order to ascertain why "the moment" occurred as it did. Further, I aimed to understand "the moment" from within a constellation of both the ASP and the local informants simultaneously. I wanted to know how each side of this equation worked, why a map existed and why was it incommensurable with the very data it set out to gain?

This chapter is an anthropological study of the moments through which commensurate totalities are established. That is, just as Strathern argues that we have an "ethnographic moment" where we are dazzled by disjunctures of meaning and ways of being that give rise to the anthropological discipline itself, I argue that it is these moments which form the very basis and the need for anthropology. Through paying attention not to radically different worlds but rather to the politics of the moments between social projects, we are able to locate the mechanisms through which harm and loss endure. I argue it is the moments of difference that matter in that this is where the terms of existence are set out. This occurs not just at dramatic anthropological moments of ontological clash, but in everyday moments of living, all the time. The material registers through which we live are constantly shifting, moving, being performed and are up for grabs. How precisely a sound "whole" of meaning is established in a world of poly possibility is a question I am interested in.

Using Foucault's notion of "ethical substance" - defined as that which constitutes the prime material of ethical conduct, or that in oneself which produces the imperative to act in a certain way - this chapter looks at a moment when two social projects with different ethical commitments meet.

> For Foucault, ethical substance is whatever stuff – cognitive, emotional, physical, or what-not – it is; that is, the object at once of conscious consideration and of those labours required to realize a systematic ethical end, which is to say the being of a subject of a certain qualitative kind (Foubion 2012:72)

It is this commitment to the ethical substance of a social project which forecloses the socially inconceivable - it defines socially legitimate action and that which is not legitimate in the self and the other. It is at a moment of disjuncture, a meeting of

incommensurate ethical commitments that the gap between social projects is maintained, yet they remain in relation.

This chapter describes how two social projects briefly overlapped through an online digital mapping interface. Both projects, I argue, are interested in the crafting and understanding of the material landscape in order to produce and extend the productiveness of that landscape in relation to their own moral projects. Whilst both projects are interested in the same material landscapes, but with different, yet overlapping, values, it is the map, and my position as ethnographer, which provides an opportunity to see how the establishment of legitimacy occurs through interaction and non-interaction, visibility and non-visibility. That is, both projects are ongoing, unfolding and aim to establish coherency and universality within their articulation of the socio-material landscape. The map, and the discussion of what is, or is not on it, affords the opportunity to reflect on the mechanisms of both social projects, and moments of meeting between them.

1.2 The Moment

The moment revolves around the silence of the online mapping platform or "community map". The map, a Public Participation Geographic Information System (PPGIS), was designed as part of the ASP and shares information via text, photo or video placed on a point on the map which would be visible to all other visitors to the site (see Figure 6). The aim of the map was to collate and share a series of testimonies about peoples' relationships to the changing materials of the built-environment and about the changing nature of life in the UK, specifically in London suburbs. In the words of the ASP, the aims of the map were to supplement structural understandings of settlements with a "need to understand the built landscape as a social place, to reveal "meaning, values, symbols"[51]. This platform, it was hoped, would be rolled out to numerous communities in order to form a participatory mechanism for data gathering in line with Habermassian democratic ideals.

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[51] Adaptable Suburbs Case for Support. EPSRC application.
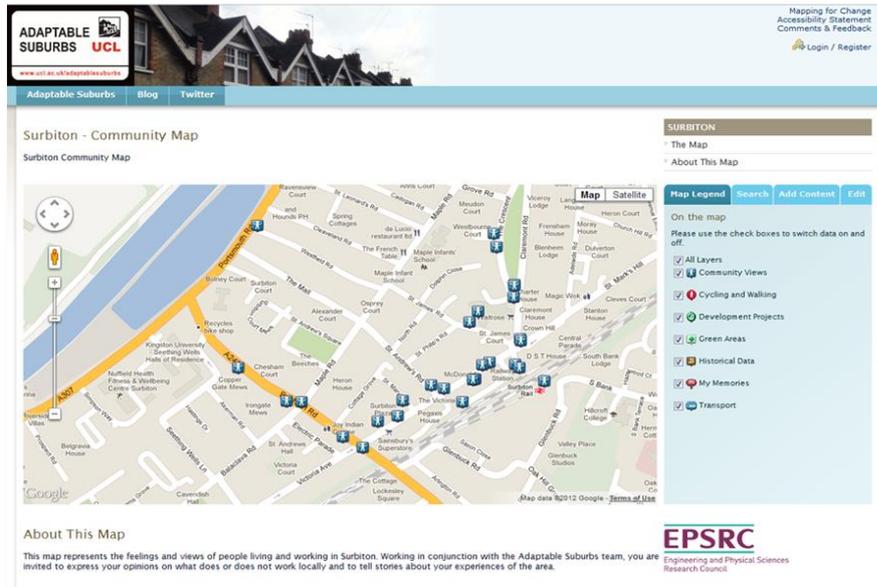
Figure 6: The PPGIS 'Community Map' from the Adaptable Suburbs Project (with points displaying test information placed there by the ASP).

The "moment" occurred when local enthusiasts, the Seething Villagers, were unable to place information on the mapping platform. Seethingers submitted a story regarding the legend of Lefi Ganderson, a tale about a goat boy who was excluded from the ancient village of Seething for being different. Despite being outcast Lefi loved the Seethingers and rid the village of the nasty giant Thamas Deeton. This tale is a founding tale of Seething life. The story was added under the sub-section "Historical Data", the Villagers were told that their addition would not pass moderation as it could not be understood as "Historical Fact". Seethingers made it clear to me that they believed their contribution was historical fact and were disappointed it was refused. It was suggested by the ASP that moderations to the map be made so that information could be added without the label "fact". However, the moderations made weren't sufficient for the Seethingers as it was the label "fact" which carried the socially productive aspect of the information. Enthusiasm for using the map amongst my suburban informants never emerged and over the course of the fieldwork period the map remained largely unused, or rather, it remained silent.

I use the word silence for the map's non-use by locals as it had a continued presence as a potential within the ASP. I suggest that the map's silence[52] is indicative of a gap

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[52] As opposed to stillness as it is still working.

between two realms of "meanings, values, symbols"[53] which are incommensurate with each other. This gap is maintained in order to be productive to the democratic ideal of the project. I use the word "failure" as an analytical device to understand the gap between the two social projects. Failure, I argue, is a moral assertion, from someone to someone/thing else regarding the unfulfilled trajectory of a possible future. The ethnographic absence of the word failure is helpful in understanding the productive capacities of the map's silence and the gap between the two social projects. The map was not used but it still worked as a potential, allowing the future to remain possible.

I suggest that the Villagers use the map as a way of testing the "controlling context" (Wagner 1975) – to see if one social project can expand into the other, to see if Seethingers could participate and be included on their own terms, through a tool of participation and articulation designed by the ASP. This moment tests if two social projects can align in the greater (larger-scale) project of the demos. Villagers try to share stories, which help explain the "meaning, values, symbols" of their socio-material landscape, through the ASP's map which aims to include in line with a democratic ideal of participation. However the map requires clear communication across all users without loss of any productive elements of information added. The Villagers touch and then walk away, as the map affords them little opportunity to extend value in their own project or into other.

The Villagers and the ASP have different visions of the same material landscapes in its values, uses and potentials. The Villagers use the moment to attempt to translate their values into the discourse of the ASP. Once refused, they turn away and carry on with their own social project. They reaffirm that the values they wish to pursue will find no purchase, or extension (following Munn 1992), through the map.

The ways in which the socio-material landscape is felt, understood, crafted and valued, by both the ASP and the local enthusiasts, is explored in chapters 2 & 3. Chapters 4 & 5 look at how these social projects interact in dialogic relation to each other yet remain separate and productive in themselves. Whilst chapter 4 looks at a playful obviation of suburban stories, chapter 5 shows how the trajectories of the ASP and Seething as social projects dramatically come together in the singularity of the material built environment through a planning objection. The current chapter shows how two social projects aim

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53   ASP   PhD   Studentship   details.   Taken   from   the   Application   documents. https://uclsstc.wordpress.com/2010/08/13/three-phd-studentships-in-%E2%80%98adaptable-suburbs%E2%80%99/ Accessed 2/8/2010.

to establish commensality within their own projects. It looks at the establishment of universal order within a project and how that order is maintained through selective cuts, erasures and exclusions in the articulation of the material landscape and its values. The losses that occur through the process of commensuration can be dealt with, either by simply walking away or by re-articulating the tense of the apparatus, through its future potential. However, in chapter 5 this tensing is an insufficient tactic due to the imminent threat to the material order.

This chapter shows a subtle moment of meeting where the two projects walk away from each other and maintain their own realms of value. However after meeting, minor changes, re-arrangements, scale-shifts or re-framings are required to enable the protection of a coherent social project. This is done by the ASP through maintaining the map's value through its future use, a tensing, and by the Villagers through the Free University of Seething. Social projects are in constant tension and dialogue with each other This tension, which comes as a demand of 'the other' creates loss, or harm, as other ways of being fall away as foreclosures are made (expanded on in chapter 5).

The focus of this chapter is to assert an anthropology of the gap, the tension, or torque, to pay attention to disjuncture and jolts and moments of incommensurability[54]. These moments of loss and foreclosure are where the terms of life are worked out. This chapter looks at attempts to establish the terms of the material-discursive, and at how the values of the material environment are understood, discussed and change.

I start with an archaeology of the map's presence in the ASP, how it came to be involved and its intended role in supplementing other forms of data in the ASP. I look at the map as a form of participation and inclusion, terms which are found in the discourse of ASP and of PPGIS academic literature. I then work through how I came to be involved with the map as researcher and my initial fieldwork moments, through which I became involved with the Seething Villagers. I focus on a moment in which the Seething Villagers came to use the map as had been intended and how, in doing so, they found that they weren't able to use it on their own terms. As such the map failed to be populated, resulting in its silence.

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[54] See Pinney 2005; Povinelli 2011.

1.3 The Adaptable Suburbs Project & Community Map.

Adaptable Suburbs was a four-year project, based at University College London's Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, that aimed at *"developing an understanding of the workings of small scale 'below the radar' economic and social sub-urban activities"*[55]. Citing the lack of policy attention outer London areas had received, the ASP's "Case for Support" document, instrumental in securing funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), stated the project's aim was; to develop *"*an integrated theory of how town centres evolve by developing knowledge on urban sustainability, patterns of social and economic behaviour and how places adapt and change over time". Further it aimed to develop an "Understanding [of] how suburban space fits within urban complex spatial systems: […] to improve our understanding of the relationship between individual actions, small and large-scale spatial order and change and emergent morphological changes" through measuring "the impact of small-scale activities on the built environment*"* (Ibid). The ASP is a distinctly social project with a moral and political background that can be traced through the history of city planning and the politics of place making through the nation state (see Rabinow, 1989).

The ASP aimed to develop "integrated" knowledge sets, by combining data that had not previously been combined, allowing values to be seen where they were once unseeable. A relational focus on how changes to the material conditions of the city at one location affect the workings of other parts of the city, conceived as a network, positions the ASP's approach to the city as a 'whole' object. The built environment is understood as a connected set of material relations. The ASP developed a methodology from a theoretical position to gain knowledge of "previously under-researched areas" - the suburbs. The approach was informed by the structuralist foundations of a Space Syntax methodology, emerging from the work of Bill Hillier and Juliette Hanson (see Hillier & Hanson 1984). Space Syntax holds that a foundational "morphic language", emerges from culturally delimited "generative rules", which can be determined in order to produce "better*"* design in line with these rules.

Once the rules are understood, visuals from analysis can be used in order to scale up and down between specific material changes so that the effects of those changes can be seen across the network. The ASP aims to fill a gap in knowledge about the workings of the city as a system. The ASP contributes to a regulatory planning policy framework

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[55] ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/1. 1st November 2010:1.

where knowledge of micro-scale material changes protects or develops the network as a functioning whole.

The project is explicitly orientated to an output that can build on and contribute to current and future UK-based governmental policy regarding the management of the built environment and to more efficient management processes to help suburbs "realise their "untapped potential"[56]. The ASP has an advisory board and 'letters of support' from a number of governmental organisations, think tanks and policy groups including: Centre for Cities[57], Savills[58], the Greater London Authority[59], English Heritage[60], the Outer London Commission[61] and ARUP[62]. The project was funded and motivated by the desire to fill a "gap in knowledge" and a "lack of policy attention" regarding suburbs[63]. The need for the study is explained through a need to further understand relations between places, such as between different areas of London, and between different aspects of the built environment, such as building shape and use, which have predominantly been studied in isolation (see chapter 2). Funding documentation for the project cites the need to develop this knowledge within a particular historical moment to deepen an understanding of already existing forms of socio-economic activity so that they can be better protected and encouraged.

> It is vital to understand the spatial configuration and social/economic significance of smaller centres at the peri-urban edge and an informed understanding of how to shape these smaller centres is necessary to prevent current solutions creating their own problems in the future. This proposal comes at a critical juncture in policy and place-making. We have been told by policy-makers that they are in urgent need to address the future sustainability of urban and sub-urban environments by tapping into their potential for densification, reuse and adaptation. An understanding of how smaller centres work within their immediate and regional networks of larger centres is critical to the future economic, social and environmental sustainability of complex mega-cities such as London. One of the major problems

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[56] Quoted from the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/1. 1st November 2010:1.
[57] http://www.centreforcities.org/ accessed 1/3/15
[58] http://www.savills.co.uk/research/uk.aspx accessed 1/3/15
[59] http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/index.jsp accessed 1/3/15
[60] http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/ accessed 1/3/15
[61] http://www.london.gov.uk/olc/ accessed 1/3/15
[62] http://www.arup.com/ accessed 1/3/15
[63] Cited in the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/1

with current conceptualisations of these three domains is that they are not viewed in an integrated and holistic way.[64]

This deeper understanding enables policy makers to make decisions in light of significant and tested data on the relations and activities that enable places to be more sustainable and adaptable to economic changes. At the core of the project is a desire to give certain decision makers, "local planning bodies, government agencies, civic society and the Third Sector"[65] the ability to make places, at a variety of scales, *better*.

The notion of "realising untapped potential" is couched within a particular notion of value related to a strong local business economy. The built environment is understood to be holding an inherent ability to contribute further to this notion of value. This comes from a greater understanding and more directed management. The project effectively aims to demonstrate increased value extraction from the built environment, through a more nuanced understanding of network relations, the working of which include the built environment, movement of people and social ideas of the value of the built environment.

Layers of data are combined in an "innovative multidisciplinary methodology". The online map is positioned as a contributing a social layer within a "holistic" system. The ASP also aimed to use the map as a technique of dissemination for project findings alongside both more traditional means of academic journals, books, conferences and more non-traditional means of blogs and Twitter. The map is a point of visibility in terms of articulating local stories and values about the built environment and further as a demonstration of the demos.

The "web based profiler of spatially-related socio-economic data", or the "community map" as it is known to the ASP, receives only a brief mention in the case for support and project documentation. However it does note the ways in which the map is seen as a tool through which social data contributes to an understanding of "the way in which people use their area" and can be layered over other spatial and historical data. Implicit is a notion of the commensurability of data streams in order to increase the visibility of "untapped" value. Within this idea of visibility is the notion that a particular story can relate to a functioning whole.

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[64] Suburbs Case for Support, 2010:2
[65] Adaptable Suburbs Case for Support, 2010:3

1.3.1 Making Commensurate.

To achieve its aim of deepening the understanding of relations and activities of the suburbs, the ASP took an interdisciplinary[66] approach, combining academics from Anthropology, Architecture and the Built Environment, Geography, Urban History, Urban Morphology and Geographic Information Science (GIS) as primary and co-investigators using an "integrated methodology".

The combination of Space Syntax techniques with GIS analysis occurred with relative success[67], however the integration of the "social layer" remained a future hope, as the map stayed silent. The refusal of the Seething Villagers to change the nature of the information they offered, and the refusal of the ASP to accept it in its original form, meant that the incommensurable data was not placed on the map. The map, as a point of visibility of data, oral histories and testimony of "the way in which people use their area", was contested. Following Barad (2007) and Haraway (1991) I "attend to the patterns of difference" (Barad 2007:.30) to understand the politics of foreclosure – of making visible and invisible - in the process of rendering data commensurate (see chapter 2). Commensurate here is understood as being able to fit into a common matrix (Espeland & Stevens 1998). This matric reflects the values and needs of a social project for particular types of legitimate data.

1.3.2 The Map as a Point of Visibility.

The community map is not directly engaged with or talked about in project documentation regarding aims and research methods, neither are there many notes about the work it was expected to do in the minutes from project meetings. However, under the project's research objectives listed in the "research task record" outlining the primary aims of the research at the beginning of the project, a suggestion of the map's use can be found.

> "This project is a study of the means through which a wide range of
> social and built environment factors influence each other in order to

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[66] In their own words, note the difference to multidisciplinary lies in the notion of integration as opposed to supplementation or diffracted reading (see Barad 2007).
[67] See chapter 2

describe how their form changes through time. The notion that suburban centres are simply an extension of the city is the orthodoxy in most treatments of the subject. Indeed the term suburb is trapped by its historical legacy […] We also need to understand the built landscape as a social place, to reveal *meaning, values, symbols.*"[68] [emphasis added]

My role on the project, as an anthropologist, was to supplement understandings of the built environment of the suburb with a collection of local testimonies in the oral history tradition, which would allow a greater understanding of how changes in the high street had been understood in the suburb as a "social place". As the studentship description states:

> "The ethnographic basis of the study will be provided by the systematic examination of local history sources (in both text, pictures and representative objects) and the assembly of an oral history archive in which the 'remembered' history of the suburb is recorded. It will also include work on an 'auto-ethnographical' project, in which local inhabitants will be asked to report and tag their local activities and networks on the project website. It is intended that the findings of the PhD research will help inform the research project's overall aim of understanding processes of socio-economic adaptation in smaller settlements."

The aim was that through an ethnographic "layering" augmenting large scale architectural analysis, the built environment could be seen as a social space with the web map contributing to the revealing its "meanings, values, symbols". The map was a material point of revelation (see Keane 2003), a point of contact from academy to local, from expert to citizen and a point of visibility where previously there was invisibility.

This visibility places multiple stories, "meanings, values, symbols", from different people from different places, into the same frame, aligning a bio-political body of the local with that of the city and nation. These "meanings, values, symbols" are also aligned within an overarching project of inclusion and participation within a singular democratic project. The map is a material means of producing an ideal speech situation (Habermass 1990:40) within a radical democratic project (following Mouffe 2005).

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[68] Cited in the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/

The visibility of the "remembered" histories enable the map and the ASP to maintain a legitimate "ethical substance" by including the voice of the demos and making *better*[69] by releasing value through the correct management of materials. The map, would add a layer of articulation about social values that would place spaces in the material landscape within a matrix of positive and negative change, drawing attention to the material aspects of the landscape that had been mismanaged or had "unrealised potential". The map was a tool of emancipatory visuality through which value could be unlocked. However an assumption of a particular mode of value, expressed in a matrix of good and bad changes assumed the values held by the user was commensurate with that of the ASP.

The map was labelled "auto-ethnographic", implying self-ethnography by the map users where they would be able to select what information was important to them to share on their own terms. In other words, they would be writing about themselves, as they liked, keeping "the subject (knower) and object (that which is being examined) in simultaneous view" (Schwandt 2007:16). Such writing would occur through a technology and frame which would provide a consistent mode of delivery for self-ethnography across a range of spatial locations. This "auto-ethnographic" ideal is couched in the language of radical, consensus-based, participatory democracy. As the website of Mapping for Change, the UCL Company that was responsible for the design and maintenance of the map, states;

> "The concept behind community mapping is to move away from 'top-down' mapping that so often fails to reflect the needs of people"[70]

The aims of the map are to realise a participatory democratic ideal and advance a solution of how to allow people to partake in academic knowledge production from *"the bottom up"* so that the academics can work around the "meanings, values, symbols" that are at play in the daily life of the people who live in suburbs.

The ability to write about oneself from one's own position therefore allows one to advance one's own "meanings, values, symbols" in relation to the built environment.

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[69] This term was used repeatedly in ASP meetings and is found in the theoretical literature behind the ASPs methodology. "better" here refers to *Better* in the sense of better urban design enabled by ASP research following a trajectory from Hilliar 1978. (see chapter 2)

[70] http://www.mappingforchange.org.uk/services/community-maps/ accessed3/7/13

The map, as a Public Participation Geographic Information System (PPGIS) stands as a facilitator of translatability.

1.4 PPGIS

The community map has its origins in the wider field of Geo-engineering and the development of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Digital Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). The ASP incorporated GIS not only as a way of representing data but as a way of increasing participation and sharing information, thereby contributing to the democratisation of knowledge in line with its policy facing research. I will therefore provide a short contextual background on the emergence of GIS to provide ethnographic context for the ASP.

PPGIS have been widely discussed and adapted in development and planning discourses, mainly due to their promise of facilitating a wider participatory framework. According to Conquest (2013) such advances arrived with the progress of technologies and the move in planning and development discourses to "put the last first". Following the work of Robert Chambers (see 1992, 1997) an emphasis and recognition of local and "indigenous" knowledges[71] came about in the field of natural resource management, re-orientating policy from top-down to bottom-up. By the 1990s participation had become the "new orthodoxy" (Henkel & Stirrat 2001:168), however for some, the idea of participation as a means and as an end had been conflated (Parfitt 2004) and by the late 2000s a more critical review of ICTs was emerging. This literature engaged with the ways in which participatory techniques are themselves products of, and permeated by, power relations (Kapoor 2002). This permeation was largely ignored by previous literature due to a "misunderstanding of power" (see Cooke & Kothari 2001) that according to Hildyard et al (2001) reduced local opposition to things such as planning and development and created an appearance of greater democracy. In the UK context, GIS has been seen as a way to foster the wide-scale participation of those who "would typically not attend conventional consultation exercises held by the Council" (Cinderby 2010:241), allowing the inclusion of "hard to reach groups".

The so-called "tyranny of participation" (see Cooke and Kothari 2001:1-15) contributed to the development field's role as an "anti-politics machine" (see Ferguson 1994:557).

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[71] See Agrawal & Gibson 1999; Brosius et al. 1998

This "anti-politics machine" is what Mouffe refers to in her description of the gap between an ideal and actual radical democracy, where a technocratic move towards a commensuration of values eliminates alternative ideological states and subsumes them into the coherent whole collective. In this position;

> The cosmopolitan project is therefore bound to deny the hegemonic dimension of politics. In fact several cosmopolitan theorists explicitly state that their aim is to envisage a politics 'beyond hegemony'. Such an approach overlooks the fact that since power relations are constitutive of the social, every order is *by necessity* a hegemonic order. (Ibid:108)

A community map, through the visual image that aligns particular aspects of the material form and social value of the built environment, can act to "perform territory";[72] in that it has an "ontological authority" but further has a potency of "ontological genesis" (Roberts 2012:14). This making visible and invisible can work to advance and simultaneously delimit the various possibilities of ethical substance in the sense that maps can be understood as "arguments about existence" (Wood:2010:34)

> …all maps, like all other historically constructed images, do not provide a transparent window on the world. Rather they are signs that present a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparence [sic] concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification (Mitchell 1986:80 cited in O'Mahony 2014:50).

The question of *who* participates in mapping projects has shifted to *how* people participate in such projects. New technologies (particularly Web 2.0) are seen to have the capacity to engage with alternative forms of knowledge production[73], whereby design processes are also brought into the process of visualising knowledge. Recognising that there is no "one size fits all", each iteration of a PPGIS technology is tailored to the project it is meant to engage with.

The extension of the *how* question has meant the emergence of a GIS field which re-frames citizenship as plural and has resulted in an enlivening of the perceived participatory potential of ICTs. This aims to enable a multi-scaled approach, allowing local agency to be built upon through design at all stages. This "scaling up" is seen to

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[72] Perkins 2004, Dodge, Kitchen & Perkins 2009.

[73] Hackley and Singleton 2008; Leach et al. 2008; Kleine & Unwin 2009; Tacchi 2012; Hackly et al 2008

bring about broader levels of radical political change and social justice (see Hickey & Mohan 2004). However, scaling up would also see a proliferation of GIS platforms, reposition GIS as a culturally specific mapping technology and re-introduce the problem of making commensurate "ideal speech situations".

Within each PPGIS project, commensality is demanded whereby values need to be understood by, and translatable for, each participant in the interface. Without this translatability there is a loss of legibility and as such a loss of the inherent potential to articulate the *demos*. The notion of equal knowledge production (see Haklay 2013) assumes an aim to show and know the same "worlds'" values and order the same materials - that is, to have the same ethical commitments and desire to extend social values. For Seethinger's to take part, with their unintelligible story, would cause fracture in the *demos*, bringing to light misunderstandings and different ethics and positions concerning place, into which much effort for translation and reworking would be needed. This effort was ultimately not invested in - instead the Seethinger's made their own platform. They turned away and did something else (see chapters 3 & 4).

The performance of territory - that is the ways in which the landscape was articulated in its matrix of good and bad changes - worked radically differently for the Seethinger's compared to the envisioned articulations of the ASP, so much so that it could not work through the same aesthetic and epistemic alignments demanded by the ASP's community map. As Unwin (2009) notes, the flow of knowledge is often a one-way flow, where information is gained to fit a gap in an already pre-determined epistemic grid, which emerges from a grounded and fixed ontological position. This is a result of the problem being understood as the ability to get knowledge rather than what knowledge, in itself, might mean.

The incommensurability for the ASP arises when the information posted threatens the ability of the map to articulate good and bad changes in the landscape in a coherent way. The Seething story, as "fact", threatens the legitimacy of other facts and as such makes "untapped potential" difficult to locate in the socio-economic matric that the ASP wishes to foreground. That is, the story added visualised value in a mode that is local, producing a local familiarity and fun. However, the ASP's commitment was to the participatory and inclusive aspect of the democratic potential of the map at the scale of national policy.

It is the necessity of translatability across the *demos* in the ASP map, which necessitates a scaling up. Following from Strathern's notion of a "partial connection" (1991), this involved the loss of information in the form of the productive capacity of the information added. I argue that in this case the ASP mapping tool was of no interest to the Villagers as the loss involved in scaling up and making the map commensurate to all entailed a loss of value of the socially productive aspects of their story (see chapter 3). The map was part of a different social project, with a different ethical commitment to the local.

Seethingers do explicitly wish to expand their project and are looking for similar communities to spread their ideas[74], however this scaling up must occur without loss and the mechanisms through which value is spread must remain coherent. The PPGIS could not provide this, however I will argue that the map did not fail but rather was put to work whilst remaining silent, via the ASPs ethical commitment to participatory knowledge production, and through its future potential.

1.5 The Moment (2)

The moment was less a moment than a missing, a series of disjointed conversations, mistranslations and avoidances through which a silence was worked out. The Adaptable Suburbs project had, in conjunction with UCL's Mapping for Change, designed an interactive web map called "Community Maps" with each suburban case study having its own "mini-site". This map, accessible via the project website, was a basic Google application program interface (API) with a specifically designed "wrap", a specially tailored interface, onto which the user could place symbols that tell the reader what sort of information is being shared. These symbols would relate to a list of "categories" which would align to the interests that a community might hold. To share information a user would register, log in, upload text, photo or video and locate the information on a point on the map, listed under a particular category. Initially the categories of information, historical fact, cycling and transport, green space and so on were designed by the ASP but were intended to be open to change over a period of consultation via my fieldwork with the communities that use the maps so that they could define their own needs. It was hoped that the community would eventually take over the

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[74] Notably Swanage is called 'Seething on Sea'.

moderation of the map and that it would be a widely used forum for discussing and displaying oral histories of the area as a living and evolving archive.

1.6 The Lefi Ganderson Story & the Mount of Seething.

After introducing the map to many Seethingers at a Free University of Seething (FUS) lecture, I had asked a few to test the usability of the site and to try adding a piece of information. After some time had passed I initially thought that enthusiasm for the map was low as no new information appeared but for the test points I had added myself. However after asking my informants if they had added information, Steve said that he had submitted a point about the Mount of Seething but that the point hadn't appeared on the map assuming I was yet to moderate the post.

To find out why the post hadn't yet appeared on the map I returned to UCL and spoke with Flo, the co-director, and developer, of the UCL spin off company called 'Mapping for Change' who designed the map. Flo was not part of the ASP but had, along with two of the ASP co-investigators, developed the map, was responsible for overseeing its moderation and would be overseeing the development of the platform in future research projects. Flo explained that the post did not pass moderation as it was entered under the label "historical fact", yet it was not historical fact. For her, the presence of a mountain in Seething was experienced as myth.

Sharing a working space with Flo via the ASPs location in the university, I was able to tell some tales of the weird and wonderful moments of spending time as a Seething Villager - such as building giant lanterns and watching skiing guinea pigs (see chapter 3) - over coffee. Moments of ever unfolding Heritage of Seething are not to be found in archives, or in second hand soundbites, but in the process of doing. They are hard to explain and intentionally "stupid"[75]. They draw people into a Seething as a "state of mind", of play, of humour and invention (see chapter 3). Through *doing*, an alignment of body, spirit, fun, smiles and affective experiences "melds" (see Garrett 2013) a new sense of local, Seething subjectivity. For this melding, to feel the productive capacities of the affective attunements you quite simply you had to be there, and that is intentional. Seething activities place a strong emphasis on bodily co-presence and doing

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[75] In that they lack sense (OED): http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stupid accessed 3/6/13

together, as such an understanding of Seething is difficult to ascertain without performing it. This difficulty is purposeful as it works to re-align dominant chains of association between people, place, action, use, history and so on. That is, the affective capacity of Seething is one that not only demands an immersion but one that without an immersion is incomprehensible. The task of any external ambiguous articulation, then, is to draw people in.

The Seething events largely revolved around an ethos captured and shared through the story of Lefi Ganderson. This crucial story is the central pivot around which events occur, stories unfold and participation takes place. From this, newness springs and stories shift and are elaborated upon. The story, and the social process it involves, will be drawn out more in chapter 3, but I will briefly outline the tale here.

1.6.1 The Goat Boy of Mount Seething.

The Goat Boy Lefi Ganderson once lived in a cave at the base of Mount Seething. Mount Seething was on the edge of the Village of Seething. The Seething Villagers did not trust or like Lefi because, being half boy and half goat, he was different. However the children of Seething, being of good heart and having not yet learnt to dislike Lefi, brought him scraps of food from the village and they played with him. Lefi taught the children how to make clothes and toys from all the things the Villagers throw away as rubbish. The "dark cloud" on the horizon was the giant, Thamas Deeton, who returned to his home on the top of Mount Seething every four years (on leap years) and terrorised the Villagers. Lefi believed he could rid Seething of the Terror of Thamas and challenged him to leave (see Hutchinson 2010).

If Lefi could survive on only the food passed through a small golden ring for a whole year then Thamas would leave the Seething Villagers alone and disappear. Thinking the task was impossible, Thamas looked forward to seeing Lefi suffer the hunger he was sure to endure. However, with the help of the children of Seething, Lefi passed milk through the ring into a small bowl so many times that eventually he made 29 rounds of cheese. After a year, Lefi had survived on just the "cheesy goodness". Thamas left Seething and in one last rage he smashed Mount Seething and turned away. Rocks flew through the air, creating panic in the village and one hit Thamas. He fell into the river and his body can still be seen today at Thames Ditton Isle.
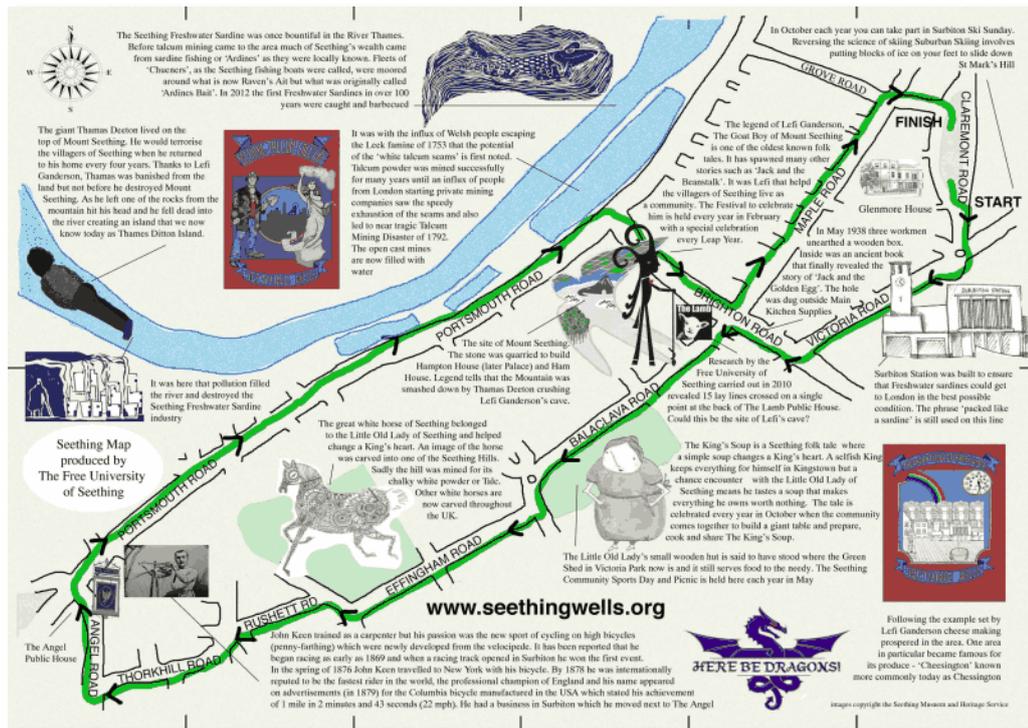
Figure 7: A map to show the landscape of Seething (with cycle route), Thames Ditton Isle is top left of the image (see appendix 2).

Once the villagers emerged from their hiding places they could not find Lefi, only a hollow in the ground where his cave used to be and a small gold ring in the middle. Lefi was nowhere to be found. At this moment the leader of the village spoke. "Villagers of Seething", she said:

> "We must learn from today and never behave like this again. Seething must become a village that is open to all. It should not matter what you look like, where you come from or who you are – you will be welcome here and Lefi has shown us the way. .Let us not forget what Lefi did. We shall hold a festival every year to celebrate him driving the giant away."

This story is key to life in Seething with its notions of inclusion, the innocence of the child, an egalitarian spirit and invented histories. Lefi is brought into Seething and Seething itself changes through seeing the value of inclusion and acceptance of difference. The "bringing-in" is based on the equal status of each individual within a social whole, the ethical basis of which is the child, who is representative of the pure social state (i.e. pre-pollution). The act of bringing-in occurs in the involutionary moment when what is good is extended to Lefi by the Seethingers. The playful nature of the story, and the way it obviates and invests through the existing semiotic structures

of place names, dates in the calendar and so on, indicate the ways in which Seething is revealed as an oscillating point between fact and fiction. It is this "openness" that allows it to work in developing new egalitarian socialities. Crucial to this oscillation is not-knowing - that is, revelation must occur through immersion in the Seething tales. When presented with the Seething story of how Thames Ditton Isle came to be one is presented with a choice. Does one choose to ignore the story, sticking only to historical fact, or does one accept the story? This dilemma produces an ethical commitment to the productive capacities of the Seething "state of mind" and the mechanisms of play and 'stupid' (see chapter 3). Through this process, one takes on the ethical substance of Seething and its moral commitments; one is brought into a community of familiarity and trust.

Figure 8: I live in Seething, it's a state of mind t-shirt featuring the Mount of Seething.

The central location of Mount Seething (see centre of Figure 7) as the home of the "spirit" of Seething can be found in a community pub where many Seething events take place. Its location and its significance were the content of the post that Steve uploaded to the map, but which didn't make it through the moderation stage.

Back at UCL, Flo expressed her concern that people from other areas, other users of Community Maps, would not be sufficiently socialised into the heritage and history of Mount Seething and this would result in users being unable to determine "fact" from "fiction". She decided not to moderate the post, thereby only allowing "historical facts" to be added. Flo offered to create an extra "layer" through which information could be added with the label "myths and legends", but this was refused by the Seethingers.

1.7 Making Fact

"Fact" is something that Seethingers actively play with. In the case of Mount Seething, archaeological digs have been made at the suspected base of Mount Seething by the British Society of Antiquarians and Archaeologists[76]. During the dig, rare compressed flint, similar to that found at Stonehenge, was "found", bringing an alignment between "sites of significant interest". A key in the shape of Lefi, a stirrup-shaped piece rumoured to be from the white horse of Seething and many other artefacts were also "found".

The Dig, overseen by Anton, (of the famed cable TV programme on ancient burial mounds "Dead Boring") occurred in the garden of the local pub. Excavations by young archaeologists and their parents found a "remarkable" convergence for around 15 lay lines. Anton "held back" the public until the experts "with the equipment" could enter and gather evidence. The "experts" held readers that looked and sounded like Geiger counters which made much noise over the site. Men in white coats and masks assured the young archaeologists it was safe to dig. The dig was done using full archaeological methods using labelled pieces, square trenches, scientists and explorers. Scientific method, the supervision of "scientists" and the testimonies of subject specialists in lay lines, archaeology and exploring ensured the work and methods met the standard of the British Society of Antiquarians and Archaeologists (BSAA)[77]. Furthermore, Anton's presence gained media coverage in Seething. After the Dig, the location and heritage of Mount Seething was well established as "fact" through the proper performative procedures of science and research. The history is well known throughout the community and at any point during which the location of Mount Seething is alluded to in speech, other Seethingers will interject whatever story or conversation is taking place by shouting the word "fact" at the end of a statement (FACT).

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[76]http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qulpWZY9aUg&noredirect=1   &
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGRGv2FbP2Y
Accessed 3/3/15
[77] A society Seethingers had just invented.

Figure 9: Film Still from "BSAA Seething Project 2010", published with permission of Robin Hutchinson and the villagers of Seething; Image Curtesy of an Informant.

I returned to Surbiton to meet the Seethingers and to explain that only "historical facts" could be added to the map. I was accompanied by the research assistant on the ASP, Rich, who would be able to tell both myself and the local "champions" (a term used by the ASP for key informants who would test the map) what our options were for using the ASP's map. We meet in a local pub where the landlord, Leon, a Seethinger, joins the conversation and provides us with a table and some food. The atmosphere is friendly, relaxed and positive.

> Rich: "just as we have made a Surbiton Mini site we can actually make you a mini site that is called Surbiton historic walk… now we have a fine line with to tread regards what goes on this, if we are working within this platform… and I don't want to open a can of worms here but the head of Community Maps, the head of Mapping For Change, is not too keen on the idea of putting in, as she put it 'false histories'… I really don't want to get into this, I'm not behind any of this, I think technology should be there for the people and how ever they want to use it this is more a political thing, this is why we have talked about a more disconnected option were people can go out and collect factual information and we can draw a link between

the two. We can make a mini site called Seething, as Seething is not a real place…"

Table: "errrmmmmm………"

Rich: (quickly) "Don't kill the messenger…"

Steve: (slowly) "No the nice thing is not to be precious about any of it, it's a fascinating idea that from her perspective that if you were in Nottingham and you wrote 'home of Robin Hood' then that would have to be dismissed because there is no actual proof to say that's true or not. Which I bet she wouldn't, she would say that's absolutely right as there is enough folk and legend around it to make that 'a truth' so it's at what point does someone figure out. When you lay it over the business of architectural spaces etc then legend and myth are massive influences and if you miss that off then you'll have no concept of what an area is about"

Leon: "if she is precious about this legend and myth then let's just use a separate platform."

From here the conversation talked through the possible technologies to achieve the aim of sharing stories in keeping with the "spirit of Seething". Leon talks through different platforms, apps, augmented realities, Bluetooth technologies and other emerging ICTs.

For the sake of the project, Rich tries to keep conversation centred on the PPGIS platform of the ASP. He suggests that we add the information about Surbiton to the PPGIS and have another place to store information about Seething.   Enthusiasm for separating the sites is low amongst Seethingers, as this would remove much of the productive vagueness of stories (FACT) and wouldn't really contribute to the "auto-ethnography" which the map purports to be in the ASP's supporting documents, outlined above. The Seethingers want to help with the ASP and appear interested and engaged with my ethnography, yet they are careful not to be positioned such that their participation would occur in a way which would fail to carry much of the social values inherent in the fun and vague stories and histories of Seething. They are protecting the bounding and expressing of their stories as that which is productive of a local self, a particular ethical substance of being a Seethinger.

Leaving the Free University of Seething[78] and returning to UCL, Rich and I talk through altering the PPGIS to meet the community's needs. We talk, at length, about how we

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[78] the Seething organisation that would oversee my research, explained more in chapter 3 & 4.

are unable to find a way in which Mapping for Change is able to create a product which suits both its own worries concerning "mis-information" *and* the community's need for a clear, usable and sharable way to exchange and experience stories. By the end of the fieldwork period the map remained little-used. It did have a brief flirt with being used during a food festival but again this did not take off, and the silence endured. In the next section I unpack the reasons for the enduring silence of the map, highlight possible locations of failure and to work through the moment of incommensurability.

1.8 Understanding the Silence.

1.8.1 The establishment of a project

I will use the silence of the map as an analytical device to expand on the ways in which two different social projects endure through a moment of incommensurability. That is, the 'moment' will be understood as a point of foreclosure as an ethical commitment to a social project. The ethical commitment for the ASP is the moral progression of the democratic ideal, which would have been compromised through the visualization of an unintelligible point of information. Whilst this foreclosure might seem to contradict the notion of inclusion and participation, I will argue that tensing - the act of discursively surrounding the moment with a solution "to come", placing the potential and value produced by the map in the future tense - enables the ASP's values to be maintained and expanded.

The term silence has been chosen over failure as I do not wish to contend that the map did not work. Rather, the map is still productive – it is doing work despite its non-active use. The map is a visualisation of possibility for the ASP through its ability to show a "democracy to come". The "meanings, values, symbols" of the socio-materiality of the area were unable to be translated across social worlds via a single material form and a common matric (see Espeland and Stevens 1998), and this incommensurability results in the map being silent. I also use this word over "still" as the map continues to move through policy and academic discourse to produce value, it does not however, speak. The silence is not awkward but is rather a necessary failure in the present in order to allow the future to arrive. For the ASP the problem of non-use can be overcome with increased time, design and functionality. This work, needed to extract the potentiality of participation, was deferred to other projects and future reseach. The

map and its silence remained, providing a material instantiation of the ongoing "working towards" of a democratic future enabled by ongoing research into tools of translatability. As Jim Hopkins has argued, it is the ability to interpret one another "spontaneously, continually, and with remarkable precision and accuracy" which "seems fundamental to our co-operative and cognitive lives" (Hopkins 1999:255). The future potential of this interpretive ability, and as such democracy, is held in the ongoing becoming of the map.

I could use the word failure to assert that the local informants failed to add the correct type of information, that the moderators failed to understand and add information themselves, or that the map itself failed in its design. However, I understand failure as a moral accusation that comes from one social actor to another[79] in relation to the stunting of a desired trajectory of a future world coming into being. Failure is a moral position on a future that does not come to be. I ask if the map failed not in terms of what it did or did not do, but rather in terms of the moral accusations laid at its door by the various social projects involved. With this, there is an interesting absence of failure in the utterances of both the participants and the project. In fact, the only failure is my own notion of my own studentship in that I failed to engage people in the project; however that failure is very illuminating.

The map failed to work for Seethingers as it did not afford the potential to expand their values (following Munn 1986) of the material landscape. However, those values and the ability to expand them, such as through sharing Seething tales, were present before the map, and therefore we should see the map as failing to add a new tool for expanding value - it failed to translate one world of values into another (see Povinelli 2001). However, this was not conceived of failure, this absence of failure is due to the difference in scale and tense with each of the moral projects involved. The map was able to not work, whilst not failing.

Returning to the planning literature outlined above, but now in a more critical than ethnographic sense, Oran Yiftachel argues that critical theorists in planning have ignored the role of the nation state where it "overlooks the numerous instances in which planning functions as a form of deliberate social control and oppression exercised by elites over weaker groups" (1998:397). A body of work that can be traced back to

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[79] I use "social actor" in a Latourian sense in that these actors can be anything from a door handle to a person or group (see Latour 2005).

Foucault (1980; 1977) examines territorial, procedural and cultural modes of regulation. Yiftachel argues that dominant critical engagements with planning have been overly general about the notion of the "public" and overly concerned with an uncritical engagement with the Habermassian project (Yifachel 2000). They have been overly focused on agency within the nexus of participation rather than on structural engagement with what is being participated in. The ASP can be understood as part of a post-political planning scenario applying binaries of inclusion/exclusion and citizen/subject where the technocratic problem of participation replaces that of ideology and difference.

Yiftachel's (2009) notion of "gray space", sits in-between the two polar opposites of Agamben's *bios* and *zöe* and refers to a situation in an era of great global democracy that advocates for inclusive and participatory citizenship where "growing assemblages of bodies, groups, zones, development and transactions […] are positioned between the lightness of legality, approval, safety and the darkness of eviction, destruction and death," (2009:88). However, where Yiftachel's discussion of the gray space concerns lands of violent conflict such as Israel/Palestine, Sri Lanka and South Africa, I wish to draw attention to the banal spaces of suburban London. In drawing an analogy I do not wish to assert that the experiences of loss, harm and struggle experienced are equitable. However, I do wish to draw attention to the minor act, the mechanism through which a social project is able to draw a foreclosure around the possibility of another project extending its values and polluting the hegemony of the other. This is the ironic position of Richard Rorty's ideal liberal, for whom "the process of socialization which turned her into a human being by giving her language may have given her the wrong language, and so turned her into the wrong kind of human being" (Rorty 1989:75). That is, whilst she recognised the contingency of values, and as such looks at how else they could be, she also needs a common language to be able to articulate them. I aim to look at the establishment of logic - a hegemony which is the necessary condition of a social project. As Laclou & Mouffe state (1985:xii-xiii) a hegemonic social project requires an appearance of universality, that it encompasses everything. As such a hegemonic social project will, by necessity foreclose that which is incommensurable with it. This ongoing project of establishing hegemony and negotiating the foreclosure of difference is the tension between universal and particular which is always being negotiated.

The establishment of a universal always contains a gap that can be worked within by the subject-to-be. The exclusion comes back to haunt the hegemony that creates the exclusion (see Butler et al 2000). It is the incompleteness of the subject position at the heart of the democratic ideal that allows it to return to push at boundaries.

I wish to look at the conditions of that return; where this chapter stands as the first moment, or turn away, it is only in the last chapter where the effect of the incommensurable moment and the associated information loss is felt. This loss is the constitutive outside, a condition of the protection of the whole (following Strathern 1991). In the following chapters I will look at how the two social projects maintain and re-perform their values, and in chapter 5 I will focus on how the Seethingers were able to re-perform their subject position as "local" in order to protect the value potentials of the material landscape. Chapter 5, through looking at a planning objection, draws attention to the condition of shifting - the possibility of re-articulating value by applying different discursive practices in different realms of value, as the Seethingers effectively form a local opposition group to participate in council procedures. Further, it highlights how this shifting also creates subtle loss, harm and exclusions that manifest in slow forms of harm, such as family breakdown, stress and anxiety.

1.9 The Promise of the Gap.

The Villagers rejected the label of "myth" and asserted "fact", however this assertion was closed down and remained invisible. The assertion was a moment of refusal, a turning away. It is not that the Villagers actively go against the ASP's aims to make better informed planning decisions, indeed they share that ambition, they are simply busy doing something else. That something else is producing *better* locally, through networks of familiarity, trust and play (see chapter 3).

However, the Villagers also worked within the "meanings," and "symbols" of the project, its academic language and institutions to invent new mechanisms through which it was able to spread value in a particular way. They took ownership of the scholarly interaction by creating a university for me (The Free University of Seething - FUS) and asking me to lecture them about the map. In so doing they expanded on the Seething stories to include a university.

Meaning, states Roy Wagner, does not float free (1979: x). It is grounded in the convention of a culture, yet manages to invent new culture from it.

> Obviation is the effect of supplanting a conventional semiotic relation with an innovative and self-contained relation . . . The result is a novel expression that intentionally 'deconventionalizes' the conventional (and unintentionally conventionalizes the unconventional): a new meaning has been formed (and an old meaning has been extended). The novel expression both amplifies and controverts the significance of the convention upon which it innovates. (Wagner 1979: 31, 28 Quoted in Nielsen 2013: 83)

The informants, through play and humour, obviated the notions of value and meaning implicated in the academic practice I asked them to engage in. Whilst there was no immediate inclusion of their story into the map there was a challenge to the understandings of value implied within the act of adding their story. This thesis is testament to that act. Even though the addition may have failed (if someone were to think of it that way) it did work to plant a seed of possibility, to display alterity, one that haunts the project through its exclusion.

The Villagers took the conventions of universities, academic knowledge production and democracy and brought them down to work in new ways at a local scale. But incommensurability remained via the map. When scaled up, by which I mean placed on a matrix of value that premises translatability across a participatory demos, the local obviation does not work. Rather, the untranslatability results in a threat to the mechanisms of the ASP's map as a communicative tool of deliberative democracy as the knowledge added must be comprehensible and translatable for a wider, "non-local" public. For the ASP, commensuration was an integral part of knowledge sharing and "bottom up" approaches to a wider scale democratic project based on the notion of a coherent and communicative whole, limiting the role of "dissensus" (see Rancière 2010) or alterity (see Mouffe 2005). In this sense incommensuration, where data is added but is fractured and incoherent in regard to the whole, would be failure. But, as Espeland and Stevens state:

> Commensuration can change our relations to what we value and alter how we invest in things and people. Commensuration makes the world more predictable, but at what cost? For Aristotle, a price too high [*as it eliminates passion*]; for Plato, an essential sacrifice [*to the moral need of a democratic project*]. The homogeneity commensuration produces

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simultaneously diminishes risk and threatens the intensity and integrity of what we value (1998:319 italics added).

For the ASP and the Villagers, notions of fact, history, movement, community, showing and sharing were both understood and worked differently. The varying "meanings, values, symbols"[80] of the built environment were different, read differently and worked to produce different futures and worlds through different regimes of value. Yet at the same time both worlds, through the assertion of their own notions of meaning, were able to obviate the other's "facts".

For the local informants, the inability to share stories on their own terms, i.e. as "fact" meant that the story was unable to translate over scales. Information and "facts" are corporally held fragments of stories only to be pieced together in the "State of Seething". Non-translation reproduced the sovereign act of Seething, that is, stating "fact" is an assertion of one's own ability to make exclusions and inclusions regards that term, to define the terms of the law and be sovereign. To understand a Seething "fact" Seething demands a bodily immersion through which the social productive elements of Seething "fact" emerge and the moral project can expand on its terms. Sharing on the map, as it was offered, would have resulted in the loss of value and productivity for local socialities. For them, the map failed to allow difference and play. During the 18 month fieldwork period my informants rarely asked about the map and showed little interest in it. They didn't resist the map, nor did they attempt to detour it in itself; once they had refused it they simply turned away and carried on doing what they were doing in Seething. So, from the point of view of the project the informants may have failed the map by adding the "wrong" data, but for the informants the map did not fail them. Both social projects were able to carry on.

The ASP seemed little concerned with the continued silence of the map. The subject rarely, if ever, came up in meetings or annual reviews. In discussions over the possible development of the map I was told there was neither the money nor the time to develop the platform within the ASP and that the designer did not "…realise the degree to which anthropologists spent time in the field with participants". Here there was a failure to anticipate, recognise or respond in a serious way to the alternative "meanings, values, symbols" that ethnographic engagement might present to the ASP. There was little momentum to accommodate alterity in the map. But the project attributed the

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[80] Adaptable Suburbs Case for Support. EPSRC application.

silence of the map not to its insistence for commensurable data but rather to a lack of usability and community training - issues which would improve with time and money.

The failure, for the ASP, was located in the ability of the map to be used as an arena in which data could be shared and values understood and made commensurate across communities and scales in the *present* moment. However, such a commensuration for the project would have either resulted in the loss of the productive capacity of value for local informants (which they refused) or resulted in a fragmented and fractured map of information which risked being unintelligible, and therefore unable to scale up into coherent information for to inform policy.

I wonder if the map is a failure at all. Its silence holds apart two incommensurate social projects. The map was created as a technology of public participation and inclusion that aims to reflect the needs of the people. The democratic project, understood as a communicative whole, is central to its existence. The location of failure by the ASP in the map's current usability manages to overcome the issue of incommensurability by obviating the failure by use of tense. Quite simply it is under development, it will work better in the future. The map's silence is productive as, whilst highlighting incommensurability in the present it maintains the notion of commensurability and of radical communicative democracy, in the future - a future that will never arrive. The map, or rather its silence, I suggest, allows the perpetuation of separate value regimes; one happy doing its own thing in a fractured local present (chapter 3), and another that believes in the extension of knowledge production from academia to the "out there" community of the "bottom", enabled to talk "upwards" through technologies of commensuration. The ability of the social whole to communicate exists in an anterior sense for the ASP's map. It is always just on the horizon, to be realised through objects and technologies of hope and possibility, such as this map, which remains always just out of reach and as such silent but productive. In this sense the map is given up, it remains silent but present, a material instantiation of the potential of the *demos*. It is the invisible (inclusion, participation) made visible. Its non-use is wrapped in a future tense in order to make it work in the present tense as a potential, as a sacrifice (following Batillie 1985) . The map breaks down the barrier between the social project and its haunted alterity (the poly-incommensurate other) by giving a position, one that will arrive over time.

1.10 Extending Value(s)

This chapter has outlined a moment of foreclosure in a mapping project which illuminates the various social projects at work in the process of late-liberal democracy. It has outlined how each social project endures, withstanding the irony of inclusion. I have discussed the ideas of value and value extension in line with the project brief of understanding "meanings, values, symbols". Here I want to review the ways in which value is understood by both the ASP and the local informants. The definitions, understandings and applications of value are multiple and varying and depend on context and use. It is the nature of value as abstractive, partible and derived which gives rise to incommensurability over the same material landscapes. In this section I outline the multiple notions of value in 'the moment'. This discussion allows explorations in later chapters of the mechanisms through which different social projects understand, derive, extract, spread, share and extend value and how these movements are often incommensurate with other social projects. I will show how these values are understood by different social projects and as such result in different forms of knowing, moving and circulating knowledge and value. This difference results in moments of poly-incommensurability and tension where social projects must shift their articulations, showings and displays of the value of the socio-material landscape in order to protect the extension of their social project and prevent foreclosures.

Value can be understood through three broad areas of thought. Firstly, value as understood through Marxist interpretations can be thought of as that which is created in the process of exchange (see Miller 2008; Sahlins 1972). Here value is understood as the worth of human action in an objectified form; partible, extractable and, for the ASP, "untapped"[81]. Most commonly this would be the value of labour as objectified in wages and profit, positioning profit as value in an objectified form removed from the location of its genesis, the human body. The ASP positions value as inherent in the spatial form of the built environment with "untapped potential" realisable from *better* material arrangements and *better* design allowing "future economic, social and environmental sustainability".

Value in this sense often works beyond the market form. Anna Tsing (2013) notes how expert Matsutake mushroom pickers develop deep personal connections to mushrooms through sorting and processing. These relations enable a new form of extractable value

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[81] As stated in the ASP case for support.

where care, expertise and social relations can be imbued into objects and exchanged. This is well developed in Miller's (2001)[82] theories on consumption and shoppers, where time spent selecting the gift imbues the material exchange with social force. The ASP worked within a partible notion of economic value which aimed to understand the social value of suburban spaces. However, in attempting to do so the project found incommensurable way of knowing value. The selection of particular "*meaning, values, symbols*" no matter how relevant, exclude others in the presencing of value.

In his analysis of city financial workers, Ortiz shows how the value of market efficiency is taken as a moral and ethical mechanism that would contribute to a working global system. A focus on one form of value, efficiency, results in the erasure, silencing or falling away of another form of value, social good. Ortiz asserts that when a particular value that exists as a minor value to another, such as efficiency in a market system serving to make society better, scales up and works in a pure sense, in this case through social practices of efficiency that become normative and ethical, then the value, the "infra value" (after Dumont 1980), translates into a "metavalue". That is, a value that helps one achieve an ultimate aim starts to supersede that very aim. For Ortiz, a lack of efficiency in the market may cause harm through the effects of changing wealth distribution, but the mechanism of efficiency is maintained even though the market no longer serves wider society. The ASP's map aimed to allow "bottom up" approaches to social data that expressed the "meanings, values, symbols" of the people in the area. However when such "meanings, values, symbols" became a threat to the idea of trans-spatial communication - the ability to commensurate meaning across the social whole perceived at the political democratic level of nation - then selections were made to what data was valid and how concepts such as "facts" were to be presented. The Villagers became bare life in Agamben's sense; they existed outside of participation in the demos, which constitutes "the good life". They are excluded from the law of and the ways of making *better* in order for that law work.

My second conception of value derives from Louis Dumont's writing, in which value is concerned with cultural continuity and change - that is, with how value differs across cultures. Dumont conceived of monist and pluralist societies to describe the nature of relations in a society. The former is based around one dominant value and the latter is based on multiple competing values. Dumont looked to see what configurations of

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[82] Also see Foster 2013

monist and pluralist relations could be found in existing societies, using the configurations more as an analytical frame than as a philosophical position. He noted that many societies would have more than one competing value. Some societies would have stable monism and as such would work around a prioritised super value, such as the value of religious observance (see Fader 2009). Dumont also conceived of monism with stable levels in which values, such as work and prayer, exist within their own realms without one transforming the nature of the way in which the other is engaged with (see Rogers 2009). Robbins (2013) furthers Dumont, arguing that Pluralism can occur with stable levels by showing how ritual and secular domains in Papua New Guinea can co-exist without a necessary hierarchy or order of importance. In the examples of work that use Dumont's conceptions of value structure it seems as if one version of four (stable monism, monism with levels, stable pluralism, unstable pluralism) has been chosen as an explanatory frame. In my case the two social projects - the Villagers and the ASP - one could make a case for the existence of any of these configurations, as concepts of value are fluid and inconsistent. People can be doing one thing one moment and then another the next, advancing multiple and often contradictory values. I myself would move between ASP and Seething activities and be equally committed to both, even if at times I knew one would compromise, evade or (to use Wagnerian terms) mask - that is, hide the contradictions in - the other. However, I would suggest that notions of inclusion, participation and an active life (*bios* not *zoè*), synonymous with democracy, are the end *telos* of both social projects.

Dumont's contribution to understanding value was that it was comparative. His comparative ethnography contributed to philosophical debates about how values worked in lives lived. His methodology was diffractive (see Barad 2007). To understand how value is conceived and practiced by one group you can read it through another way of conceiving of and practicing value. As he moved between different field sites (India and the UK) the gaps and contradictions he saw in the logic of value enabled him to get at how value worked in each cultural group. For the ASP, the social whole at the level of the *demos* and the material whole, the city, remained central. For Seethingers, a strong and articulate local would allow a strong city and local citizen. Meanings remained local because they circulated in a way that one needed to be immersed in fun, play, double meanings and requires lots of body language, personal relations and a development of local relations. Yet at the same time Seethingers were looking to expand Seething and actively sought out connections in Leeds, Aberdeen,

Chiswick and Swanage (known as Seething on Sea). As such, whilst mechanisms for creating 'the local' were local, they wanted to extend the supra values of inclusion and equality, friendship, love and trust. For Seething it makes no odds that nonsense may rule as long as it works to develop *better* being, or making *bios* from *zoë*, through equality and fun.

My third conceptualisation of value takes elements from the above and emphasises movement and change following a commodity pathway diversion model that builds on[83] the work of Nancy Munn and Terence Turner. In this model, any form of human action can be considered as contributing towards a form of value creation or loss. Value can move in and out of stable, objectified forms and socially normative action through acts that "brings the universe into being" (Graeber 2013). Value may exist in more or less objectified forms, be placed in different tenses (see Nielsen 2013) and requires work for it to be maintained. Here a performative understanding draws attention to the relationship between value and action whereby moments of foreclosure, making things more and less visible, can advance some value regimes and negate others.

Graeber, building on Terrance Turner, discusses Marx's notion of economic modes of production as people-making. Marx implies that labour shapes our actions, and thus the world, into the forms we feel *ought to exist* and that we wish to have around us, such as a good worker, a productive high street and so on. Labour should not be seen as a means to creating value in the form of commodity production, as the real value of producing occurs in the *idea* of labour and its social conditions, such as wages, good workers, and a healthy economy producing the kinds of bodies and forms that we think ought to be made within a particular value regime. These forms, that which *ought* to be made are delineated by the hegemonic social project and its notions of value. It is here, in the gap between those who *define* ethical substance and those who *are* ethical substance (returning to Povinelli 2011:11), where ideas of value and the production of desire, through the normative conditions of a social project, come to matter. Social projects, in their attempts to maintain themselves as coherent and legitimate, are in dialogic relation. Taking Marx's Capital as a work of symbolic analysis Graeber states;

> … it's actually quite a powerful theory of symbolism, because it goes
> well beyond the familiar anthropological idea of symbols as 'models
> of and models for' social reality (Geertz 1973), but sees them also as

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[83] see Lambek 2013; Graeber 2001, 2008, 2013; Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986.

representations of the importance of certain forms of action that become objects of desire that, as such, play a critical role in motivating those very forms of action that they represent. (Graeber 2013:225)

Graeber uses money as an example of symbolic value that becomes a form of desire. Value moves in and out of comparative forms through its embodiment in a material form. However if value is a desired form then there must always be an audience, or market for that value, as it can only be realised through someone else's desire, it needs to move. As such, memetic ritual acts and everyday performance can be seen as generative of value forms that objectify, or rather subjectify, that is it places desired value not in a commodified form or a materialised abstraction, but rather in a bodily personhood, a shared sociality, a feeling, an emotion. The value form may float free from the objectified form; it may be temporary, ephemeral and fleeting. Graeber returns to the politics of value, as "politics is always ultimately about: not just to accumulate value, but to define what value is, and how different values (forms of "honour," "capital," etc.) dominate". Graeber calls this the ontological gambit - in the fact/value split, it is values that come first as "the pursuit of facts can only be a consequence of certain forms of Value" (Graeber 2013: 232, see also Latour 2010 on French Law). As such, it is the very literal debate over "fact" in the PPGIS that brings my attention to *the moment*. This moment is one where two social projects meet, not through a recursive immersion into an ontological other, but rather at the edge.

Using the word ontology, states Graeber, implies that most people care about the "ultimate" nature of reality, when in practice they don't. Rather, most action is situated in immediate and real value regimes. Social projects become *through* the ongoing performance of value, and as such the performative dimension of the establishment of a social project places "the plot" - the value - as the driver or "real essence of the thing" (ibid:230), where characters are defined by action and not vice versa. Creating an ongoing social project involves attention to spatio-temporal moments of extension and contraction, moments of instability and oscillation and relational play with, and obviation of, 'the other'. Graeber asserts that belief in the project it is not essential, or even a question that warrants asking. Rather people care that the fellow characters in the performance produce a commitment to the order of things. It is this care which sees a "Barthian ideological naturalisation effect" (ibid) where we accept and become attendant to a performance of value, are convinced by it and are moved to act. One can

be committed to two projects at the same time; such was my position in my ethnography as I oscillated between the social projects, attendant to both.

'The moment' saw a meeting of two social projects looking to extend value through "facts". For Seethingers "factishness", (a term used by Seethingers when discussing the ASP's refusal) as ambiguous and playful truth was an ontological gambit, a presencing of the story as a mechanism of value (play, localness, fun and so on) which formed an articulation of "fact". The materials of the built environment are participants in this imaginative play for the Villagers, the same materials produce very different articulations of "fact" for the ASP. The silence of the map ensures the endurance of the democratic ideal for the ASP whilst turning away by the Villagers sees them carry on in their project. Both work.

1.11 Conclusions

This chapter works through an ethnographic moment of turning away between two social projects, where incommensurabilities in their respective epistemological modes of extending value resulted in acts of foreclosure. This is understood within the process of pressencing value and creating the conditions for legitimate knowledge. 'Knowing' not only emerges from a particular ontological position but also orientates action and desire towards it, producing ethical commitments and dispositions to act in certain ways and, through dialogic relation to the other, forming the terms of ethical substance and social legitimacy.

A loss of information occurs between the projects in this moment as different notions of value and ethical commitments, associated with particular arrangements of body and place, produce incommensurability. Procedures, such as the discursive tensing of the map, allow the map to work and the ASP to endure as coherent through its ability to bring about a democracy to come (following Derrida 1993).

For the ASP, the notion of value bound up in local sociality threatened the supra value of radical democracy; the intentions of the map worked on a different scale. With intentions to "roll out" the map across different communities, information needed to be productive across wide areas. Localised socialities and "factish" tales of Mount Seething were antithetical to the map's coherence. The moment sees the ASP and the Villagers

work through different value structures. The latter, routed in the local, works outwards through networks of corporal and emotional rationality, whilst the former, routed in the infrastructure of the state, aims to provide the tools that enable "bottom up" communication from the local to the *demos* as a whole. The ASP understood the material landscape as a palimpsest in which history can be uncovered as "fact" (see chapter 2) and in which the future "*better*" is to come through extracting "untapped" value, with the map as the mechanism of delivering that future. The Villagers developed ongoing emotional relations with the material landscape with different conceptualisations of value. Both social projects aimed to extend and cultivate value in regard to the same *telos,* but the mechanisms they used to do so produced incommensurability. As such, the map stayed silent, failed in the present tense yet continued to work towards the future.

Chapters 2 & 3 will look in more detail at how the social projects produce affective alignments and ethical commitments. Chapter 4 will look at the obviations that take place when the ASP engaged the Seethingers again. Chapter 5 will relate the actions of the Villagers to the notion of local sociality more generally and of the ASP to the regulatory practices of planning it is involved in. The final chapter looks again at a moment, however whereas in this chapter the informants walked away, as the imminent contestation over the material landscape was both abstract and academic, in chapter 5 the change to the material landscape and the potentials within it are immediate and felt. As such, the last ethnographic chapter is where the turn away described in this chapter comes to matter and Seethingers, as locals, shape-shift. That is, they articulate value through the terms of other social projects, ones which control the terms of governance. In this shifting, vital information is lost, foreclosed, and the work needed to maintain the moral project results in loss and harm as aspects of the self are lost in order to maintain "a community that works".

2

Making A Suburb Part 1:

Experts Who Eat Cake.

The previous chapter discussed a moment of foreclosure, a refusal of a story which maintained the coherency of the ASP's social project. This chapter outlines the mechanisms of the ASP in producing efficacious knowledge about the suburbs that aims to inform government bodies, think tanks and ultimately national planning policy. Different data sets were brought together and made commensurate, which involved aligning, cutting and selecting data so an image of the suburb could emerge that allowed them to be understood in an "integrated and holistic way"[84]. The ASP's methodology aimed to be universal in its application so that "untapped potential"[85] can be released from any particular part of the urban infrastructure.

In the process of creating data a number of selections were made in order to make data commensurate, which Epselands & Stevens define as "the transformation of different qualities into a common metric" (1998: 314). Through creating relations between data, value is revealed in the comparisons that show how much of one thing is needed for something else to work (ibid). In the process of making alignments and trade-offs (how much of one thing is needed to relate to something else) data is cut, re-aligned and lost. In making a universal method the ASP needed to represent the suburbs in a way in which accurately account for their materiality. Their methodology needed to be able to scale in and out of the universal and the particular. The material of the suburbs needed to remain indexically linked to the representations, mainly images, produced by the ASP. In his study of French law regarding land plots Bruno Latour (2010) notes that data must be considered stable by all involved in order to work. This stability comes from knowing what makes it unstable, where errors might be found. A consistency in

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[84] Quoted from the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/1. 1st November 2010:1
[85] Ibid

measurement allows errors to be seen and a consistent measure arises through that which is able to represent that which is wanted to be shown accurately. Through the scaling in and out, the cutting and abstracting, a trace of the desired aspects of the material form remain linked in the data. It allows the production of what Latour calls an "immutable mobile" (1986:7) where a representation carries the link to the material, is presentable, combinable and readable. This chapter traces the production of the suburb, as image, as an 'immutable mobile' that can move as stable data from the suburb through the ASP analysis, to academic papers, think tanks, into government policy. This traceability enables the maintenance of the data's legitimacy in the eyes of the demos. The suburbs the ASP produces, need to work.

The recommendations of the ASP are derived from producing and reading visual images which reveal, with "an innate potency" (Adler 1998) the "untapped potential"[86] of the suburbs allowing greater value extraction. The images carry "social and political values across temporal, geographic and cultural boundaries" (Adler 1998:502). They work to make better design for the population, which is managed by the state infrastructure of which the EPSRC funded research project, Adaptable Suburbs, is part. At the same time they are objective, made by people who are not local, and who do not need to physically inhabit the spaces they represent in order to be experts about them. The skills and competence this method requires "skilled doing" (following Boyer 2005; 2008) where a rational objective practitioner is able to develop the correct techniques to make data commensurate and moveable. It is the expertise that gives rise to the moral authority of the "intellectual" and their outputs as a form of "skilled knowing" (ibid 2005; 2008) where epistemic jurisdiction is established in producing, knowing and reading data such as images through a "semiotic-epistemic competence" (Boyer 2008: 39). Skilled knowing requires a practitioner to be able to trace the indexes of the image down to the particular material form of the suburb and up to the universal rule of the method. As such the "expert" gains authority through being able to move up and down without a loss of the trace. This ability to produce precision and uniformity through skill, professionalism and discipline is a moral commitment to the state and the demos. The ASP brought experts from different disciplines together to develop a methodology. As data sets were made commensurate, foreclosures arose and data was cut away. As such, the meetings required concessions regarding what data could be keep, lost and re-

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[86] Quoted from the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/1

worked. Team building and making concessions occurred while sitting around a table often eating cake.

The chapter concludes by returning to the 'the moment' (chapter 1) as a foreclosure required for epistemic universality in the ASP's map. The information refused needed to be able to move and circulate at a particular scale, the scale of national planning policy in order to benefit the population (see Zizek 1999; Boyer 2005). I follow the production of a representation in the form of the image and the expert who speaks with an authoritative power on behalf of the suburbs needs. This chapter outlines the ways in which planning policy and procedure endures as moral and rational. This is seen again in chapter 5 when locals of the suburb object to a planning application. The locals' values of the land concerned had to be articulated through a frame of value outlined by policy and procedure managed by local governance who are informed by planning law. This frame of value is equally applied across a nation state, and traceable in form, to projects like the ASP. The locals' ability to represent and articulate value through circuits of power, i.e. through networks of people and organisations that have jurisdiction over land, is of crucial importance. Further the chapter looks at the role of the diagrammatic imaginary, following Chatelet (1993), where diagrams are understood as "gestures that invite further gestures" (Burrows 2014), and at how the diagram "does more than resemble, it takes the place of the original situation" (Latour 1999) in their ability to promise better through revealing value.

2.1 Order Out of Chaos

The ASP uses multiple techniques and sources to develop its understandings of suburbs, notably Space Syntax measures, understood as potentials of people in a network (city streets) and land use measures based on business classification types and building shape. These measures enable the project to contribute to architectural and planning discourses in the academic and policy settings. Visualisation is seen as the key to understanding those material conditions of suburbs which are "productive" and which enable the ASP to "get at what is going on" (ASPM2[87]). 'Productive' for the ASP is understood as those urban infrastructures which allow a place to endure, that is, to adapt and to work with changing socio-economic conditions and maintain itself as a 'successful' place, hence the

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[87] I use Anonymous code rather than names ASPM is Adaptable Suburbs Project Member.

project name Adaptable Suburbs. This is assessed through the degree to which the material arrangements of buildings, movements and uses align according to "generative rules" or 'space syntax'.

This process, which aims to be widely replicable, involves multiple scales and articulations of data. Marylyn Strathern (1991) notes that a change in scale involves a change in the amount of information that can be made present; with each scale change some information is lost. The particular, the local, becomes generalised as it is scaled up and wider relations are lost as one scales down. In this chapter I focus on the production of alignments, in that the ASP scales in and out repeatedly (following Yaneva 2005) between the particular and the general, in order to establish a concretisation of a phenomenon, in this case the knowable suburb, to move. The ethnographic description that follows will look at the production of movement potentials (Space Syntax lines), building shapes and land use, as understandable and alignable data sets. The notion of a boundary will be used to highlight the difficulty in producing a boundable and understandable object from the materiality of the built environment. This relates directly to the bounding of place in chapter 4, which is corporal, contingent and historical.

My involvement in the ASP began with the process of my application to the PhD studentship, as such I have had a deep ethnographic immersion in the production of the data, I am one of the 'experts'. The bi-weekly two hour meetings were mainly spent discussing the various parameters of measurements needed in the analysis and the development of the images that would inform the project outputs. During a daylong meeting the project team discussed the most effective ways to move the methodology forward. Underlying these discussions was the notion that "a town centre will not survive if it is chaotic… these are highly structured spaces" (ASPM2). It was "getting at" this structure that was the aim of ASP so they could advise on effective place management.

2.2 The Origins of Space Syntax

Space Syntax is both a theoretical and methodological approach to understanding spatial organisation and social life. Hillier & Hanson's *The Social Logic of Space'* (1984) had significant influence over design and planning methods, particularly at the Bartlett

school of Architecture at University College London where it originated and where the ASP is based. Two project members of eight (sometimes 9) worked within the 'Space Group'[88] which both uses and develops Space Syntax. Today most Space Syntax practice focuses on applying the method to achieve 'better design'[89], however Space Syntax arose from a desire to 'get at'[90] an understanding of the relationship between the material form of settlements and their social role. As Hillier & Hanson note:

> It has become clear that a lack of understanding of the precise nature of the relationship between spatial organisation and social life is the chief obstacle to *better* design [...] The obvious place to seek such an understanding is in the disciplines that are concerned with the effect of social life on spatial organisation – how spatial organisation is in some sense a product of social structure. This has long been the concern for geographers, but recently anthropologists (Lévi-Strauss, 1963), (Bourdieu, 1973, 1977), theoretical sociologists (Giddens, 1981) and archaeologists (Ucko et. al., 1971 Clarke, 1977; Refrew, 1977; Hodder, 1978) have become aware of the spatial dimension on their subject, and its importance to questions of social morphology and structure. (Hillier & Hanson 1984: x, emphasis added)

Space Syntax arose from a structuralist background. In the 1978 British Archaeological Record, Hillier describes Space Syntax as a *"morphic language[...]* unlike both natural and mathematical languages but which borrow properties from each" (ibid: 343), relating Space Syntax to mathematics and the study of pattern. However Hillier makes clear that Space Syntax is neither math nor language, but is rather part of the "everyday world of practical pattern recognition" (ibid: 344). This 'everyday world' is readable through a "theory of patterns" (ibid) built up from "intuitive formal principles" based on "real evidence" (ibid: 345). The fundamental aims of the Syntax method is one of knowability and usefulness:

> Although we realise that we are bound to be strongly criticised for our neglect of mathematics, we hope we may be excused on the grounds that our resulting model of formal syntax of human space organisation is at least unreasonably effective in characterising the space patterns made by human societies, in showing how they were generated, how they relate to social patterns, and perhaps above all, in showing how even the most complex patterns are *knowable* through

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[88] Founded by Hillier
[89] Cited in the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/
[90] This term is repeatedly heard in the field.

knowledge of a few elementary concepts and operations (ibid: emphasis added)

The technique aims at getting at an underlying "rule structure" (ibid:346) to relations between sets of objects, houses, streets, bodies and so on that give form to human settlements. In getting at these rules one can uncover a record of all of the "order" that has been built into a settlement, understood as a system, and elucidate the "principles of knowability". At the time of publication the method and its foundational structralist logic aimed at moving beyond what Hillier called "Aristotelean essences" that reduced spatial form to an output of universal behaviour principles. Space was positioned as an actor in a network of agencies that offered "an alternative basis for encounters, other than those dictated by social structure" (Ibid:376).

Whilst in anthropology structuralism fell out of favour for failing to give adequate accounts of the subject and agency (see Hodder 2004), its manifestation in Space Syntax made it an amenable and workable tool for planning and modelling of place, notably through Hillier & Hanson's notion of urban movement economy, which was the focus for the ASP:

> Research into twenty of these [suburban] centres has found that their ability to adapt to change over time has been strongly influenced by their situation on routes that contain flows of movement at different scales and by different social groups. (Vaughan et al 2013:222)

The ASP examined how a change in the road network would have an impact on the socio-economic functioning of small settlements, such as suburbs, via buildings and their uses. *Better* is achieved through an awareness and management of a place having correct "co-presence", that is the correct alignment of movement, building type and building use. The buildings and use of the local high street should be aligned to medium or local movement economies[91] in order to be efficient. The ASP aims to make visible these properties and how they work, which they argue have, until now, remained invisible in UK planning policy:

> Understanding more about how the movement economy operates in different social and historical-geographical contexts is necessary to

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[91] understood as an area of 800-2000 meters which are indicative of how far people may walk or drive to shop locally

help local policy-makers and investors in making better decisions to support its aptitude for 'mixing' (ibid: 239).

The notion of making *better* design remains central and is understood to arrive through an examination of the "conditions that give rise to" (ASPM1) mixing. The ASP advised planners and governments on the ability of a material network to induce a productive proximity of bodies and land use types that form 'healthy' socio-economic places. As such, the project aims to "get at" the distribution of land uses and its correspondence to a spatial logic (ibid 235).

The project makes a case, to the media, think tanks and to academic and industry conferences, that high streets should move beyond a focus on retail and shopping as a driver of growth. The project asserts that the spatial logic could give rise to an array of non-residential/domestic activities, such as industry, retail, public services and so on. These activities then provide conditions of an active and vibrant high street which then allows further growth. Flexible space that is able to respond to economic and social needs is seen as key in a modern economic system. The suburbs are understood as potentially able to provide this and, the ASP state, are currently an undervalued aspect of a nationwide economy (see Vaughan et al 2010).

The basic tenants of a Space Syntax approach brings various aspects of data together in a visualisation, enabling an "eyeballing" of the data. This 'eyeballing' has the capacity to reveal new sets of relations and value within suburbs. Vision, according to Martin Jay (1988) is the master sense of modernity and its dominance can be linked to Renaissance notions of perpectivism in the visual arts, influenced heavily by Dutch landscape art. Here perspective drawing linked mathematics with "god's will" and the ability to see divine light accurately. Whilst the theology faded the basis for objective drawing remained and was further influenced by Cartesian subjective rationality from philosophy (ibid:4) where retinal images are interpreted by the mind. Alberti's Cartesian drawing, through pyramidal vanishing points, located the singular point from which a gaze emerges as the eye, in the singular (Jay 1988; Latour 1986). This founding principle of Cartesian perspectivism lends a power to the eye as a tool which can see the natural world in a scientific way, without subjective inference (Daston & Galison 1992). An absolute eye emerges where images can be made without the emotional entanglement of painter (Jay 1988:9). The Cartesian perspective in art, which gave rise to the "autonomy of the image" (ibid) and a "faith in geometricized, rationalized, essentially intellectual

concept of space" (ibid:12) gave rise to a Baconian empirism – an empirical visual experience, best demonstrated via the diagram. The diagram is neither too particular, like a photograph, nor too subjective, like a painting. A diagram has an ability to transfer, through indexical links, from an abstract image to the material world and back (Daston & Galison 1992; Latour 1986). The next section explains how the ASP made visualisations through gathering, processing and aligning various data to make visualisations which reveal new value, making the visible from the invisible. Tracing the technical details demonstrates the ways in which the images are made through a series of cuts, alignments and negotiated data selections.

2.3 Creating a visualisation - Understanding the 'Movement Economy'.

2.3.1 Lines

The primary and first form of data I will look at is the Space Syntax analysis where a system, the city of London, is understood as a network of spaces through which people would be more or less likely to move. The spaces, for now, streets (this gets more complicated), are then taken as individual units and placed in relation to each other in terms of their connectivity to one another. Mathematical algorithms enable models to see how likely it would be that a person would move through any given segment when traversing from any point, A, to any other point in the system B. This means that every possible journey has to be considered, requiring a great deal of computation power[92]. The result of the calculations gives a segment (imagine a street for now) a value indicating the likelihood of movement in that space in relation to the other spaces in the network. These are assigned a colour in the visualisations for easy and quick readability. This calculation involves the assumption that all points A and B in the space are, at the start, equally desirable and that people will walk either the fastest route, called "choice" or the simplest, called "integration" (Klasqvist 1993: 2), these are the common measures for Space Syntax and the reading of a "movement economy" (see Hillier & Hanson 1984; Hillier 1996).

"Choice value" measures "the shortest paths in a system" predicated on Zipf's notion of least effort. Integration "describes the average depth of a space to all other spaces in

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[92] UCL super computers were booked to run the analysis.

the system" which can be ranked from the most integrated to the most segregated (Klasquvist 1993: 11). The ASP used both measures in order to indicate which spaces (again, streets for now) are most likely to induce "co-presence"[93] (people being together). Lines of movement potential were created as maps enabling the viewer to zoom out and focus on the relations between the lines in the network. However different maps or "basemaps" provide different conditions for drawing lines and as such produce different Space Syntax images and different understandings of network relations. I will provide a brief description of those choices for ethnographic detail[94].

The most common basemaps originate from the Ordinance Survey (OS), a non-ministerial government department, one of the largest producers of maps in the world. The origins of OS can be traced to the mapping of the Scottish Highlands in 1747, which allowed the management of land by the government following the Jacobean rebellion of 1745 (see Hewitt 2010). By the mid-1800s, and soon after famous cartographer, John Roque, produced maps of London and the surrounding counties[95], the OS was mapping at a national scale. In 1836 the Tithe Communication act saw the production of highly detailed six-inch to the mile surveys of England and Wales, enabling surveillance and recording of taxable lands. In 1841, the Ordinance Survey Act allowed surveyors to enter private lands and as such the maps had unprecedented coverage. The history of mapping originated through a need to bring taxable lands into view by authorities and governments. These developments occurred as the state increasingly took control of extracting value from the land and increasingly managed a bio-political population (following Foucault 1986). Ordinance Survey remains the standard map source for national planning and land law (Hewitt 2010)[96].

The rise of digital technologies and PPGIS (see chapter one) has led to an increasing availability of other mapping sources. Open Street Map (OSM)[97] is compiled of data generated by its users, (Volunteered Geographic Information[98]), through GPS (Geographical Positioning Systems), now common on smartphones, who enter information into a database, which is then edited by an online community. OSM is the

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[93] This is a term used frequently in Space Syntax to relate a desirable bringing together of bodies with a network of movement.
[94] See Dhanani 2012[94] for the technical detail, an ASP output
[95] Historically regarded as the first significant detailed maps of the area and forbearer of modern mapping.
[96] This is stark contrast to the history of mapping in other countries where the surveying of land is often a legally contested practice (see Hewitt 2010)
[97] http://www.openstreetmap.org/ accessed 3/3/15
[98] see Flanagin, Miriam & Metzger 2008

world's largest crowd-sourced mapping platform. This results in uneven data coverage globally but areas of high technical capability, such as London, are well covered (Dhanani et al 2012) with reasonably high levels of accuracy. This is sometimes above that of OS (Haklay and Weber, 2008) and has the advantage of being able to show locally known routes that OS missed or did not recognise as a route, such as a small path. OSM is free and open whilst OS generates revenues by selling data to private companies, although it is free to academic institutions. The promise of OSM is linked to the developments in citizen science (see Haklay, Singleton & Parker 2008) where web technologies enable participation in science and data gathering on a huge scale. This democratisation of knowledge underpinned the ASP's online community map (chapter 1).

In order to assess which basemap to use, the ASP compared OS, OSM and Integrated Transport Network (ITN) data. The latter two basemaps have lines drawn down the road centre over (road centre line) in as few straight lines as possible. Another way to draw a line is the 'axial line' which is based on the line of sight along a road in a straight direction as far as possible regardless of the road's centre, this was drawn over the OS map. This aims to re-create the navigational technique employed a hypothetical monadic walker and is the dominant line drawn in Space Syntax. The ASP compared line types (Figure 11) and basemaps (Figure 10) in order to assess what they show and correspond to, with the ITN network as "primarily a representation of the road network; whilst the axial and OSM models explicitly set out to include pedestrian networks, [and] thus constitute a representation of the street network" (Dhanani et al 2012:32).
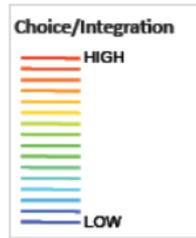
Figure 10: Images of Surbiton analysed using Axial, ITN and OSM lines (from left to right) with buildings and topography removed. Blue are lines of low movement and red high. The values are relational, as such OSM (right) has many footpaths and therefore differ

Figure 10 shows the different networks produced with the three measures. Rather than discuss the relative merits of each measure (See Dhanani et al 2012), I emphasise the selections and decisions behind the making of an image by the ASP. The line, when drawn, does not simply represent or correspond to a world out there, the materiality of the suburb, but rather creates the it as Riles notes "relations and connections are described as belonging to a network, which does not simply connect people and places but creates them." (2000:172) (see also Lacour 1996; Latour 1999). The choice of measure affects the visualisation and relative values of the network. As such different measures have emphasis in different parts of the network and would lead to different design recommendations.

The outputs of the ASP are efficacious in their advisory role to policy makers in how to make *better* places. This is enabled through the construction of images within a paradigm of objectivity. Whilst working to make visible the "untapped" value, the members of the ASP apply an objective ontology to their work. The ASP is linked directly to the state through funding and project outputs. It is involved in value extraction from urban configurations yet as Daston and Galison (1992:98) note, such images can be both bearers of political values, "constituent of a moral vision", yet at the

same time the "standard bearer of objectivity". This occurs through "routines of mechanical production" (ibid) and a standardised and reproducible procedure.

In their study of historic images in early scientific atlases, Daston and Galison demonstrate how the memetic quality of standardised images produces a perceived form of objectivity through the suppression of idiosyncrasies, obviating the need for interpretive judgement. "Professionalism" is conceived as a moral act towards the development of a method that will advance knowledge for the benefit of a population. In this sense it is a commitment to the social project, to others, to making *better*. It demands self-discipline in making reproducible images according to "the rules" and not letting the subjective urges get in the way. They state that objectivity lets "nature speak for itself" (ibid: 81), but first nature has to be decided upon. Each component of objectivity is opposed to a form of subjectivity as it "attempts to eliminate the mediating presence of the observer" (1992:82), requiring self-discipline, honesty and restraint. Objectivity is mechanical in method, restrained in morals as subjective desire is controlled. Daston & Galison's study of how the history of anatomical depiction led to the use of diagrams demonstrates how objective study requires the universal image to be created which can have an ontological equivalent in the particular. Atlas makers would rather:

> …present a scatter of individual phenomena that would stake out the range of the normal, leaving it to the reader to accomplish intuitively what the atlas maker no longer dared to do explicitly: to acquire an ability to distinguish at a glance the normal from the pathological, the typical from the anomalous, the novel from the unknown. (ibid:117).

Atlas makers considered it better to have bad images/diagrams with blurred boundaries than to have even a suspicion of subjectivity given that there was a moral ban on interpretation. Paintings and sketches were deemed too subjective, originating from an artist source. Photographs, whilst being considered like real depictions, were too particular. As such, the diagram emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a useful conduit of morally sound objectivity in that it conveyed a reproducible and useful representation that was of use to all the population, without a political agenda, it was for the greater good. It is this ability of the diagram to carry the indexes from matter to eye, from particular to universal and back again that lends it a moral weight. It is able to work for the greater good of the social project without a subjective interference. It can remain stable whilst the trace moves through a number of abstractions. These

abstractions are made and read by those who have the training and skill to do so, as such the position of 'expert' as skilled maker and reader, is a moral one. Maintaining the objectivity of the diagram is a commitment to the social project. Daston & Galison quote Marey from *La Methode Graphique* (1878) who states the diagram is "superior to all other modes of expression" as it could "cut across disciplinary boundaries to capture phenomena as diverse as the pulse of a heart and the downturn of an economy. Pictures became more than merely helpful tools; they were the words of nature itself." (1998:116)

The diagram has become the standard bearer of the objective method, free of individual or artistic violation and produced through mechanical procedures that are reproducible to any trained person. This places mechanical reproducibility within a vision of objectivity. Adler (1998), in noting the rise of mechanical reproduction of diagrams for military technology in enlightenment France, links the drive for mechanical reproducibility to changing patterns of work during the industrial period where standardisation and uniformity were key to increased production. The state, in a role of managing the economy, became the regulator and guarantor of public order. In this way objectivity enables more than images, it also makes a moral economy for particular subjectivities of work in capitalist societies. A failure to make objective images is a failure of sober judgement, a failure to control emotions and desires[99] to extend one's personal values over the social need to know objectively. As such the ability to make objective images is a commitment to a social project and its telos, the democratic whole.

The choices involved in making lines in the ASP images is a decision of cutting or keeping aspects of the material built environment, corners, roundabouts or footpaths, and of making them visible or invisible. These choices re-articulate relations, quite literally, as Space Syntax is understood to be a relational measure of potential movement. Lines are coloured according to their value, which is always relative to the system as a whole, and hence the three different images of the same city suburb emerge from different types of measure (see Figure 10). The creation and selection of the line, as a unit that forms relations, comes about through a selective erasure of other relations. These choices are made through their ability to align to other data and to show adaptability in "the network" - the city as a whole object. The ability to presence relationally at a fine scale of detail was the overriding motivation for line and basemap

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[99] Following Foucault's 1986 exegesis of how the control of desire has been linked to morally good subjectivities since Aristotelian times.

selection. This would enable the ASP to show how a healthy, economically viable and adaptive suburb is made through a universal image that can be applied to a particular circumstance. More than a specific output of the ASP, the image aimed to emphasise a particular form of relationality across a network as existent and efficacious, and as such in need of management and regulation. The aesthetic makes present the "untapped" value in the configuration of the material landscape, making its management a dynamic part of value and societal regulation.
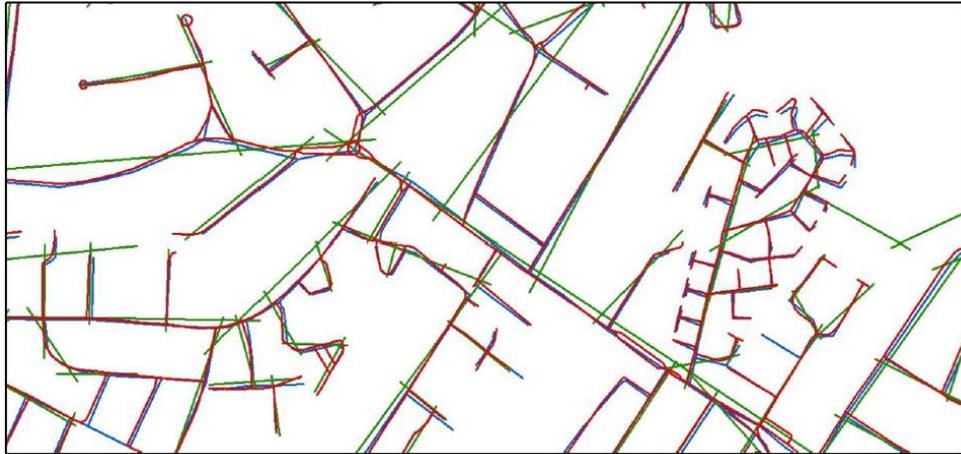
Figure 11: Overlaid image of axial (green), ITN (red) and OSM (blue) network models taken from Dhanani (2012).

Difficulties in making a universal method that could be applied to the particular saw the ASP draw boundaries around suburban areas which relate to different scales of movement. These boundaries focus the analysis to either 800meters considered a local walkable distance, 3000meters considered the furthest walkable distance or a close drive and *n,* the entire city or system[100]. As the measure and resulting visualisation is always relative to all other parts of the system, the various scales aim at focusing attention towards the different effects resulting from a change in a system. That is, if a road is built, say a bypass as occurred south of Surbiton in 1927, then this change will have an effect on all parts of the system. Any change, no matter how small will have an effect due to the ways in which "choice" and "integration" are measured. Changing the boundary of measurement eliminates the effect of changes at other scales, isolating systems to degrees of localness. This ability to choose and move between scales maintains the ASP's objectivity through its ability to provide a range of measures under

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[100] In the case of London this was measured up to the greenbelt area which provides London with a break in dense road structures

different parameters. As such the method remains constant across a need to analyse across a range of scales.

After a period of analysis and comparison the Ordinance Survey released new, previously unavailable data (in 2013). The 'Ordinance Survey Urban Paths' (OSUP) showed paths that had mostly been absent from OS and ITN data but present in OSM. After a period of discussion the ASP decided that road centre lines should be chosen over axial (line of sight) and lines were then drawn from OSUP data that now included paths. In one of the many meetings over line data, axial lines caused some confusion.

> ASPM5 "I don't know where to draw the line."

> ASPM2 "It doesn't matter the line is arbitrary."

This response was flippant and caused a shared, if geeky joke, alluding to the perceived amount of personal perception involved in drawing a line of sight over a top down, Cartesian cartographic representation of a place. In this moment the position of the expert jolted with the individual subjective, causing a disjuncture, a joke. A project member turned to me as the member of the team who spent time in the spaces under discussion, and with the people who used them, and joked - "you should give your participants an axial line".

The implicit recognition that the line is neither tangible nor sensible to the lived experience of those using the spaces of the suburb in which I was conducting my ethnography brought to attention the abstractness of the measure and the image that required both a particular eye to read it and training to create it. The line in the Space Syntax image has an aesthetic quality of its own in that an understanding and extension of value is attached to the experience and sensing of it (following Sharman 1997). The comment was then qualified by another team member, "you're not supposed to use this method [axial line - line of sight] unless you've been there and know the space". Here issues of scale and translatability became the points around which decisions were made: "the challenge of doing network analysis embedded in the real world is that it is not straight forward, in a sense these problems are what we want" (ASPM1). It was this challenge and the ability to make rational judgements to ascertain how to create the correct images; abstracting, typologising and choosing, that is the essence of being 'expert'. Expertise comes from the ability to understand and having the 'epistemic competence' to manage and create a methodology that maintain the links between

matter and representation without the data becoming unstable or inserting subjective experience. In this sense "the problems that we want" are the ones that enable the method to remain objective through posing a problem, which can be fixed and maintains the need for experts within that social project.

The OSUP road centre line, when drawn by a computer program, was perceived to miss fewer junctions whilst the axial line demanded to be checked for consistency and accuracy when used on large scale networks. Discussion of mistakes made by computerised line drawings and of objects absent from maps but possibly obstructing the line of sight (such as trees), informed the ASP's choice of line used. Accuracy and data volume were considered alongside the need to create a universally applicable method. Despite being the most common measure in Space Syntax due to the perceived correspondence with human movement, axial lines were dropped from the analysis. It was determined that they failed to remain consistent, clear and justifiable to anyone who would critique the methods, this being the always present force of reason. The perceived gaze of the outside academic enforced the scientific rational of replicability (see Latour & Woolgar 1979). However the loss of the axial line also resulted in the loss of the social data associated with it, as it was the line of sight which accurately predicated pedestrian movement. This loss constituted the necessary exclusion in the process of making commensurate data that can be rationally traced through each step and allow the particular to be analysed from a universal method. Loss of local particularity, the embedded phenomenological human movement the axial line attempts to recreate, is consequential of the demand made upon the ASP to be able to move in and out of the particular and universal and across scales. The demand is outlined by traceability of the data to its usability at a national policy level. As such, the data is always only a partial connection as it contains cuts and exclusions through each choice of data use (following Strathern 1991).

During a discussion of a formula used to group segment lines (individual units into bigger units for different scale analysis), I asked a team member what it was we were trying to find out. The answer was a measure of diversity, that is, how diverse were the activities of non-residential land use along one street segment compared to another. The aim was to see if similar activities coagulated around corners or junctions. Amidst heavy discussion of the formula, I began to feel a little lost but felt I should try to keep up, so I asked what would happen when a measure for diversity had been agreed upon

with regard to the segments of streets in the case studies measured and values that were given. This somewhat interrupted the flow but people were very patient as I trained to be expert.

> Me: "What's the point of this research, what will happen with it, where will it go?"
>
> ASPM1: "well its research, research for research sakes"
>
> [Silence and eye contact for around a second and a half]
>
> Me: "erm…no, seriously, what will happen with this data, what does it help us do?"
>
> ASPM1: "Well it tells us what conditions give rise to such things as diversity so that when planners and policy makers are looking at these spaces they know what sort of space they need to encourage"
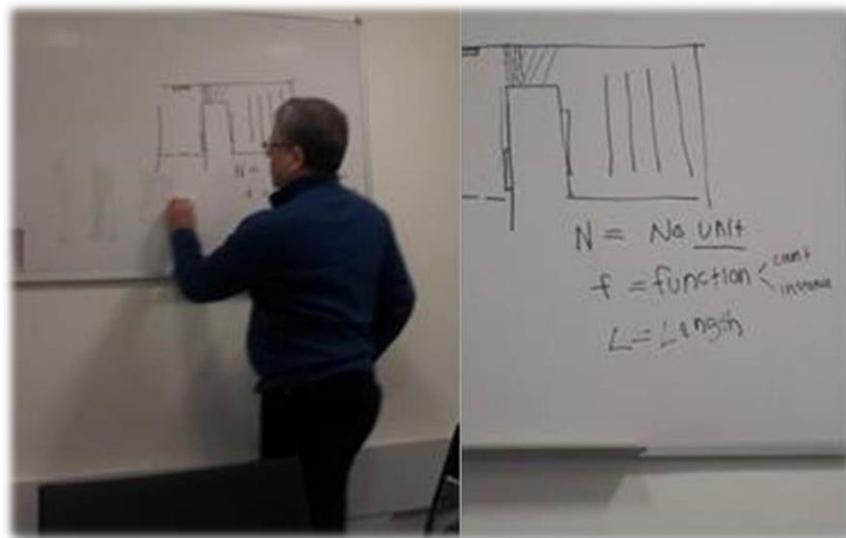
Figure 12: The team working through the various formulas through which to measure diversity.

This material adaptation or flexibility allowed for changes in the socio-economic function of those material spaces. This flexibility was considered vital for a place to maintain its 'vibrancy' and 'remain successful' (see Vaughan et al 2010; 2013) and the ASP's methodology develops a measure of this flexibility.

This was not the end for the lines, more than to be consistent; they needed to become "spatially meaningful units of analysis"[101]. Road centre lines were joined to create

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[101] Internal ASP data document.

junction segments, which are the lines that occur between two junctions (such as a street segment) and multiple lines made into single lines to reflect a street section (Figure 13). This joining enabled analysis at a local scale whilst remaining relational to a city scale (n), whilst also not creating too many lines in the system, which would then affect the relative value of each line and make the visualisation unreadable. The ability for information to move between scales is maintained in the methodology which enables a movement between the particular and the universal without loss of information.
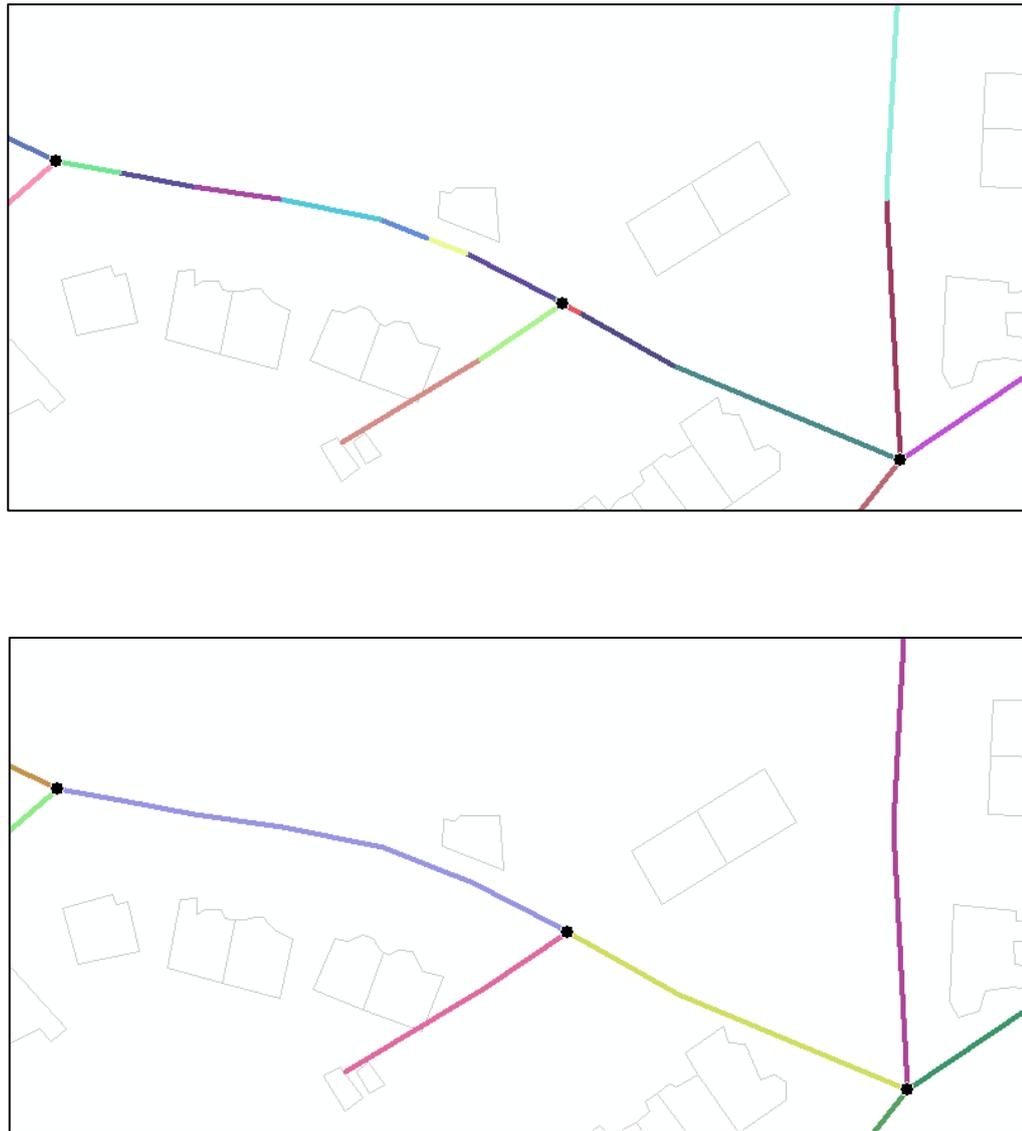
Figure 13: ITN lines (straight lines down a road centre) (top) being joined between street junctions to create a line to which a space syntax measure can adhere (bottom).

These lines were then aligned to other data - "non-domestic activity", which was considered the most appropriate phrase to describe the activities the ASP were

interested in encouraging. The next section looks at the choices and exclusions made in the data generation of land use classifications.

2.3.2 Land Use

Lines, as street segments with Space Syntax values, were aligned to "non-domestic" land use over a range of historical periods to ascertain what effects network changes, such as a road being built, would have on building types and usage.

Case Study	1880s	1910s	1960s
Surbiton	Philipson Almanac and Directory for Kingston, Surbiton and Norbiton (1876)	Kelly's Kingston, Norbiton, Surbiton and District Directory (1915)	Kelly's Directory of Surbiton (1956)
South Norwood	Ward's Croydon Directory (1874)	Ward's Croydon Directory (1915)	Ward's Croydon Directory (1956)

Table 1: List of data sources for historic 'non-domestic land use' information

'Business directories' were originally compiled by private companies for commercial use showing address and professions of locals. Residential addresses were occasionally included with ambiguity in the record as to if a profession ran from that address. They enabled professions to be found in a particular locality. They were surpassed by phone books around the 1960s with the rise of the home phone (Schlichman & Patch 2008). The directories were updated at irregular intervals and the local studies archives only had data available from particular years. As such the record would not always align with the year for which we had other sources of data (see Figure 16) but the closest year was used. Early directories were organised by the order in which the person who compiled them walked the area surveyed. The surveyor started at one side of the settlement and walked up and down each street often using the main street 'high street' as an axis. This path is evident in the layout of the directories (Figures 14 &15).
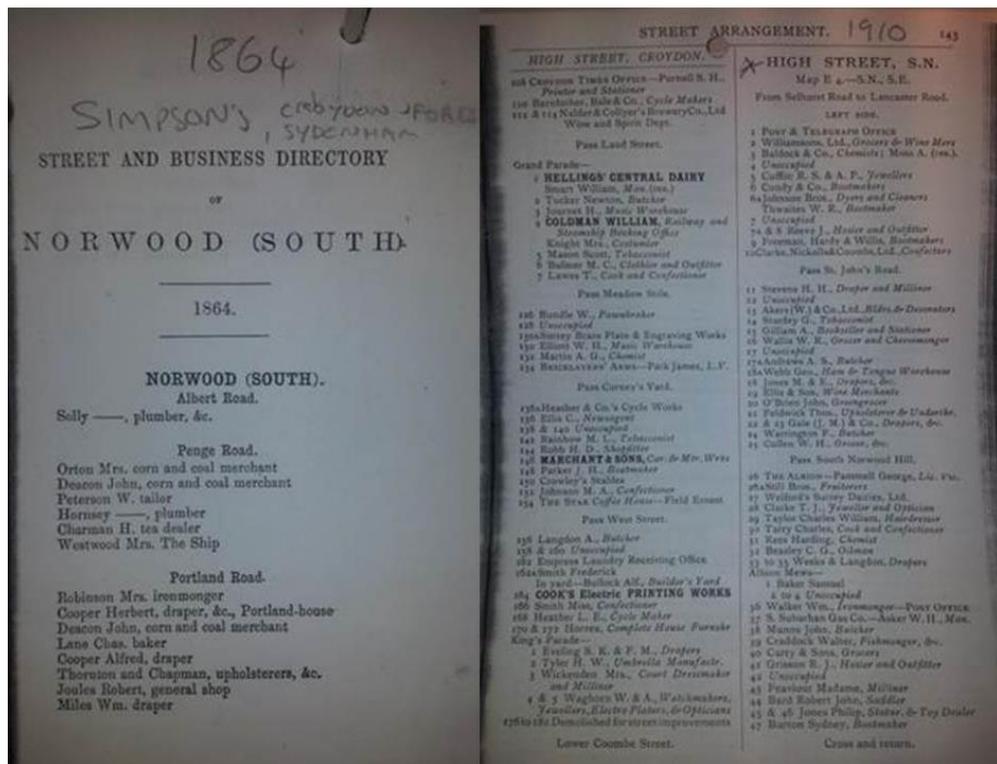
Figure 14: Business directories collected from the local studies archives laid out in the form of a perambulation.

Later, the directories were catalogued by alphabetical order of the street name in each area. An area was delimited through an assessment of where commercial activity came to an end. This relied on the local knowledge of the person making the directory. Directories were often prefaced with a page of description about the area surveyed. Of the two areas for which I was responsible for collecting data (of four within the ASP), South Norwood was always clearly defined in directories. Surbiton, however, was a more recent suburb (it arose post 1836 after the arrival of a rail line) and was catalogued as an area of Kingston until 1956 when it had a sufficiently large enough business population to demand its own cataloguing, bind and as such its own boundary definition. Within this source Surbiton's boundary directly related to the amount of business activity in the area.

For each location, I sourced directories from local study archives and entered the information into specialist GIS software to 'spatialise' the data. Each piece of information was located, as a point, over a historic map. Data points were available in spreadsheet form and different attributes of information could be visually represented through manipulating the GIS. Intense work over three months led to the data bank.

The sheer amount of work invested led to a bank of information through which various parameters and articulations of data relations could be articulated and correlated, through which new visualisations could be made and new patterns found. Through this process I became familiar with historic directory records and thus became regarded as the expert within the ASP in ensuring the types of land uses aligned to the Space Syntax movement potentials as expected. This meant looking for anomalies, such as a local shop being on a road aligned to a city wide network, such as butcher on a motorway and looking to explain it. The data underwent an extensive 'clean-up' process through which various elements were standardised, however the extent of the data captured depended on a) the availability of detailed directory sources and b) the amount of geographic data provided by the directory.

Figure 15: Business directory entry.
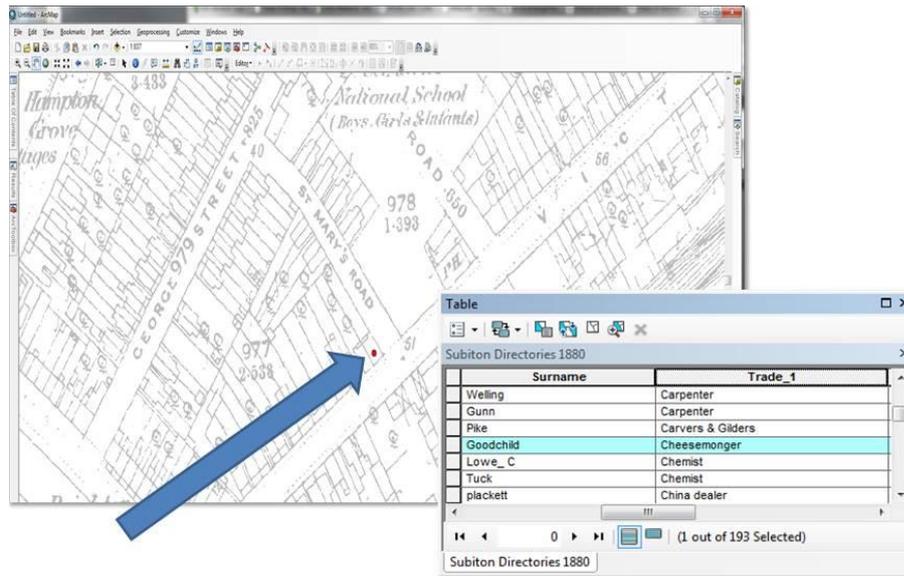
Figure 16: Making point data from business directories over OS basemaps (informed from data seen in the above figure).

Unlike the historic time periods, contemporary data has no directories. As such, a researcher[102] surveyed the areas by foot. However problems arose regarding where to stop surveying, where to determine the boundary and how to measure it objectively?

Over many months, various boundaries were discussed. Rather than attempt to define a boundary, a similar method to the one used in the historic directories was employed. A researcher walked until they felt there were no occurrences of non-domestic building use. As such, the boundary was made through a perambulation of the area involving a bodily immersion in the streets analysed. The researcher carried a paper map[103] for annotation, which was later tabulated into data and transferred into GIS to make images. This method created the "fieldwork boundary". The ASP data document (which compiles all data methodology) stated, "The area was surveyed as long as it showed possible non-domestic use; after which, if there was *a feeling* that the area was wholly residential, the researcher turned back and moved on to another area" [Emphasis added]. Here the phenomenological *feeling* of a place guided the measure of a boundary that guided the forms of relations and values of the space syntax measures.

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[102] Another PhD student on the ASP.
[103] Initially this was a tablet computer but it didn't work in the rain, after many thoughts we used paper.

Issues of scale and translatability occurred between historical periods as areas significantly changed over time in their building density, size and relations to surrounding areas. A "comparative boundary" was drawn;

> "The comparative boundary is defined as the lowest spatial common denominator for the areas, covering all time periods (1880s, 1910s, 1960s, and 2013) and would be used to compare data statistically across time and in relation to the spatial analysis. Notably this doesn't preclude analysis of a single area's expansion and contraction across time and of course the full data sets collated should be retained, but there will need to be an additional column to indicate whether or not a business is within the comparative boundary."[104]

Rules resulting from questions such as 'will the boundary encompasses both sides of the road?', or, 'will it cut through buildings?' were discussed and debated to enable a consistent method. Eight months later this was reworked as focus moved from the boundary to the definition of diversity on a junction segment;

Box 1: the rules

The Comparative Boundary is set as a 40m buffer of Junction Segments that have non-domestic occurrences throughout the time periods.

The boundary should be considered a 'fuzzy' one, in that it is not to be taken literally. As such, the line is visualised in subsequent graphics as a 'dotted' line.

The line may cut through buildings.

It may intersect other Junction Segments; however, unless the Junction Segment is one of the ones identified as having non-domestic occurrences throughout time, the analysis excludes it.

There may occasionally be non-domestic occurrences that fall outside of the boundary, but are still on the junction segment. They are included in the analysis as they are still part of the Junction Segment; the Junction Segment is the defining object for what's included/excluded from the comparative area.

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[104] ASP data document.

Figure 17: Surbiton boundary line (left)

Figure 18: South Norwood boundary line (right). Images only show 'non-domestic buildings' roads with the boundary line (darker shade) and outside (lighter shade)

With two boundaries, ("fieldwork" and "comparative") the data can be read in a way that obviates any anomalies and remains objective, as the document demonstrates:

> "Occasionally project notes refer also to a fieldwork boundary when writing about historic data. This is a misnomer, given that the extents of the data on the historic situation depend on a variety of parameters, such as how the place was named at the time, how far the surveyor walked and so on[...] This leaves two options: of studying *all* data for each period, or comparing across time using the comparative boundary."

The images needed to 'work' and to do so they needed to remain vibrant, that is to have a clear ability to transfer value to the reader. The ASP images needed to be aesthetic (Eagleton 1990) in that they can be perceived by expert readers, such as other Space Syntax academics, and confer the forms of value the ASP were looking for, often revealing a surprise, things that one did not know one was looking for. Through looking at and sensing the image an expert would be able to read the indexical links (following Gell 1998) in the image and trace those links down to the specific material form and up to the universal methodical principles. These indexes would flow in different ways once the various aspects of data, movement, building type and land use data had been aligned and created new, visible relations in the image. It is the ability to make a visualisation that allows new potential value, "untapped potential", to be released from the configuration of urban form. This relation of image and sense is the potent and efficacious aspects of the aesthesis where experience of particular values of the suburb can be recreated through sensing the image (following Sharman 1997). All

other data was stripped away leaving just those elements to be compared within particular boundaries and scales.

Another boundary, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Town Centre Boundary, was used to link the ASP data to previous research that derived boundaries from local government definitions (see Llyod et al 2003). These boundaries excluded industrial and other non-retail, non-residential activity, and are considered 'fuzzy' in that they are likely to change over time, but their inclusion allowed objectivity, as determined by the ASP and the research community, through the ability to make comparison and reproduce the method. The methodology of understanding the materials of the suburb was designed so that the images and knowledges produced could circulate without loss or compromise to the representational capacity of the image. This capacity works in two ways, down to the specific resemblance to the form of the world and up to meet the 'need to understand' as defined by the project, its funders and its community. Data emerged through a number of decisions around the necessary inclusions, exclusions, categories, and typologies that allowed lines to work through the aesthetic of the image. That is, the lines carried information regarding the potential values of places, and thus would allow policy makers to *see* "what sort of spaces should be encouraged" (ASPM1). The line needed to remain traceable through its stages of abstraction and representation, which was detailed in the ASP data document in order to track methodology.

The development of a methodology which is traceable, rational and objective requires significant amounts of time, work and skill. The expertise required, a "skilled doing", lent the members of the ASP an authoritative voice with regards to determining the forms and visibility of value understood within the suburbs. They were the authoritative "intellectuals" that is "skilled knowers" (Boyer 2008). Large amounts of time and resources were spent to produce work that, once put together with other data might not produce the desired image. An image that could not transfer value, that could not be read, would not be used. Any break in the traceability if the indexical link would comprise the objective method. A sober rationality was needed to make judgements and remain motivated. Members of the team conceded that their data, on which they had spent a considerable amount of time may not be used. Notions of objective, degrees of readability and the extent to which data could be lost (such as a line running over a building or not) would be debated. The work, effort and energy spent was done

through a commitment to the objective method which serves the production of useful knowledge that provides an ability to find "untapped" value in the material built environment. This method, designed to be universal and contribute to national planning policy is a commitment to the wider social project of managing the built environment for the population through the state. The ASP informs other academic projects, think tanks, government policy and informs media debates. Through creating relational and understandable measures through the image which reveals "untapped potential" local government and state policy makers are able to manage the materials of the suburbs better. The ASP's outputs advise on what buildings, roads are built, what business are encouraged to locate where and what the role of suburbs are in wider society.

Figure 19: Explaining, translating and making through drawing lines.

2.3.3 Dots.

As lines indicate flows of movement, dots indicate places along those flows that emerge in relation to them. To create this aspect of the image, segments of the tiled Historical Ordinance Survey maps (EDINA data) (see Figure 20) are stitched together via a

computer program to create a specific map. This process also allows OS to keep their data, which has to be ordered tile by tile, secure and controlled as it is commercially sensitive data[105]. A map that appears to be a snapshot of an area at a specific date may have actually been compiled over many years as the image below shows multiple dates of surveying go into making a single map image.

Time Period	Range
1880s	1865 - 1894
1910s	1908 - 1925
1960s	1947 - 1976
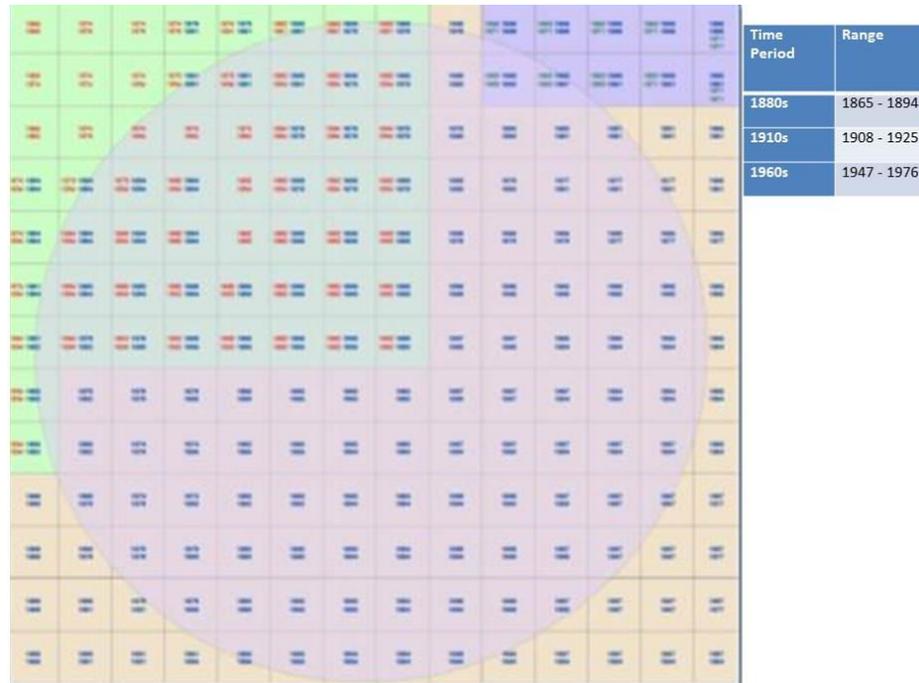
Figure 20: Map tiles showing different years in which they were made (squares) and an arbitrary area boundary around Surbiton (circle).

Data from business directories were then checked against this map for anomalies. When a business did not correspond to the material infrastructure, that is it had no building, it showed up as a "floating dot". This was due to the incommensurable elements of data - such as when a street or a building was not originally on a map due to the physical changes to the area over the years in which the map and business directories were compiled. Discussions during the ASP meetings addressed the challenge of representing a range of "invisible data" in the historic and contemporary records given that maps do not allow for measurements of upper floors, building frontage, floor space, shared spaces and so on.

Automated software was used to recognise building shapes in digitised historic maps and align them with a Space Syntax line. Within a 'building only layer' a building was associated with a use type. Dots, which represented a spatial location of 'non-domestic

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[105] OSM data is seen as a potential threat to this but is not yet as competitive.

use', were categorised and attributed to buildings. A classification scheme was sourced from a previous research project in the Bartlett[106] which allowed commensurability with that data. Three team members, including myself, sat in a particularly miserable, windowless room with little space and humming office lights, and worked to assign a classification to each dot. This was done collaboratively to ensure consistency in classification types over two days. The suppression of emotive bodily responses to terrible office design was necessary in order to get work done and ensure objective data was produced; we were committed to the quality of the data. This commitment to data was a reflection of our commitment to each other as producers of data and to the social project of making knowledge for the greater good. Once each building had a use type classification it was associated to a Space Syntax line to correlate to a degree of movement.

Figure 21: (left) Dots containing information as to building use by classification.

Figure 22: (right) building front attached to segment line.

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[106] See appendix A

Figure 23: Surbiton 1880, 1910, 1960 and 2013 (top-left, top-right, bottom-left, bottom-right, respectively), with contemporaneous background mapping and land uses, overlaid with segment angular integration 800 metres.

The ASP produced 'meaningful' images through alignment of Space Syntax lines, land uses and building shapes. The "conditions that give rise to such things as diversity" (ASPM1) was understood by the ASP and the particular aspects of what allowed particular places to endure as economically successful was understood through a universal set of rules and measurements.

Meaningfulness was established through the correct selections, classifications, typologies, exclusions and inclusions that produce commensurate and effective data. Traceable alignments of data enabled the visible to materialise from the previously invisible. This visibility was not considered the point at which answers were achieved, rather the point at which questions could be asked of the images that are "gestures that invite further gestures" (Burrows 2014 following Châtelet 1993). The next section aims to bring into focus how the affective aesthetic of these images work to produce a coherent object, the suburb, and the expert knowledge that allows for its regulation and control. The ASP's output informs think tanks, policy and local council decisions. The ASP's academic work is directly part of a moral project of managing resources at a national level for the benefit of the population.

2.4 The Images as Movable Object.

The technical processes of academic experts allow for the alignments of data elements and the production of a visual aesthetic that is able to reveal the "untapped potential" of the built environment whilst remaining stable. The image, made through a common matric of well worked out rules alludes to a promise of *better* place design, policy recommendations and economic use. This promise of better emerges from the work of the ASP and moves through its social network of advisory boards, academic peers into government policy and design practice for the benefit of the population. The ability for the image to move whilst remaining authoritative, that is without a loss of perceived objectivity and rationality is dependent on its ability not only to carry indexes but also on the ability of the epistemic jurisdiction of the academic to remain stable as the trace moves from matter to image and back.

The image must be analogous to the suburb and to desired value as it moves. Barbara Maria Stafford writes in consideration of analogy that, "Analogia, or ana/logos, signifies 'according to due ratio' and 'according to the same kind of way'" (2001:8). Analogon is the proportion of similarity that exists between two or more apparently dissimilar things. Alignments, made and brought together to extend the value potential of urban infrastructure, have a materialising effect and generative potency. This process, of stabilising disparate elements of data into alignment to produce an image, undertaken by skilled practitioners from different disciplines, requires consensus to create a mutually intelligible form of objective data. Concessions include agreeing upon the terms of data exclusions that will still allow for the objective, rational and traceable data to endure. The process of alignment by the ASP is congruent with the moral substance of each practitioner, as they are responsible for producing objective data with rational and sober judgement. Any pollution of that data means that non-objective, subjective desire, value or non-rational judgement can be traced to the data producer, the academic. As such, the creation of the images is serious work that, whilst professional, requires personal concessions, communication and management of relations.

The capacity of images "to span the gap between the contingent and the absolute" (Stafford 2001:28) give them a force and efficacy to make suburbs. Alignments of data create new relations, or intra-actions (following Barad 2007) where new stable, knowable phenomena, suburbs, are produced with all their "untapped potential" visible. Using Bohr's insights into the nature of measurement (following Barad 2007) the

ontological referent in this analysis is not the 'object out there' the suburb, but the 'phenomena', the *knowable* suburb as a set of relations that can be managed objectively. Production of the phenomena, the suburb as image, enables control of the suburb through an extension of objectively rational method to planning discourses and policy which shape the suburban form. The ASP cites a fractured and irrelevant planning policy, "overly focused on the urban centres" (see Vaughan et al 2010) into which they interject a suburban specific methodology of tracing and extracting value.

Acts of measuring, selecting and presenceing aspects of data allows the "untapped potential" of the suburb to emerge, from the "the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting components." (Barad 2007:32). Data is cut, selected, abstracted and reduced from the 'real', and following particular understandings of desirable value, made present in images which inform action towards the suburban built environment. These cuts isolate elements of the material-discursive qualities of suburbs so that they can be typologiesed[107], aligned and made into moveable data[108]. Generalisation, following Strathern (1991), results in a loss of information as we move from the particular to the general. This loss, cuts of exclusion and inclusion as analysis moves in and out between scales of representing the 'real'[109], produce different relations and understandings of that under consideration. Particular phenomena emerge from particular cuts[110], what remains is the trace of the real, the index to the material world and particular aspects of its desired form. In Latour's analysis of soil scientists in the Amazon he describes the process of working with the material soil and the process of creating typologies, categories and data. As data is categorised it is able to move through scientific communities of knowledge, be compared, calculated and assessed through a universal method of measurement. However as it moves through successive categorisations (amplified) it loses a particularity, a localness, nuisance is lost.

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[107] values and classifications of business type, building shape and movement economies
[108] see Latour 1999 on soil scientists in the amazon for a similar tracing of cuts
[109] Understood as an absolute or 'Lacianian real'
[110] See Bohr (in Barad 2007) on the double split experiment in regard to how position and momentum cannot not be measured together.
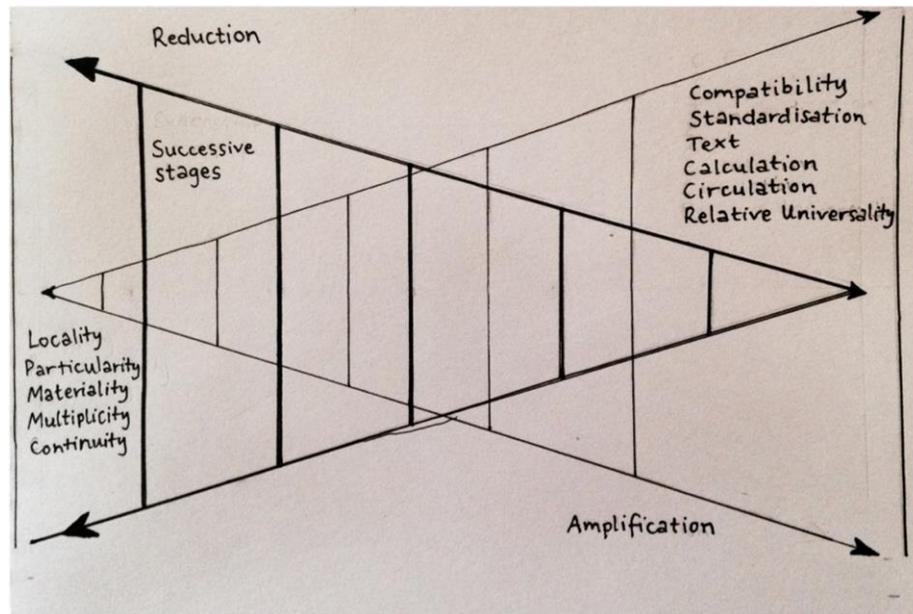
Figure 24: The transformation at each step of the reference may be pictured as a trade-off between what is gained (amplification) and what is lost (reduction) at each information-producing step. (re-drawn from Latour 1999:72).

There is a gap between the 'real' and its representation which occurs through multiple iterations and abstractions in the chain of categorisations and representations that make the world understandable. The gap between matter and form is traversed by the phenomena, whilst other properties are not (see Figure 24). This loss is a compound of the gap that occurs between matter and form in the process of representation (see Figure 25). Latour states that the "deambulatory" conception of reference through a series of transformations means that each one allows a small gap between "form" and "matter". What remains is an index which allows the movement up to abstraction and down to the particular, this index he calls the "circulating reference". This can stay whilst other indexes can be lost. Which reference to select depends on what it is that is being looked for, such as socio-economic value in the built environment. This stability, enabled by a common commensurate reference, must be accepted by all involved in the process.
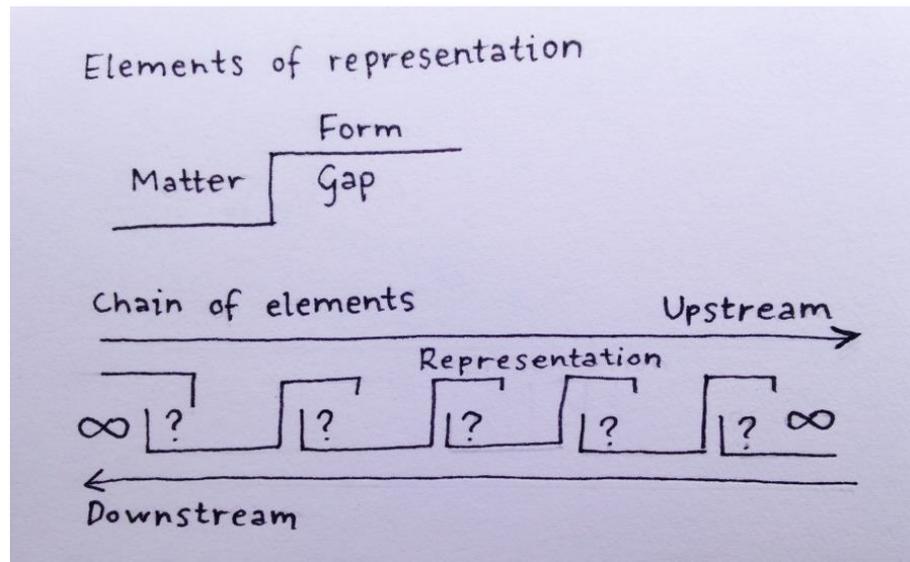
Figure 25: The 'deabulatory' conception of reference following a series of transformations. (re-drawn from Latour 1999:72)

It is the partible and moveable elements of the representation that form the phenomena from the real; what remains is the index what carries value, that which may show what is desired and can be known;

> phenomena, however, are not found at the *meeting point* between things and the forms of the human mind; phenomena are what *circulates* all along the reversible chain of transformations, at each step losing some properties to gain others that render them compatible with already – established centres of circulation. (Latour 1999:71 emphasis in original).

These 'established centres of circulation' are embodied in the members of the ASP and practises of the academia, policy think tanks and planning law. The ability to move up and down chains of transformations, the translatability and traceability of the representations and the rational, objective method of production give the phenomena, the suburb as image, its force and its vitality. If at any point the phenomena were unable to refer, to trace back, and to be cut off it would cease to expand and would break, it would be discounted. As social need changes, such as to have less economic unpredictability in the high street, different phenomena emerge from the processes of tracing. However this traceability can only be done by those who know how the abstractions (Compare Figures 26 & 27) between the real suburb and the image have been made, it can only be traced, read and understood by experts.
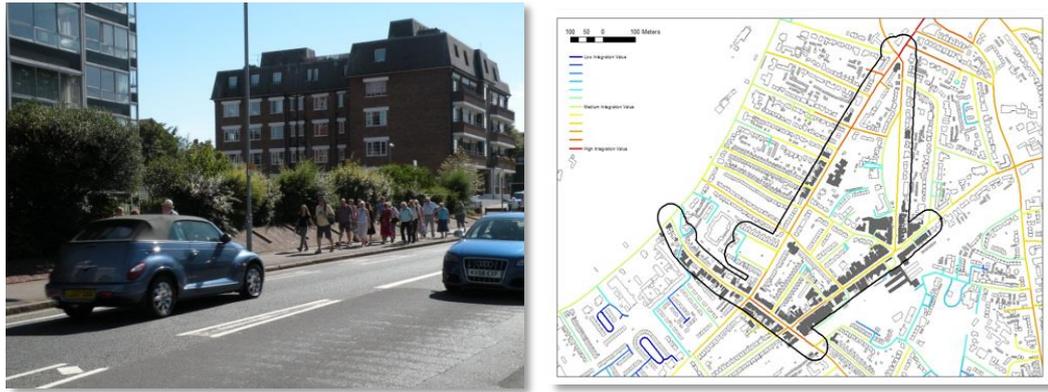
Figure 26: A representation of Surbiton - People moving down a street in Surbiton to see some non-domestic heritage located in the large white area at the top left of the next figure (also see chapter 5)

Figure 27: A representation of Surbiton Non-domestic land use of Surbiton with boundary line and movement economy.

Through alignments, justified and rational, new aesthetic of relations are produced, a phenomena as object, the understandable suburb, presenced and readable by the intellectual (Figure 27) as image. Placing the data in alignments produces a network, a series of connections, streets-to-street, streets-to-buildings, building-to-use, which create a universal method of understanding any particular aspect of the city an object. This method binds different buildings, streets and bodies in the aim of extracting "untapped" value. This city as object, as a network, emerges from a need to manage the materials of the built environment to make *better* places for the population. The creation of a network of alignments produces a phenomenon which remains (the city as object), via abstractions and the reference , whilst allowing a scaling in and out and as such, produces an ontological real, a place that matters, as Green, Harvey & Knox states in regard to communication technologies.

> …a particular notion of "network" and its apparently self-evident and rather special capacity to overcome problems of scalar differences and distances tended to generate an idealized imperative to connect that failed to recognize that connections usually involve disconnections, entanglements, and constraints. At the same time, everyone involved in the networking projects in which we participated was well aware that this idealized network did not yet exist, or not entirely. However, this did not make it potentially less "real": it was a fantasy in Zizek's terms, and if backed up by sufficient official and aesthetic power fantasies have a habit of making themselves felt as ontologically real. (2005:817)

This feeling of the 'ontological real' allows a presence of different elements, aligned and visualized to produce surprising effects. That which could not be known can now be seen and known. A suburb emerges as mutually recognisable and as contributing to a moral good through objective reference. The ASP images promise a way to economic advancement, better planning, better design. Harvey & Knox (2012) take Jane Bennett's notion of enchantment which is decoupled from the supernatural phenomena it is usually associated with and aligned with a 'mood' or 'affect' brought about through a surprise encounter (Harvey & Knox 2012:523). Images can be tantalising and enthralling. The ability to make visual images, with their ability to make visible the invisible through following a methodology of objective rules allows the city, as object to be understood. This understanding, and the expert's image that "promises", is able to keep malignant forces at bay as the ASP enables '*better*' planning decisions to be made.

Images are not the final output of expert process, they carry a second order affect, they align in new ways as they start to reveal and produce in themselves, they are "gestures that invite further gestures" (Burrows 2014 following Châtelet 1993). The process of making the images itself requires a strong team that can work together to produce data through consensus, building a common matric of objectivity. Diagrams, as "gestures to invite further gestures" require re-working, re-aligning and re-articulating of data to the point of almost exhaustion. This tension of re-working has to be managed between experts with different roles in producing data. A key part of this is happy and conducive personal and professional relations, enabled through jokes and shared cake.

2.5 Eyeballing the data.

Throughout the project's bi-weekly meetings a notable research dynamic occurred between those academics who were able to develop and generate the technical aspects of the images and those who asked for new parameters for the images being made[111]. Conversations overwhelmingly concerned questions of how to spend the limited time and resources of the team on making what type of visualisations. What was made would depend on the selection of parameters and measurements such as those discussed above, each perimeter change would alter the visualisation producing a totally new with

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[111] For want of a better terminology this was the division between technical experts and theoretical experts.

alignments and different values of place. The amount of time and computing power needed to run each remodelling was significant, as such the team did not want to run models unless they had a reasonable idea of what is was the visualisation may be able to show and if it would be useful.

During one meeting a data set that had been requested was not ready as it had not been cleaned or standardised before being run. ASPM2 defended the point of asking for repeated runs of data with minor changes as a process of "not knowing what you have until you have it". Other team members added "this work is difficult to anticipate as it is so unintuitive". The discussion and decision on where to spend time and on whether or not visualisations should be re-run occurred in the spirt of team co-operation, however the time and resources of people, who are all keen to get useful results from the project, is at stake. Asking for data to be re-run or cleaned, or arguing that such processes are not needed could give rise to tension. Mechanisms for creating an atmosphere in which such tensions do not arise such as laughing at comparatively poor computerisation speeds, at the technical abilities of team members, or through sharing personal stories at the start and end of meetings produce commensality through personal interactions. Losses of data are understood as part of the process. At most meetings the principal investigator brought home baked cake. The cake was always excellent and I usually took a piece to have with some tea. Sharing of cake placed a material common substance, ingested by all around a table onto which data was placed, discussed and drawn. The cake produced cohesion through a gift offering and taking enforcing a mutually recognised respect for the work of others. As a proxy for cohesion it worked well, especially as it was really good, homemade cake. This wasn't necessarily needed but it certainly helped re-inforce the relations between moral bodies of committed workers.

Figure 28: Spot the cake amidst the data.

In a project of this nature it was easy to get lost in technical language. As to not talk across each other team members would explain technical aspects of their conversations to others through hand images and paper hand outs (see figure 19). These scribbles aided in explanation of expectations prior to a visualisation, relations could be talked through before work and time was invested. They prefigured the outputs as justifiable work. Without such visualisations the conversations would be abstract or rather would lack sufficient linguistic referent to describe the phenomena that needed to be made. This process of visualising is not simply the outcome of a process but rather *is* the process through which making better occurs. As Gilles Châtelet argues diagrams "work as prosthetic devices that become vehicles of intuition and thought" (1993:xiii);

> Visual images have an efficacy of their own in their ability to show a spatial relation. Diagrams hardly stand as isolated figures but are placed within a narrative setting. They become - or are intended to become - part of a structured argument. (ibid:xvii).

A discussion of a need for a measure of diversity[112] revolved around the type of data needed to talk to the debates in public policy and mainstream news around the health of

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[112] Of land use types

high streets[113]. The project had been working on a 'hedgerow idea' as an analogy linking the diversity of ecological life forms found within lines of hedgerows to the diversity of uses a modern suburban high streets might need to meet social needs. Discussion ran onto what type of technical measures would be needed in order to produce the visualisations. At a point when there seemed to be numerous options without any clear opinion on which one to take. ASPM3 stated that "any would do". This was not so much a laissez-faire attitude to the visualisation but rather as they explained;

> "you don't really know what you want until you can see what it is you have, I don't really see diversity as a measure, more a concept I'd like to just get it down so we can really *eyeball the data* and ask questions of it".

2.6 Second order affects

The visual image creates a space for intuition, it has an affective property which allows *'better'* to be understood and made. Through making present relations the image works as an aesthetic which "attach[es] values to experience" (Sharman 1997:178). Bringing different elements of data into direct relation to each other in one form, the image, creates a new experience of relations, it makes the invisible visible. This is then acted towards as a desired value and the material form of the suburbs are made through the delimitations of planning regulations turning image back into form. Through such work the suburb is known, made visible and crafted. The images produced are pivotal points of visibility that deposit and give out knowledge enabling judgements of relations to be made. As such, experts who can read the indexes of the images, advise as 'intellectuals' on the 'good use' of space allowing 'better' to occur and prevent bad design.

This aesthetic, which requires expert reading, allows the circulation of value, meaning and power into an effective trajectory. Academic expertise determines and confers the value of the built environment and in this sense we can assess Carr's assertion that;

> Expertise is also always ideological because it is implicated in semistable hierarchies of value that authorize particular ways of seeing

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[113] See the Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets Portas, 2011. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6292/2081646.pdf

and speaking as expert. Expertise is arguably the exemplar of what Silverstein calls *"second order indexicality"* (1992, 2003)—that is, historically constituted and contingent metadiscursive practices (e.g., rationalizations, evaluations, diagnoses) that mediate between would-be experts and some set of cultural goods (2010:18 emphasis added)

The 'social good', as moral commitment to the process of knowledge production for the benefit of the population, allows the network to endure (see Green, Harvey & Knox 2005:807) as efficacious form. The 'city as object', the 'network', the 'image' work as what Carsten & Hugh Jones (1995) calls "illusory objects" in that they have the capacity, as coherent forms to resolve disparate social problems. As outlined above space syntax analysis proceeds through the idea of generative rules, these rules give rise to a structure which can be read or 'got at'. The ASP makes particular relations visible as the phenomena of suburb, as image, and thereby able to be regulated and managed (see Vaughan et al 2008; Jones et al 2008, Griffiths et al 2008). This process acts as a form of language, which is neither mathematic nor linguistic, nor I argue morphic, rather it is aesthetic (following Sharman 1997). Value is attached and inferred from a sensorial relation to the image, it has an affective quality in that it produces a disposition about the value of a relation, indexes can be traced up and down from image to form, from universal to particular by the expert. Through this *better* can be made within a mutually recognisable ontological moral good, but only by those who can make and trace the indexical links.

The aesthetic provides a material affective bridge between the worlds of the seen and the unseen. Through the traceable index, desired value can move from a policy utterance such as "what sort of spaces they need to encourage" (ASPM1) down to a material crafting of the suburb. Conversely it can move from a material form, such as the need to understand place boundaries through a feeling of an edge, into an utterance such as the need for a boundary in a business directory. In his discussion of the ways in which the Sumbanese examine the entrails of chickens for marks which represent the words of the spirts, Webb Keane (2013) notes how the marks bring the world of the invisible into the realm of the visible. The ontological orientation, is of utterance preceding the material form of the word, into which it is made. Derrida (1978) conversely posits that perhaps a material or visible entity such a mark on a wall or another human may have given rise to the need for utterance. These orientations have particular political trajectories in that:

> Transductions among different semiotic modalities are practical
> analogues for relations between phenomenal and non-phenomenal
> worlds. But they are not merely representations. They derive their
> efficacy, impart, from their manifest manipulation of the relationship
> between two domains by operating within the world of perception"
> (Keane, 2013:13)

The line, as aesthetic, draws its efficacy from its ability to 're-distribute the sensible' (see Ranciere 2010) from matter to representation and vice versa in an ongoing flow up and down. The key focus of analysis here is not the order of semiotic relation but rather what the production and flows of making relations is doing in shaping subjectivities, such as experts, and material arrangements such as 'the city'. In her discussion of René Descartes, Broadsky Lacour draws attention to the onto-epistemological[114] notion of the line through which the world is made. The line, when drawn creates an 'other', "a sign which thinks", which in a Descartian frame is the self 'I think therefore I am'. The line is an enabler; it is both the basis and the articulation of language through which the world becomes. However the world becomes through particular lines (see Deleuze & Guattari 1987), the drawing of the line is the temporary recognition of a sign needed to bring about an instance of a relation through which order can adhere. The line is stabilising and assembling. Its visualisation produces a coherent and moral generative structure, making *better*. As such the line does not simply show, but produces the relations and the consequential action towards them. Anthony Vidler, in his work on diagrams asserts that "operating between form and word, space and language, the diagram is both constitutive and projective; it is performative rather than representation" (Vidler 2000:6) and with particular reference to digitised imaginary Vidler states;

> More fundamentally, the intersection of diagram and materiality
> impelled by digitalization upsets the semiotic distinctions drawn by
> Charles Sanders Peirce as the diagram becomes less and less an icon
> and more and more a blueprint or, alternatively, the icon increasingly
> takes on the characteristics of an object in the world. The clearest
> example of this shift would be the generation of digital topographies
> that include in their modelling "data" that would normally be
> separately diagrammed the flows of traffic, changes in climate,
> orientation, existing settlement, demographic trends, and the like
> (Ibid: 17)

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[114] Whereby the world is made through the process of knowing.

The digital diagram acts like a semi-stable-object, in that it is a latent manifestation of multiple possibilities. There remains, through the re-ordering of buried data a potential re-articulation of the relation. Following Châtelet

> diagrams are not static but project virtuality onto the space which they seek to represent" they are "lines of force" which are incitements to provoke space, as diagrams, as dotted-line experiments alluding to real experiments that manifest latent actions (1993:166)

In short, they make suburbs.

2.7 Conclusions

The technical procedures that academic experts (with skilled ways of doing) undertake, in order to produce images that have an affective quality, occur through an objective paradigm of procedure. Data outputs, as an image of alignments, are read as aesthetics which transfer value through their revelation of relations, where new potentials can be seen. The ASPs expertise gives the academy an ability to know and as such an intellectual position with authority and moral character, through objectivity, to make suburbs. This objectivity must be maintained, managed and regulated to allow traceable phenomena to endure as real, rational and of value, as it moves. Universal certainty and epistemological clarity are enabled by, and enabling of, moral action and consistency. Further, through the maintenance of objectivity, enabled by the gaze of peer review, trust in the hierarchies of regulation is enabled. Any contradiction, break in the chain or pollution to objective, traceable procedure would result in the expertise being discountable.

Returning to the 'moment' (chapter 1) the ASP's refusal of the Seething story can be understood as a moral act in order to maintain clear and traceable knowledge in the Community Map at a particular scale (more than local). Presenting a mountain as destroyed by a giant as "fact" would have polluted this clear line of communication. This clear, traceable and rational knowledge emerges within a paradigm of objectivity. In building the tools that enable knowability across space, experts must maintain the traceable line. This is the basis of deliberative democracy, where communication is clear and understandable. However adding the story was also considered a moral act by

Seethingers. In the next chapter I look at the social productivity of being "stupid". Unlike the ASP, where the index needed to be able to move scales of policy at a national level, in Seething localness is the key, in many ways 'you have to be there', the story is not to be known, clear or rational so that it can draw you in. In Seething, body and mind are aligned as Seething in a "state of mind" where a local subject, as citizen (see chapter 5) is the moral or ethical substance that asserts a form of citizen.

Ethical substance is maintained in the ASP through the removal of subjective experience, as Boyer points out intellectual professionals tend to absent the body from intellectual activity (see 2005). It had been agreed that the ASP would be included in my ethnography from the start. As I typed during a meeting a joke (ish) was made "as long as you don't start all your notes about cake". I did however and had been doing for some time[115] as cake was productive of team work, commensality and maintained moral relations amidst concessions in data use[116]. The request that it be excluded as not-relevant, and of no sense to the objective making of images[117] was a request to maintain a representation of the ASP as rational, objective and without any subjective idiosyncrasies (see Daston & Galison 1998). The body is present in the production of data, in the speed in which work is done in crap rooms and how boundaries are made through walking and feeling. The eye emerges as something conceptualised as extraneous to the body in that it is a tool through which to sense and *see* rather than to feel. The procedures of being expert also produce an ethical substance, the moral coherency of the sober and rational practitioner; the trained expert is a particular subjectivity of the disciplined rational actor, a moral intellectual body, who eats cake.

In this chapter I have looked at how to make a suburb. This is done through aligning data that can move and transfer value extensions of particular potentials of the landscape to advance a particular social project. The next chapter looks at the extension of the values of a particular social project through not aligning data, but rather making disjuncture's in alignments, through being "stupid", which involves making cake, talking about it, but not necessarily eating it.

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[115] With permissions given.

[116] Made through walking around in the rain and after sitting in shit rooms.

[117] the absence of sense is the definition of Stupid I the OED
http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stupid accessed 3/3/15

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~~Come fail with me.~~

The Social Productivity of Being "Stupid".

Chapter 2 looks at the mechanisms and procedures of producing objective, knowable data - the suburb, as a stable phenomenon. Returning to chapter 1 and the moment of refusal, whereby the Seething Villagers were unable to submit information, the refusal of information to the map can be understood as a moral act. The refusal enables the data to remain clean and coherent at a particular scale of commutative clarity. This chapter focuses on the social productivity of the story that was refused, which in the words of the Villagers (and the moderators) was daft, funny, silly and "stupid"[118].

Stupid, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is "the lack of sense"[119]. The Seething events are nonsensical in that they appear incomprehensible at first encounter. As one starts to learn the stories, mechanisms of invention and play they start to make a particular sort of sense. A way into sense occurs through the ways in which the stories closely align with common discourses and tropes such as social movements (Seething Guilds), the heritage of suburbs (ancient legends) and biblical events (fishing and feeding the crowds). The term 'almost-stupid' may be more appropriate as it is the close alignment of Seething events to the dominant discourses and symbols that allows an obviation, that is, a supplanting of a relation. However I use the term "stupid" as this was a term used by informants to describe the events. 'Stupid' works through aligning and creating a small twist, playing in the gap, this alignment to existing tropes with a twist results in different outputs through the involuntary mechanism. As the flow between meaning and matter is constantly being transferred, alignments and twists can re-orientate meanings, associations and affects.

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[118] This is an ethnographic term used by my informants, both Seethingers and the map moderator.
[119] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stupid accessed 3/3/15

'Stupid' is different to failure in that failure comes as a result of a moral accusation levelled at a unfulfilled trajectory of a possible future, - it was meant to happen but it did not. Whereas 'stupid' has a productive element in regard to what that future should be and how the conditions of life in that future are set out. Seethingers occupy a 'not this, not that' position, that is they are neither outside life nor do they accept the current trajectory of it, they are on the threshold. They push at the boundaries of normative culture in order to make a swerve. 'Stupid' refuses moral accusations of suburban and late liberal subjectivities by rendering the accusations incapable of cohering to the subject through this play. Seethingers, through being 'stupid', are not this or that because they are not trying to be this, or that. The giant puppets, improbable guilds, which mimic those from the neighbouring area of Kingston, (the regional centre of governance) draw an analogy that says 'we can't possibly be this'. They apply the normative rule to themselves to show how it does not fit, they create a gap and new forms of life emerge.

Figure 29: Seething Parade fronted by Thamas Deeton the giant.

3.1 Not 'This' Not 'That'

Elizabeth Povinelli's, *Economies of Abandonment* (2011) gives rise to my 'not this' and Judith Halberstram's *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) gives rise to my 'not that'. Povinelli asks how it is that 'late liberalism'[120] can rationalise, justify and live with, overlook, allow or disavow social abandonment. How is it that harm is distributed on certain bodies and lives and not others, and further, how do these bodies endure amongst these regimes of harm? Povinelli broadly gives three answers. Firstly, the use of the future anterior tense, that harm in the present tense will be justified in terms of the last man, the greater good, 'democracy to come', humanity will benefit in the end and todays harm is a necessary sacrifice [121]. Harm in the present is a form of care for future relations. The anterior tense is, I assert, implicit in the background of a particular suburban imaginary, which Seethinger work against. This cultural imaginary of suburban places is embodied in the imagined figure of the hyper individual monad capitalist worker, living in 'dormitory' suburbs, without community. This over individualist unethical plane of existence, a product of late liberal ideology, where selfishness and greed dominate the individual subject as they strive to be a good worker, gain money, enter the 'rat race' is one Seethingers are always working to prevent coming true in the future through acting in the present. Rather than the 'future good' of humanity being served through the 'good worker', the Villagers place faith in the community at the scale of local relations and regimes of care, working to build trust, familiarity and fun through bodily and intimate interactions. This sociality resides not at the national scale of gross domestic product measurements or global scales of economic systems where the individual serves only their employer and immediate family[122] but rather at local scale, through networks of trust and familiarity.

The second mechanism which allows harm to endure, Povinelli asserts, is the lack of event. Routine and the mundane allow a status quo through which harm can endure in unnoticed, normative ways. There is no dramatic forgetting or dying, no radical shift in being, location of harm or distribution of life and death, rather the lack of event allows things to continue through repetition and habit (Bissell 2011). Seething events can be seen as a radical interruption to the non-event, routine and everyday rhythms of

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[120] Povinelli's term here will be adopted to describe a post-colonial form of liberal democracies which describes a form a governmentality which responds to forms of difference. See Povinelli pp25-42.
[121] Following Derrida; See Specters of Marx, 1993, pp 73-83 in particular, see chapter 1.
[122] See chapter 5.

suburban life[123]. They re-orientate contacts, networks, business assets, time, relationships and geography. They serve as a point, a moment and a thing around which a new ethical commitment can be built. Being 'stupid' works in relation to creating *not* this rhythm, *not* this forgetting and *not* this 'walking past'. 'Stupid' however arises in relation to the mundane and the everyday through an alignment and obviation of it, always in contact and opposition to the non-event[124], mimicking and confronting the mundane, the everyday and the normative through re-adjustments of it through ongoing process of involution.

The third mechanism of abandonment is difference and similarity. While difference in ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religion may be recognised in late liberalism, the universal is that people must be productive citizens, useful bodies, not a drain on society and so on. Those who do not align themselves to the forms of 'help' as offered, in Povinelli's case by the intervention policies of the Australian government towards aboriginal communities, only have themselves to blame when they endure harm, thereby placing the ethical responsibility of harm on the subject which endures it. Alignments must be made by subjects to the terms and conditions of ethical subjectivity in late liberalism. In the imagined suburban dystopia represented by a preSeething[125] community, difference is subsumed into a universal late liberal subject who must be a productive body, aligned to a particular mode of socio-economic efficiency, resulting in the monadic individuated self, working, commuting and tied only to work. Seethingers argue against this vision of suburbia and draw attention to the forms of life as ethical subjects within the universal, inserting a different subjectivity into late liberalism by changing it, making it "swerve". They are always working to make a different late liberal subjectivity possible, to make bios, qualified participatory life, from zöe, bare life which can be left to rot.

Seethingers focus on producing a happy life through others as; in their words 'profit is a motive they struggle with'[126]. They do not envisage a radical break with late liberal capitalism but rather a re-working of it whereby forms of exchange and notions of value incorporate relations of familiarity, trust and fun. Seethingers actively support local business they have relationships with. They aim to create an environment whereby

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[123] See Lefebvre 2004; de Certeau 1984
[124] Which is why new events are always needed.
[125] This is a term I use to denote the imagined dystopia that Seethingers work against. It is imagined in the Seething stories as a time before an awakening to love and sharing brought about by Lefi the Goat boy.
[126] Uttered by Steve upon on of the Free University of Seething Walks.

people are enabled to start a form of business, contributing to a particular form of economy through a developed and known network of trust. In the words of Benny "suburbs are where you can fail"[127], where "giving it a go" or "daring to dream" is the substance of pushing at the boundary, making the conditions of new trajectories possible. Seethingers recognise failure as a moral accusation emanating from a particular economically normative notion of productive and successful. Seething events value non-normative production through alternative creative acts, the basis of the parades and festivals. These clearly could not ever serve a purpose in the capitalist mode of production that dominates the suburban imaginary. They are "brilliantly stupid", they 'lack sense' if approached through a normative modes of being a political citizen, or economically productive, they are off the map.

Povinlli's work is useful for thinking through the endurance of harm in bodies that are localised in particular social worlds; however I differ from her in the regards political significance of endurance. Povinelli positions endurance as nurturing a "living otherwise" (2011:110), where through encounter with 'the other" or "alterative social projects" (2011: *passim*) the sociology of potentiality can be excavated. Tanya Murry Li (2013) asks, is 'the otherwise' not set up by Povinelli as a radical other, thereby reinforcing it as a body that is unable to talk back, is outside of dialogue, language and translation? In being other, in its radical ethical potential, it simultaneously becomes untranslatable and, as such, a subject of desire for 'our radicalness' (Murry Li 2013). As Povinelli herself states;

> the social projects that interest this book may not have the force to act in the sense of making anything like a definitive event occur in the world (becoming a counterpublic is an achievement), but they exist, nevertheless, in the Spinozian sense of persisting in their being. And insofar as they do, these alternative worlds maintain the otherwise that stares back at us without perhaps being able to speak to us. (2011: 10)

Povinelli is interested in the origin of newness and the radical potential of the 'otherwise' as an affective interjection into the 'ontology of potentiality[128]. Ethical and political questions of the otherwise are opened up as potentiality emerges from the 'look back at us' providing an 'ethical substance' of imminent critique.

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127 (in this case he was talking about young musicians)
128 Which she later states needs replacing with a 'sociology of potentiality' (2011:16)

Povinelli's interest in the moments and conditions of life in "alternative social projects", that are "neither something or nothing" (ibid: 8), is where she finds a 'virtual space, a new space', one that 'opens up' in indeterminate oscillation "between the potentiality and the actuality of an alternative social project"[129] (ibid). The very presence of the other offers a possibility of newness through Foucault's ideas of affect as a mode of thought that is not representationally defined. Povinelli describes a Deluzian notion of the potential of affect in its ideational form where a 'not this' becomes possible to imagine.

> for Deleuze, the perpetual variation between vis existendi and potentia agendi - between striving to persevere and any actual idea of action that emerges from the striving - provides a space of potentiality where new forms of life can emerge. (ibid: 9)

> Affects may be ultimately determined by the given system of ideas that one has, but they are not "reducible to the ideas one has (ibid: 8)

In looking for radical potential Povinelli sets up the 'other' as radically *not* 'late liberalism' and late liberalism as totally disengaged with any 'otherwise project'. Povinelli's informants must accept the defining contours between bios and bare life, they are outside and they remain there. Povinelli's anthropological aim is to expand the terms of life in late-liberalism through enabling a "listening" (2011:176) to the other. This chapter works through how alterity is not necessarily found from the outside but from the ongoing performance of making life. New terms emerge through normative and alternative positions that are in a much more dynamic relation to each other than Povinelli imagines. This dynamism, in suburban London, occurs through being 'stupid', producing obviations of the context to make a swerve in the terms of life. This is possible through the very ongoingness of the involution. This potential comes about through the performative potential within the moments of transfer in the involution of the index (working from Gell 1998; see page 47 in introduction).

Povinelli's 'other' leaves us with little to go on as to the precise conditions of 'better' and positions 'otherwise' as a constitutive feature of late liberalism. Povinelli is prepared for this stating that books such as hers are critiqued for lacking a normative dimension;

> a fundamental rule of scholarship has been broken: every critical social analysis must have a normative horizon against which

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[129] It is this actuality that is always in the anterior tense and the potentiality in the present

> progressive action can orient itself and social movements can be assessed[…]to say, "not this", does not tell us "what then?" or "where then? (2011: 189)

In her words, we are left with no insight into how to move to a more positive living. This chapter picks up the baton in working through some of the empirical groundings of affective interjections, not of 'the other' but the almost other. Through being 'stupid' Seethingers make alignments which allow easy obviations to occur. Through playing in the gap, through aligning the socially normative rule to themselves to show how it does not stick (such as deep historical myth in the non-historical suburbs), new possibilities for social life emerge and the sensible, socially normative terms of life, are re-distributed (see Ranciere 2010). This occurs through the creation and spreading of non-sense, highlighting their 'not this' position. Centres of governance, historical myths, industrial movements, are brought into analogical relation[130] with the suburban subject to show how it can never be suburban, and suburban will never be them, yet life may still thrive.

Stupidity simultaneously rejects any attempt to make utterance through the terms on offer and offers something else. This 'something else' has often been lamented as a spirited embrace of the outside. Judith Halberstram writes in '*The Queer Art of Failure*' that her book aims to "dismantle the logics of success and failure with which we currently live" (2011:2) through losing the idealism of hope of the normative project;

> to live is to fail, to bungle, to disappoint, and ultimately to die; rather than searching for ways around death and disappointment, the queer art of failure involves the acceptance of the finite, the embrace of the absurd, the silly, and the hopelessly goofy. Rather than resisting endings and limits, let us instead revel in and cleave to all of our own inevitable fantastic failures (ibid: 186-187)

Using Start Hall's 'low theory' she argues that we should take seriously the 'stupid' and the ridiculous as it brings about a disruption to habitual modes of thought. A new "grammar of possibility" (ibid:2) can emerge in unlikely, everyday places, such as animated children's films. Their ability to animate new articulations of the self, via alien sociologies, through such things as a talking lion and zebra who fall in love and push beyond their normative desire to eat each other (see *Madagascar* 2005), mean different bodies, selves, things, social lives are brought into analogical relation with, and counter the normative.

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[130] See Barbara Maria Stafford *Visual Analogy* (1999)

Halberstram calls for the acceptance of failure, for us to "revel in and cleave to all of our own inevitable fantastic failures" (ibid:187) allowing the moral accusation of failure to be projected and understood as it precipitates onto the subject. In her articulation, power is shifted from the accuser to the subject through a nonchalance to the moral prescription. In Halberstram's example of the animated film 'Chicken Run', Babs asserts "we will die free chickens, or we will die trying!" to which Ginger responds "are those the only choices?" Babs' willingness to die comes from a conception of freedom where (honourable) death, or failure, are the only moral and ethically possible positions. It is Ginger's position, which rejects both, from which I draw my 'not that'. Seethingers, in being 'stupid', make their position of suburban dystopia not inevitable; they both demonstrate and practice the life of the suburban citizen. Freedom for Seethingers is neither subjugation nor escape to the outside but rather changing the conditions of the inside through the involution.

Benny, a regular Seethinger, invited me for a drink on his birthday; "suburbs are places you can fail" he said as Fran interjected and explaining the idea in relation to Seething myths;

> yes *failure doesn't matter* because you can (get something wrong), then
> just embellish the legend that you were trying to illustrate by bringing
> in some already established characters and bringing them into the plot
> and thus adding to the legend

Flexibility and doing things in non-prescribed way extends to all Seething life, it is part of "the State of mind". Fran talked through a popular TV program where diners host others in their home amidst an overdubbed commentary which draws out judgement of the ability of dinners to cook and host;

> "'Come Dine With Me' has taken over picking holes in everyone's
> achievements and telling them its rubbish…."

> Me: "I'll call my thesis 'come fail with me'"

> Tina: "what?"

> Fran: (talking to Tina who has just arrived) "Benny suggested it
> [Seething] was about that, you know, you can come and have a go.
> The point is you can have a go at something that isn't your field or
> your day job or whatever and it's fine because there is nothing to lose

from it[…]it's different to the Kingston Society[131] or something, because they've all got rules and it's all set up, there is a set way of doing things, that's established and looked too and if people don't meet those norms they are frowned on. You hear about it all the time, someone has upset the WI[132] because they have put the cake ingredients in the wrong order or something."

Me: "but you couldn't make a shit cake and take it to the pub[133] can you?"

Fran: "I did! The clandestine cake club, I had a brick of a cake, I'd left it in the oven to cool when I went out and when I came back it was solid, but I still took it" (to show she had a go)

The social productivity of being 'stupid' is an (un)honourable[134] form of life made honourable (or normal). Similar to Ginger, Seethingers reject the impending suburban death at the hands of late liberalism (not this) and the embrace of failure (not that). Being 'stupid' lays the ground for the development of value through a re-ordering of networks of relation. They create new choices through pushing at the edges of the normative, exposing the socially contingent conditions of 'being'. Pushing at the walls of the articulated norms that govern cultural intelligibility, what Hegal calls 'sittleichkeit', being 'stupid' becomes socially productive. Just as Butler argues that our ideas of kinship delimit our ideas of legitimate and intelligible sexuality, being 'stupid' points to the political possibility of new terms of citizenship that emerge when the limits of representation and representability are exposed (Butler 2000: 2).

Butler writes of how Antigone, in Sophocles's play, refuses to deny 'her deed' and as such takes possession of it whilst not conceding 'I did that deed' under the terms offered by Creon[135]. The accused deed is the burial of her brother's body which had been left to rot as a display of a dishonourable death under the sovereignty of Creon, King of Thebes. Antigone simultaneously refuses the authority of the sovereign[136] and gains her autonomy, asserting her own sovereignty, through an appropriation of an authoritative voice of the one she resists. The refusal and simultaneous assimilation of authority occurs through being on the threshold between two forms of kin, her brother

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[131] The local history group
[132] The Women's Institute.
[133] Seethingers frequent a few different local pubs but 'the pub' is run by two prominent Seethingers and they host small events there.
[134] Depending from which angle you approach it
[135] The ruling king, her father.
[136] Those who decide on the conditions of the exclusion, following Agamben (1995:11)

and her father. She is between a death by the law, for if she attends to her brother she defies the law of Creon, and a social bond as she loves her brother. By being on the threshold she rejects the terms of the law's demands yet, in her answer does not defy it. Similarly Seethingers are on the threshold, neither accepting nor refusing the terms of the law, or the conditions of exclusion. Returning to 'the moment' of refusal (chapter 1) Seethingers, like Antigone, are turning away, are doing something else. As Butler states;

> …recognition begins with the insight that one is lost in the Other, appropriated in and by an alterity that is and is not oneself, and recognition is motivated by the desire to find oneself reflected there, where the reflection is not a final expropriation. Indeed, consciousness seeks a retrieval of itself, only to recognize that there is no return from alterity to a former self but only a transfiguration premised on the impossibility of return. (2000: 14)

Chapter 4 works through in more detail the mechanism of transfer within the involution between the ASP and Seething. This chapter focuses on the ways in which Seethingers presence an alternative suburban life that ensures that the outside see and recognise their types and forms of life. This work ensures the future suburban dystopia never comes to be.

Seethingers live in the 'State of Seething', Seething is an imagined past village which learnt to include and accept all forms of life. The 'State of Seething' is a state of mind that recognises all forms of life and in so doing brings about the 'State of Seething'. The tales of Seething and the events and rituals they involve are constantly invented. A form of universality forms the pre-social aspect of the events. Just as Antigone's severing the social and symbolic form of relation, through a love of her brother showed the universal social conditioning potency of the incest taboo, Seething acts sever the social and the symbolic fear of late liberalism instantiated in the idea of the suburban death. They make space for life on new terms, bringing themselves in and aiming to bring others in by extending Seething. The incest taboo, Butler writes (2000:15), is the fundamental step through which a transition from nature to culture is established, that is, it is biological and draws its authority from that. Similarly the authority of capitalism, which produces the late liberal subject, is the universal. In a 'post-political'[137]society where the is only one meta-cultural mode of social organisation, late liberalism, the 'unproductive' human, the failure, is they who do not align to the sorts of subjectivities demanded by

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[137] See Mouffe 2000, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe 1985; also Zizek 1999; Rancière 2004

that culture. Here the authority is drawn from the normative nature of culture, late liberalism as the non-event and the status quo. Seethingers assert a non-normative and yet do not fail. Death, for Antigone only leads to death as it seeks to defy symbolic norms, her love is denied under current social arrangements, as Butler asks;

> which social arrangements can be recognized as legitimate love, and which human losses can be explicitly grieved as real and consequential loss? Antigone refuses to obey any law that refuses public recognition of her loss, and in this way prefigures the situation that those with publicly ungrievable losses - from AIDS for instance – know too well. (2000:29)

Povinelli and Butler both ask, what sort of life is demanded by social law, which sets the terms of legitimate existence. Through being on the threshold Antigone takes possession of the deed. Seethingers, more than Antigone, *seek* this position in order to take a positive (as opposed to Halberstram's negative) possession. Butler reads Antigone's death through Lacan who;

> establishes Antigone at the threshold of the symbolic, understood as the linguistic register in which kinship relations are instated and maintained; he understands her death as precipitated precisely by the symbolic insupportability of her desire (2000:29)

I ask if it is 'unsupported' does it have to be death, can it force a reconsideration of the terms through the distribution of the sensible occurs? It is non-sense but not to the point of madness, outside, rather being 'stupid' pushes at the edge. Seethingers understand the conditions of making sense and precisely because of this are able to be 'stupid'. They vacillate between the forms of life that exist and the forms of life which might exist.

This chapter looks at stupidity as a form of conceptual crafting, or rather, as a mechanism through which the conditions for conceptual crafting can be laid down in the gap between sensible and possible. This gap is opened through affective interjections which are material in form and force, and as such ethical and political, as Gregg and Seigworth note;

> Frequently this work focuses on those ethico-aesthetic spaces that are opened up (or shut down) by a widely disparate assortment of affective encounters with, for example, new technological lures,

infants, music, dance, and other more non-discursive arts (particularly architecture), animals (companion or not), and so on. (2010:8)

Yeal Navaro Yasin's assertion that "conceptual crafting emanates or emerges from the tangibility of the field" (2012:11) arc's back to Spinoza's call to treat human and non-human entities with the same potential potency. Following Lefebvre's (1996) call that 'moments' may form entirely new demands for social order as a form of intervention in institutional power (see also de Certeau 1984 on tactic) these moments form affective obviations within the mechanism of ongoing involutions. Because of the ongoing involutionary mechanism in relations between forms, such as the ASP (see chapter 4) and local government (see chapter 5) Seethingers enact a "swerve". The 'stupid' and its radical juxtaposition with the boring everyday come into critical conversation with forms of administration and notions of participation and inclusion in understanding suburban socialites in late liberalism.

3.2 The Emergence of Need.

Suburbs are dull, they are the place you go when you have failed at life holding neither the idyllic draw of the countryside nor the buzz of the city, they are deadly compromise or so goes the cultural imaginary. Yet 84% of people live in a suburb in the UK (Vaughan et al 2009).

Surbiton, where I did the majority of my eighteen-month ethnographic research, is perhaps the pinnacle of the suburban image; it even sounds like suburb - 'Suburbaton' (London Evening Standard 2012; The Big Issue 1999). In 1995, Liverpool City Council "seriously considered adopting 'Liverpool – it's not Surbiton' as a marketing slogan" (Statham 1996: xiii in Wickstead 2013). The ordinariness of Surbiton, which stands as a synecdoche for 'suburbs', can be harnessed and politically deployed as an image of middle England, the home of the ordinary 'good worker'. As Helen Wickstead highlights, the 1967-8 'I'm Backing Britain' campaign, where "five girl typists at a factory in Surbiton" worked "an extra half-hour a day without extra pay" (Times, 1968: 1, cited in Wickstead 2013:202), rolled into a national campaign dubbed "the Surbiton Revolution" (Economist 1968: 12 cited in Wickstead 2013:203) and provided an alternative image of an ordinary worker to the public in an era of unionisation. It is this idea of the detached worker ideal removed from the community, loyal to family and

employer, fitting neatly into a dominant socio-economic paradigm and void of creative rebellion, that plays into the notion of a suburban death. It is this threat that forms the imaginary of the suburbs. When 'The Good Life' sit-com was written in the 1970s, to portray the apparent absurdity of a middle-class couple deciding to go back to basics in their back garden, it was perhaps inevitable that Surbiton would be its chosen setting.

In 1999, *The Big Issue* magazine ran an editorial feature, 'I Want the Good Life', with the sub-title "Bland. Boring. Banal. Everything You Think You Know about Suburbia is Wrong; says Jim McClellan and to prove it, he's moving to Surbiton". The magazine professed to be surprised that there was actually 'life' in the suburbs. The assertion of life in the face of the cultural image of suburbs came across again and again in my fieldwork, as Rani explained to me whilst we got to know each other during the crafting of a giant wicker lamp (see Figure 5);

> "I'm Surbiton born and bred, I've been away for a few years and I moved back again….I used to think the place was a boring middle class, middle England conservative town…When I came back I heard about all these strange happenings…people skiing down the road and all that."

The suburbs, with Surbiton their imagined ideal, have a firm place in the cultural lexicon as the home of middle England. As Benedict Anderson (1991) notes, the imagination can be a powerful cohesive devise in the formation of collective identities. Against the background of the Seething events in Surbiton a cultural imaginary of a dystopian suburban subject frequently emerged during conversations. People talked of "never having expected to live here", meaning they never expected to live in a boring commuter town. But then they would paint a new picture with a tone of '*but…*' saying "we have great friends here" and would describe "a real sense of community". Underlying such conversations was a sense of the idea that, if left alone, the suburbs would fulfil a media-fuelled, culturally imagined, prophecy of being void of character and life. The suburbs are understood as a cultural terra nullius, an anthropological desert.

The suburban imaginary (see Silverstone 1997) provides a background against which an analogy of the exotic, rich anthropological 'other' – over there and interesting - can be imagined in order to highlight the position of suburbs - here and banal. These two 'worlds' were juxtaposed in a sketch by the famous English comedians Monty Python

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(episode 28, BBC1, 1972) who recreated the anthropological investigations of the Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl. Recreating a journey by the Kon Tiki raft that Heyerdahl sailed across the Pacific Ocean in order to test a hypothesis that people from South America could have settled in Polynesia, Python satirically parodied the journey made by the characters of Mr and Mrs Norris.

Moving from Surbiton to Hounslow, Mr Norris finds similar mock-Tudor vernacular housing and common lawnmower technology, decreeing that the 'identical cultural background' must mean the areas are linked through a historical movement of populations, but that people moved not from Surbiton to Hounslow but rather Hounslow to Surbiton. The sketch is funny due to the stupidity of the claim, which makes an analogical connection between the movements of the distant, unknown and historically rich South Pacific islanders and the known, close, historically vacuous London suburbs. It is funny because what could be less adventurous, less exotic, than the suburbs?

The suburbs are portrayed as being without history, without heritage. As Wickstead (2013) notes, this *is* their heritage, and this non-heritage as heritage is recognised and played with by the groups described above. Whereas mainstream TV comedy and satire play on the notion of a suburban *terra nullius* at the expense of the lives in those suburbs, in the events I witnessed in South London people take ownership of these cultural imaginaries, build on them and change them by showing what it is that they are and, importantly, what they are not. In so doing they create a suburban world that takes its dullness and pushes its discursive limits to the edge of sense. It plays with histories, stories and 'that which you expect to find' until you get that which lacks the common sensibility of what a suburb is. It makes it 'stupid'.

Strange happenings arise through a disjuncture between the banal image of Surbiton and the spectacle of 'stupid' events. Seethingers draw on rich resources of personal skills and business contacts, they, in Steve's words, allow 'brilliance' through showcasing various talents, abilities, energies and enthusiasms. The everyday language, tribulations and images of the suburban imaginary are drawn into this stupidity;

> "Surbiton station was built to ensure that freshwater sardines could
> get to London in the best possible condition. The phrase 'packed
> liked a sardine' is still used on this line"

"I thought Thamas was a commuter, he had to deal with the train
every morning, which of course makes you an angry person"

Seething stories can be considered invented traditions in that they perform new functions with recourse to the symbols and discourses of the past (Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983:7). However the same symbols used through history may not retain identical meaning, nor are the socio-political functions of old symbolisms necessarily preserved (Babadzan 2000). In their study of the invention of tradition Hobsbawn & Ranger (1993) were interested in how new events emerged in large number, through the industrial period. They suggested that with the decline in the ability of the church to provide a model of political and social governance new modes of establishing bonds of loyalty, creating community and producing moments of cohesive social value emerged through 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983b:263). Seethinger events may have significant ritual or symbolic function but it they are not strictly rule governed or invariable (counter to Bell 1997). Rather developing a 'State of mind' involves developing and holding a permanent state of ambiguity. Seethingers are 'threshold people' (Turner 1969:95) where their state is purposefully ambiguous. This state enables a constant state of being able to bring in others and simultaneously enable a form of communitas. This 'State of mind' is seen in everyday Seething life through outrageous punning, wordplay, surprising association, extreme subtlety, layered reference and comparison which is the embodiment of a comic spirt similar to Ryan's notion of trickster (1999). This threshold position allows the establishment of a durational moral force, that plays with the unfolding forms of late liberalism. This is more an 'invention of culture' Wagner (1975), which is ongoing as the suburban citizen constantly make *bios* from *zöe*.

Playing in the gaps, Seethingers do not so much invent from nothing but play with the discursive tropes around them. The dominant suburban imaginary of banality gives Seethingers licence to play with magical and wondrous stories as 'stupid' emerges from the satirical shadow of more officious and serious histories. Kingston is a historic town close to Surbiton, it dates back to the time of Saxon kings, has governors and guilds and has a rich history of royal links, traditions and is the centre of governance for the borough. Seething's social form aligns with Kingston's traditions; Seething has guilds of cheese makers and talcum minors[138] (Figures 79 & 80), a national anthem, a flag and

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[138] Talcum is a mineral compound used as a bathroom product.

King and Queen sardines. The re-imaging of guilds and histories to do not directly critique or aim to undermine Kingston, rather it aligns those symbols to show how it does not apply to the suburb. As such they refuse the authority of it, but recognise its force through mimicking it, creating their own of symbols of allegiance (See Ortner 1973). The contingency of the rule is opened up for invention. Through applying the rule (of governance, history and so on) to themselves, they show it does not apply thereby creating license to play, demonstrating the threshold position where Seethingers are betwixt and between the inclusions and exclusion of life and are able to assert their own. Seething guilds, whilst 'stupid' are taken seriously; people become quite attached to them and compete under their guild affiliation on Seething sports day. The invented nature of Seething life means it is ever expanding; all people who encounter it can use the mechanisms of being 'stupid' to play in the involution to bring themselves into whatever part of life it is they wish to be included in.

The authority vested in the historical depth and tradition of Kingston is taken into the sovereignty of the Seethingers. The banality of Surbiton with its inability to hold guilds, be a location for ancient kings or be the centre of local governance is brought into relation with Kingston through its allegorical memes. Seething could be understood as a form of radical democracy as per Laclou and Moufe (1985) in that it works to bring about an increased attention to uneven power relations. Whilst Seethingers contribute to the development of a 'for everyone' ideal[139] which is egalitarian, Bart explained "we would never call it anything, because once you do that people think it's something, like a politics and might be weary of it". Seethingers are not explicitly political; however I argue that their actions can be understood in relation to a moral commitment at a particular scale. There is a strong commitment to the notion of equality between individuals and the local as a body. The 'self' in the Foucauldian sense is developed in relation to this moral community, freedom and a particular form of life emerges from being Seethinger, which is at the same time is extended to others.'[140] A 'resilient'[141] community that can speak as a body, a group, and "works" emerges (see chapter 5). Seethingers go to great efforts to stress the newness of its histories, meanings and stories which can be changed, re-written and made up on the spot, maintaining a spirit

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[139] Although there are notable exclusions, such as those who don't drink, people sceptical of 'pagan overtones' and traditionalists.
[140] See the History of Sexuality Foucault 1978;1980;1985.
[141] The notion of a 'resilient community' is taken from the Community Brain website which emerged, partly from the community activities in and around Surbiton. http://thecommunitybrain.org/

of inclusion and participation in a meaningful local community. The philosophy of openness and newness comes across in the ways events come together and occur as events.

3.3 Planning Lefi

The main Seething event, the Lefi Parade, occurs on the last Sunday of February each year. Further there are around 6 other major events and numerous small events which generally involve a story and legend, a parade or game and often a festival with music and food. New events and happenings are emerging all the time, keeping Seething fresh, ambiguous and inventive and further allowing new input without the establishment of expertise of firm ways to do things.

Some events in the local area use the skills and resources of Seethingers but does not bear the Seething name. Removing the Seething 'brand' produces community events with less emphasis on humour, surrealism and new histories, rather they aim to promote the locality and involve all people and businesses, such as the 'Surbiton Food Festival'. Whilst Seething promotes the recourses and life of the local area it primarily is a moral project of inclusion in and of life. Seething events spread to other areas; notably there are events in Swanage (Seething on Sea) and Oldenburg, Germany which invent their own myths through the same mechanisms of being 'stupid'.

Local events, Seething and otherwise, emerge in a background of forms of localism whereby over the past 30 years local councils have had to manage more of their resources. This devolution of power rhetoric is consistent with a deliberative democratic ideology[142] (see Giddens 1994). In 1988 the borough of 'Kingston with Surbiton' was threatened with being dissolved into the surrounding boroughs and counties. Steve, then local councillor, responded that Kingston "hadn't done a good job of promoting itself" (Surry Comet 1988[143]). All the events work towards the same aim, bringing people together in order to produce 'resilient community' as a coherent entity that gives people a 'sense of belonging to something'. A community interest company[144]

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[142] See the Localism Bill 2011 http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism.html
[143] An unknown date as the edge of the paper was trimmed in the local archive.
[144] A new form of organisation enabled through 2005, Community Interest Company Regulations 2005, to let community groups access business type services for social good. This aligns business form with local citizenship.

(CIC) "The Community Brain" emerged which looked to spread Seething ideals, of strong, resilient and creative communities which were based in local relations, beyond Surbiton;

> "The objects[145] [sic] of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community in particular anyone who believes they are outside of a perceived, meaningful community. This could be people isolated by culture, geography, poverty, disability or simply a lack of connection with the people around them."[146]

Seething events aim to "let people be brilliant" through networks of confidence, familiarity and trust. They pool skills and resources in peoples personal and professional lives towards making Seething, in this way "doing is believing" (Myerhoff 1997:223) as getting involved, no matter how, is morally productive, as evident in the Seething planning meetings.

3.4.1 Planning Meetings

Meetings are open to everyone and are advertised and shared on social media[147], flyers, posters and word of mouth. They are almost always held in the pub, on a weekday evening. The pub forms a vital community space of co-presence. People who ask about the events are sent there, objects are made and sorted there and small and large meetings are held there. The large bar forms a horseshoe shape in the middle of the room with three sides (Figure 30). Before the meetings the tables on the entrance side of the pub would be arranged to form a long table for the meeting.

The sofas at the back of the bar are commonly used for regulars, many of whom are Seethingers. This space enabled lots of chance meetings for my ethnography, a place to write up notes and a Seething base[148]. The area closest to the entrance is usually lit with candles and is used by people wanting a more private drink, but is reserved for meetings. A significant rear garden allows room for smokers, games and events in summer. Whilst much Seething life happens here, Seething events always happen in Surbiton's public spaces remaining open to all.

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[145] I suspect a typo meaning objectives
[146] http://thecommunitybrain.org/ accessed 3/6/14
[147] Mainly Facebook
[148] But I also drank a lot, got fat and spent lots of money.

Figure 30: A planning meeting & Floor plan of the pub.

Seething meetings did not dominate the pub but were noticeable; being near the door allowed the arrival of regulars to be noted with collective hellos. Arriving late a collective 'JEEVA!' greeted me as twelve people smiled at me from the table, a nice feeling. Some would sit slightly away from the table on bar stools or would come and say hello from another part of the pub and stand there for a few moments and give opinions and suggestions then move away again[149]. The meeting environment is relaxed, flexible and adaptable with different levels of engagement. Zoe told me they once tried having the meeting elsewhere, in a conscious effort to move away from the pub and drinking environments, but "it didn't work it just wasn't the same vibe". There is an intuitive phenomenological awareness of the conditions needed for the right sort of meeting: the room, atmosphere and flow of bodies need to be just right. The landlords of the pub were committed Seethingers and ran a bar at Seething events. Historically pubs in the UK have always provided a relaxed meeting space, conducive to social mixing and are considered key spaces for healthy communities (see Fox 2000).

Meetings would usually be around 20 people with one or two new faces, every person would say their name and if they liked, something about themselves. People committed to getting to know others on a personal level asking who they were and what they might like from Seething events and what they might like to bring to them. People wanted to help others be "brilliant".

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[149] Often they would be drawn back in, unwillingly.

Meetings would not have agendas, but would work towards an event on a set date and build from there. Past events would be remembered as 'great' and 'wonderful' and people were thanked for their efforts. Then the practical work would be set out in a fun and positive way, with all contributions and participation valued and recognised. Despite using the symbols and signs of local government Seethingers were not antithetical to it and current and former members of the council would regularly attend meetings. Being 'stupid' extended to the meetings through parodies of professional and officious meeting language that seemed out of place, such as: "theoretically we have the lino to make it work". Play and invention was seen as a way to have fun in solving practical problems, there was no expert way of doing things, as long as they got done. Stupid suggestions were taken seriously and serious suggestions were to a degree, considered a little boring. Any person who suggests how things could and should be done is then expected to make it happen, this ensures that the moral responsibility falls on them alone and accusations of failure cannot arise or adhere.

Events are formed around Seething stories such as 'The Kings Soup' which tells the tale of a nasty King who demands his cooks make amazing soup he once tasted from a kind old lady. The chefs are unable to do so, if anything the extra chefs brought into help made the soup worse, playing on the popular phrase 'too many cooks spoil the broth', but this was never said aloud. This unspoken alignment is the essence of 'stupid'. The old lady teaches the king that the soup needs to be made with love, which comes from doing things together. During the event, which is also taken into local schools, people cut donated vegetables which are then cooked on site by volunteer chefs into soup. People drink and dance to the sound of local bands whist eating the shared soup.

This event occurs the same day as the only hill in Surbiton is covered in lino and people 'ski' down it with blocks of ice on their feet. "Suburban Skiing" sees teams, individuals and local community members, including the borough Member of Parliament (MP), compete to get the fastest course time. From skiing in the banal everyday place of suburbia to placing well respected MPs in ski equipment, "Suburban Skiing" places "the world upside down" (Stallybrass & White 1986)[150], as the website states;

> "Suburban Skiing simply reverses the scientific principle of skiing. *No longer do you need* to strap two lengths of wood to your feet and go in search of snow and ice. Now you simply strap two carefully moulded

[150] following Bahktin see also Strathern 1991 on Hagen tree inversions.

blocks of ice to your feet and hey presto - *you can ski anywhere.*" [italics added]

Figure 31: Suburban Skiing.

Like in Bahktin's carnival (see Morris 1994) entities which carry social power - MPs, common discourses of suburbs and elite sports - are drawn into the banal suburb to make 'stupid'. Rather than a Bahktinian mix of the sacred and the profane, humour and grotesque, this moment of serio-comical equality between the suburaner and other, is an extension of the life of the suburbaner. It expands life into the suburbs and vica-versa. The direct symbolic switch of who and what life occurs in the suburbs is an obviational play that occurs in the moment of transfer between matter and meaning in the involution. Suburbs and its forms of life are made into something else. They become *bios*, active participatory citizens, re-performing the suburban, mixing MPs, popular discourses into a performative event that re-aligns what the terms of life are.

At planning meetings, lists complete with jokes and odd annotations, were read out with seriousness to everyone's amusement; "the supermarket will freeze the blocks", "carl has arranged the power supply", "Bernie promises to dress better" and so on. The events were split over two sites and an easy way to guide people between them was needed. I suggested we build a ski lift, joking that we could bypass the busy road; "Great" said Steve; "Jeeva, you're in charge of that then, a ski lift, brilliant". With the joke I had committed myself to the task and as such to others, to the event, to the community, to being 'stupid' and to Seething.

Over the coming weeks, Villagers came forward to offer their help, advice, and time. I deepened relationships, friendships and had fun; the ski-lift was being talked about and

everyone trusted me to make it. I started to see everyday objects as possible seats, ropes and pulleys for the lift. I wandered the parks looking for places to hang lines and signs. I subjected my friends, who had no knowledge of Seething, to questions like: "How would you build a 200 meter ski-lift with £3,64?". My response to the smells, sights, and sounds around me changed. I started to see the potentials in objects differently; I became Seethinger (see Halliwell 1996[151]). My relationship to everyday, familiar places, to the people around me, changed as I saw new potentials and affordances (following Gibson 1977) in the material world around me. I formed new relationships of exchange, favours where had and trust and familiarity spread. Rhythms, senses and feelings also changed, the moment of vacillation in the affective moment precipitated down in new ways, making Seething (see chapter 4). New assemblages of person and place were being formed through small everyday encounters, through motivations of mutual care, care for a body of people, local people.

I made ski lifts from garden cane and old vinyl records (Figure 32). As people walked the string would precede them, giving the impression they were being pulled along by the rope (Figure 33). People were given a ticket as they mounted the seats and told to follow the chalk arrows along the street (Figure 34).[152]

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[151] For a comparative study of ethnographic emersion.
[152] At future events these would evolve to be Lefi stencils.

Figure 32: (top left) And of the Ski lift at the Kings Soup

Figure 33: (top right) The UK environment minister and local MP, Ed Davey riding a Seething ski lift

Figure 34: (bottom) Annotated pavement or 'ski lift'

The problem had been solved. There is no wrong way to do things; the 'crapness' of a solution and the banal nature of the problem means that no matter the level of effectiveness, 'effort' and 'doing' are productive of the moral commitment to 'brilliance', to letting people and seeing people shine: life is made and made visible (following Munn 1986). This doing attitude, where responsibility in making emanates from and onto the person making the suggestion, means the Seething meetings are effective. As Pauline said; "this meeting was way more effective than the last four hours I have just wasted the LBC" (Local Business Community meeting).

3.4.2 Arranging Lefi

In 2012 I helped build a stage in a wood yard across from the pub in preparation for the 4th annual Lefi parade (Figure 29). The yard acted as a gathering point for the parade and hosted the festival afterwards where bands would play and the story of Seething would be acted out. Keith, the manager of the local branch of the national chain DIY store that owned the yard left his position over the course of the following year. The new manager, following the protocol of the chain store informed Seethingers that the space was no longer available for to use. However through Seething networks it wasn't long before the council agreed to allow events in public parks.

A stage was borrowed from the local school, bin collection, storage, park access and other needs were met by various Seething connections to the council, local businesses, people with vans and so on. Each event made those connections stronger as more people were drawn into and constituted, the Seething networks. New traders and local businesses were encouraged to get involved. Local integration goes beyond a cash economy but works to produce networks of skills, trust and help thereby allowing people to lead productive lives, try new things and make ideas into events. PP Coffee provided hot chocolate during the skiing, hampers for a mass picnic and helped with planning, arranging and organising Seething. Their business grew from a stall at the sports day to being a regularly used shop on the high street. This was often used Seethingers for (sober) meetings away from the pub, usually just between a few people to discuss particular tasks. Unlike the pub, PP had a form of Seething privacy, people would say 'hi' but sit elsewhere if you were in a meeting, recognising the difference in atmosphere and social rules between pub space and PP Coffee space.

Fran, the regular Seething correspondent to stall holders at events, would oversee a range of stall holders who came to the events from high street supermarkets who would put on demonstrations, to home businesses to hobbyists selling craft items. The events provided a temporary alternative space of mixing away from the high street. Such events would not be recorded in the ASP data sources, such as business directories and building maps, yet are vital in supporting local businesses. Surbiton had a well-used and active high street and Steve had been involved in projects to support it as a locus of the local economy. He and a few others frequently engaged with the council and aimed to

'get hold' of a shop as a base to promote Seething but also small businesses, local traders and crafts people without premises. During the entire fieldwork this never came to fruition as the bureaucratic restrictions 'got in the way'. Steve made great efforts to keep this knowledge to himself and would often only pass on positive information keeping the negative effects, such as stress and disappointment, away from Seething meetings. This caused stress and strain in himself and only towards the later stages of the fieldwork did he talk of the effects that had on him. He long suffered with depression and Seething was a great help in tackling this yet he often talked of growing despondent with the way 'some people are' (see chapter 5) when they would not help or were only interested in profit. Steve was trying to make a better world and aspects of him were being sacrificed. The care of the self - *for the self* (following Foucault 1985) - was being sacrificed so the *self for the local* could be made in order to produce a *self as local* which is able to engage in a commitment to state of mind made through a way of shared thinking amongst people, the equal *body local*.

Seething events placed emphasis on local traders and crafts people; the local economy was seen as one that could be supported through particular types of transactions, exchanges and forms of capitalism. Profit was seen as the prime motive of the operations of big companies who had little commitment to the local area, whereas smaller companies not only have that commitment but need it and can trade with it. As Alex from the Surbiton Business Community explained during Seething Community Sports Day;

> "They [high street business] don't see the benefit of doing things like this, they might get one or two people walk in off the high street but you can't run businesses like that anymore, you have to get out there, engage with people, make the market for yourself… we see this as networking really, not only that but getting involved in the community, knowing the customers, we live around here too we want it to be a nice place to live"
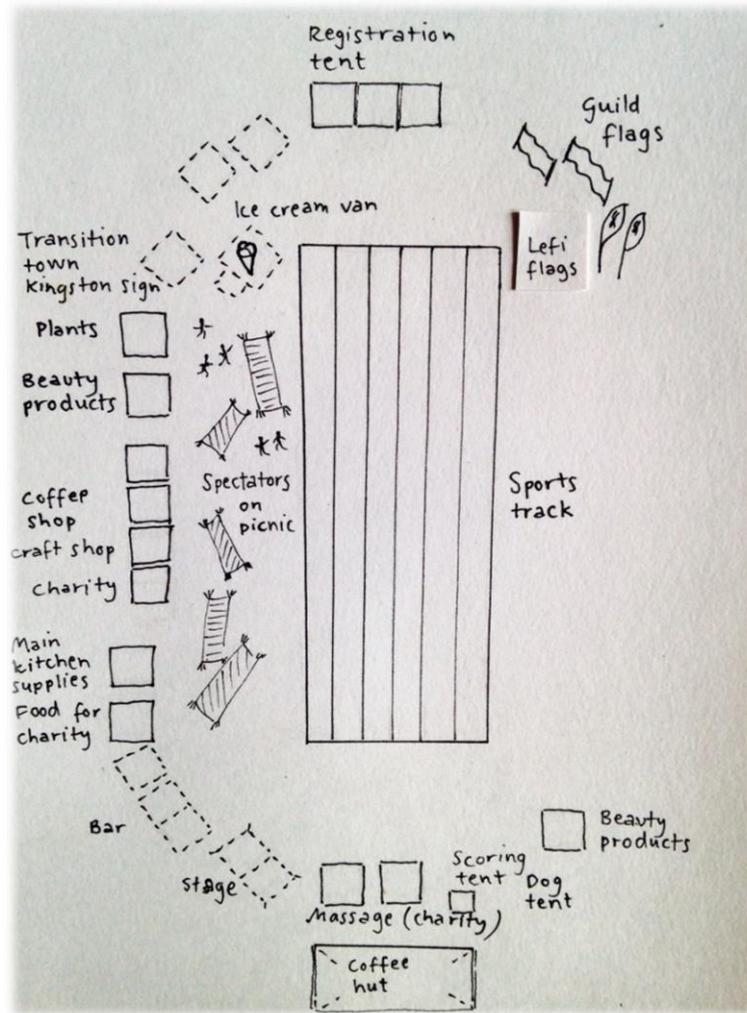
Figure 35: The layout at the Seething community sports day, with businesses surrounding the running track.

Business would be loaned tables and marquees where possible. In return people offered help with running events and developing Seething life. This saw Seething and the local economy grow and mutually constitute each other. Transactions went beyond cash but were also measured in fun, quality of life and resource exchange. The local was being made.

3.5 Doing Lefi

The figure of Lefi pervades all Seething events. He is flown on flags, made into badges, placed centre stage and his name is uttered as a form of blessing[153]. The Goat Boy is a ever present reminder to Seethingers of how to love and give. Seethingers increasingly

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[153] For want of a better word.

become familiar with him as a symbol (following Turner 1969: 95), he is the spectre of the outside.

Figure 36: The image of heroic goat-boy Lefi Ganderson is paraded around Surbiton from Surry Comet 24/2/2014. Photograph: Jon Sharman

On the day of the events people meet early to help set up. Newcomers are helped to 'get involved'; it is the doing which counts. The pub provides warmth, drinks and toilet facilities and usually runs a charity bar in the public parks.

Volunteers[154] move the stage, music equipment, sculptures and borrowed items to the event sites from local houses, storage in the back of pub or empty sheds and council facilities.

Figure 37: Seethingers on the river bank during the Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival.

Figure 38: Seething freshwater sardine fishermen on the Thames.

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[154] Or rather had been persuaded with drinks.

Seething events take different forms but they often involve a parade and a small festival in a park. The Lefi parade is led by a 12ft tall Thamas (the Giant) placed on a Segway, which is manoeuvred at speed toward passers-by (see Figure 29). This radically disrupts the everyday rhythms and aesthetics of suburban streets (see Lefebvre 2004, see also Hubbard & Lilley 2004). Moments of aesthetic and material intervention display the hours of craft and care that have gone into the aesthetics of Seething. These include guild banners, giant wicker cheeses and man-size sardine tins. Music fills the air as talc miners parade their 'traditional colliery band', drawing on the history of the UK's mining movement. Volunteers ensure the crowd stay safe by halting cars and thanking the confused onlookers for waiting (Figures 29 & 37). Some ask 'what's going on?' and others, who sound their horns or boo the Giant are clearly already in the know. The tale is well established in the area through events, book readings in schools and local stores and word of mouth. As we walked, the Deputy Mayor commented on how nice it was to walk through the centre of the street with slow traffic, music and banter. This allows a very different experience of place, momentarily turning the order of relations between people, streets and traffic 'upside down' in a carnivalesque moment (See Bakhtin 1881; Strathern 1991).

During the Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival, Seethingers gather on the river banks to great the arrival of fishermen. Throwing their net over the side of the boat they show a poor catch and the crowd sings sea shanties and thank Lefi. Again the net is thrown, but over the other side and a catch of sardines is made. The sardines are paraded through the local streets in a cart pulled by four guinea pigs, to the festival site [155]. Here local bands play, whilst people, dance, drink, eat and talk with traders, old friends and new Seethingers. Upon the late afternoon Seethingers clean and pack up as a collective group. These moments of collective helping is where people mingle with strangers and get to know each other through sharing the same tasks[156]. The cleaning and caring of the spaces in which the events occur affirms the 'spirt' of togetherness as a moral position of 'community', of commitment to each other and to the spaces of the suburb. New assembles of people, place and emotion are crafted, shared and experienced from the "tangibility of the field" (Navaro-Yasin 2012: 11).

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[155] Nobody seems to know why but people are, at the time of writing, making efforts to incorporate the guinea pigs into a new story.
[156] Notably people don't focus on if you are local, if you're here you're involved.

Through the interventions of puppets, using public spaces in new ways and cloaking them in a mythical history the rhythms, aesthetes and sounds of the suburbs are disrupted and new affective experiences occur. This allows new feelings, emotions and a re-working or crafting of relations to occur between people and the materiality of the built environment. The local is crafted. Affect here is understood as a bodily capacity prior to cognition or emotion, is always interpersonal and is un-representational (see Pile 2010). According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987: xvi) affect differs from emotion in that it is more the capacity to be affected, to be moved, to be influenced in your state of being, for a change to occur, than the production of a specific emotional state which is able to be represented. The capacity of 'stupid' to produce a disposition, a change in a person in 'that which is considered possible' is what I wish to draw attention to. Through 'stupid' events and playfulness the normative rhythms and discourses of the suburbs are broken. New states of being suburban emerge changing what a suburb is, what relationships occur within it and what sorts of life it holds. It is "conceptually crafted" through dancing in parks or parading down streets as new ways of thinking, feeling and relating are opened up.

In his work on urban exploring, Bradley Garrett (2013) uses the term 'Edgework'[157] to describe the ways in which urban explorers push at the boundaries of what they think their bodies are capable of doing, where they can go and how they can interact with the city. He describes the ways in which new relations between bodies, buildings, streets, the city and its rhythms are forged. Constellations of power, subject, personhood, rights and the sense of belonging are reworked. New subjectivities and understandings of the self, the city and power emerge from these reworkings in what he calls 'the meld'. In a similar but less dramatic way, a comparable reworking of relations occurs in the suburbs through Seething events. The local emerges from melding places, new relations, bodily movements, mythical histories, symbols and affective substances (such as alcohol). Where Garrett's urban explorers are self-declared liminal subjects working at the edges of the city, the law and themselves, the suburban enthusiasts are working in a slower, less dramatic arena, but nonetheless are involved in the process of pushing at limits and 'melding'. These events, I suggest, are more than 'stupid' but are a key part of the reworking of relations between suburban spaces, people and the perceived future of late liberal living. The local emerges as a meld of body, place and forms of daily living that change the impending future towards one that is full of life.

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[157] Taking from Lyng 1990

As the Mayoress of Kingston stated at one event, "Claremont Gardens moment has arrived….it has been waiting to have its moment for around 100 years and it has become a new home for Lefi". A conscious effort had been made to meld with the underused spaces of the area. Grass is worn thin and memories, attachments and emotional bonds made. Later Zoe would tell me that she would often take a longer route through the park so she could remember being there "it's one of my favourite spaces now" she said, having previously given it little attention, a new local is being made.

Figure 39: The Event

Figure 40: The Trace

3.6 The Pub

Leaving the park people joke "which pub shall we go too?" always heading to the regular pub. After an event bodies fill every space, beer is spilt onto the backs of jackets and people fall out of the back door into the garden of the pub. People buzz with the energy of the event, congratulate each other and buy each other drinks; arrival at the pub means the main event is over but drinking can begin, really begin, as opposed to a few drinks mid event. Normal concepts of personal space, sobriety and sense are left behind. 'Rounds' do not necessarily require a return purchase, as Fran explained to me, a pint of beer can be referred to as a "Seething pound". If it was known that a person had little money, they would often find themselves with a drink being purchased for them with little attention drawn to the matter. I was always struck by Seething generosity; it was not just kind, but inspirational and pre-figurative of Seething life.

Bands that played the event often played again in the pub and instruments would be passed around. The Seething national anthem has no lyrics but is a simple tune which people sing "der de de der der, de de, de de der dur…." and the entire pub joins in. This moment of collective unity interrupts and conjoins the many conversations and brings new people instantly. In the social heat of jokes, elaborate stories and laughter a collective effervescence emerges (Durkehiem 1912). Arms go around shoulders,

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drunken photos are taken and the next day people reminisce through Facebook, or a "Seething echo". The drinking is central to the development of a social bond (See Jayne et al 2010) distinct to drunkenness where the forms of trust and familiarity involved are far removed from officious professional arenas of council, work or traditional community meetings. The nights of events serve as a talking point for the next time you meet Seethingers. Drinking and drunkenness provide a particular, hot (McDonald 2013) affective experience that is a corporal, sensorial embodiment of a sociality, further to the aesthetics of the events that binds people together. Through the ingesting of alcohol, the body goes through radical transformations, the pub is a space of an affective economy whereby strangers and friends mix in ways particular to alcohol and drunkenness (See Jayne et al 2010), it is a prime space for a melding. Further it is a deeply creative space where people reflect upon, inventing and extend Seething legends amidst laughter jokes and fun.

After one particular event, in the midst of the singing and drinking, I noticed a man walk through the door alone, look around as if he was deciding to stay or go when another Seethinger said, "go speak to him Jeeva". I asked if he was ok, he looked suitably confused and asked what was going on, I explained the festival and Seething events the best I could with anecdotes about guinea pigs and carts of fish. I was drunk and it was hard to tell these stories in a way that made any sense or that he could feel involved at that point. Bar staff noticed him looking 'outsiderish' and served him quickly, I introduced him to a few people and left him to it. However I saw him leave again and remained unnoticed by most. Some people in my immediate conversational circle noticed and a conversation about those who aren't included started. Some said it "wasn't for all", "but it is" came the response.

Privately a number of informants expressed their worry that drinking and pub culture may exclude others from Seething activities, whilst simultaneously recognising the centrality of the pub to Seething. As Zoe stated;

> "The pub poses difficult questions, as much as we'd love it to be open
> to everyone it's not, there are a lot of people who aren't very happy
> with the Lefi symbol and think it's all too surreal and nonsense. I feel
> incredibly happy there, but can it be a total neutral space? I'm not
> sure that space exists anywhere in the world, a church hall? I don't
> feel comfortable as it's linked to a church. The reason I spend so
> much time there as I do is because there isn't enough spaces in
> Surbiton and Kingston to do the sorts of things I'd love to be vibrant

in our community - total lack of little venues, spaces, performance spaces."

For Zoe the pub was a massively important part of her life, she feels "at home" there, often working and arranging meetings there as well as relaxing. On her drawing of Surbiton she drew stars and a happy face on the location of the pub and labels roads with arrows 'this way to the pub' and a sad face at the train station where she would leave Surbiton. The pub is a place where the affective dispositions created in Seething can find an everyday sociality, where they can be reaffirmed and spread. The pub provides the conditions to arrange social life and work life around such a Seething disposition and as such becomes a vital adaptable space for the community.
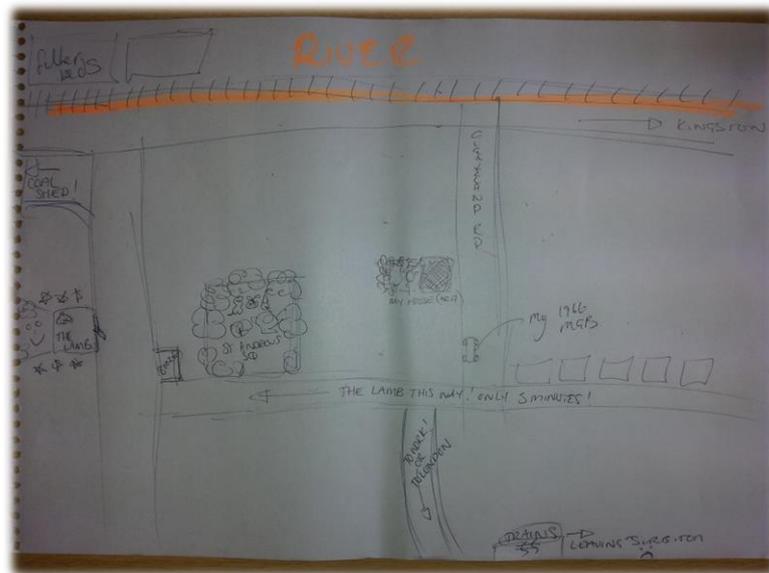
Figure 41: Zoe's map of 'her Surbiton' drawn during an interview.

Over the course of the fieldwork period I went from drinking very little to drinking on an almost nightly basis in the pub. I would often finish an interview with a walk to the pub with an informant and buy them a pint (a Seething pound). I would meet people, arrange fieldwork there, and use it as a base, in return I often helped out trimming the garden and odd jobs, entertaining the children and so on. The pub acted as a material space for the commitments of sociality to play out. Drinking played an important role in being Seething. Zoe, who became one of my closest informants, initially was not;

Sarah: "don't you find it weird that's he studying us?"

Zoe; "well yeh, when you explain what you're doing in all that academic language then yeh it's a bit weird but when you're sitting

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here just having a drink with us it's just normal. I'm not sure I get all
that academic stuff, it's not that I'm not cleaver it's just that I'm not
sure if we are just doing what we do you know"

Zoe would often express their surprise at an anthropologist being interested in Seething and would explain my position to newcomers, which was great for my ethical discloser. 'Just having a drink' was a thing anyone (who drinks) can do. Otherwise my presence, as ethnographer, posed a problem for Seethingers. They aim to always include, to bring people 'in' and to spread Seething, yet at the same time the position of expert does not fit, there can be no expert, no fixed way or rules: everyone is the expert. The ethnographer, as expert, going into the field, Seething (not Surbiton), learning about it and returning to a realm of academic practice as 'expert', would produce a distinctly unSeething expert body about Seethingers. As well as being an ethical dilemma it also served as fruitful material in which relations could be re-articulated through acts of stupidity. My position as ethnographer was not rejected, rather it was made 'stupid'. Academic practice, a social rule, was applied to Seething to show how it did not apply or rather to make obviations and swerves. All of the symbols, the prestige, and the positions of expert it produced were obviated in the moment of transfer within the involution. A university was set up and a series of events were held. This involved people in my research and created more Seething events, PhDs were great idea, said Seethingers, PhDs for everyone.

3.7 The Free University of Seething (FUS)

During the first months of my fieldwork, I was talking to a small group of Seethingers about what my ethnography would involve, what my motivations are and so on. The group started to talk about the prescriptive nature of 'official' knowledge and through some of the reasons behind 'the moment' of refusal by the ASP (chapter 1). The conversation evolved and soon we were talking of public lectures, open universities and involving everyone in my research. A couple of weeks later, on a Wednesday afternoon, the 'Free University of Seething' opened with a public lecture to around 50 people.

Wendy talked first; being a researcher herself she gave a full blown account of the history of suburbs and in particular the history of Surbiton. Steve finished the talks with

the story of Lefi – explaining the motivations behind Lefi, his origin[158] and how he helped "built a community that belongs to everyone". Between them I nervously talked through the understanding of suburbs that came from the ASP's Space Syntax maps the PPGIS. I hoped people might take interest in the map but over the course of fieldwork people remained little interested. FUS, however, was a place where people could get together for the love of learning, where I could conduct my research and extend the ASP in new ways (see chapter 4). My research melded into new Seething events and degrees and awards were handed out to all involved and displayed with pride.

Figure 42: FUS degrees on display in the Pub.

FUS, through applying the rules to itself, is able to make obviations, symbolic substitutions, in the chains of meaning and practice. Expert is taken up by everyone; knowledge comes from everywhere in whatever form is productive of Seething. Through playing in the gap, the moment of transfer in the involutionary mechanism, between what academia is and could be, Seething opens up new possibilities. An output of that is this PhD, which transfers value to other social projects and creates obviations and swerves of them[159].

> "Long before the 'Open University' the people of Seething founded
> the Free University of Seething. Indeed it is considered by many to
> be the oldest true university in the world. Built upon the foundations
> of Lefi's Law that 'all people good and true' should 'enjoy and

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[158] From the old idea of Left handed people being the outsider, leftie/Lefi.
[159] It is a fetish

prosper through knowledge freely given through love of learning of Seething'. From 'all people' we get 'Universal' and from 'love of learning of Seething' we get 'learnseething' which became 'universalearnseething' which in its shortened form was spoken as 'universeethee' – the origination of the modern pronunciation of university.

The Free University of Seething was closed as an institution in 1902 as a result of its then contentious work on global warming and the effects of over use of the earth's resources. Subsequently much of this work has proved to be sadly correct although unfortunately the hypothesis that within 100 years 'man would have found a way to overcome greed and resolved a world where resource was shared according to need' (IWLWHW) still defeats us"[160]

Of course, Surbiton, the queen of suburbs cannot accommodate the oldest university, the biggest trade union, the centre of governance nor would it try to. Seethingers craft an image of what it is they cannot be but are brought into relation with, they parade it back to you, showing what they are and are not. Through the performative play in the gap between meaning and material, 'stupid' etymology can force a swerve in the process of involution. This enables a cleaving open of the terms of legitimacy regarding knowledge, expertise, knowing the suburbs. As Butler states;

The "performative" dimension of construction is precisely the forced reiteration of norms. In this sense, then, it is not only that there are constraints to performativity; rather, constraint calls to be rethought as the very condition of performativity (1993:94)

The constraints of language provide the tools through which norms can be detoured, re-orientated and brought to work to build new relations. Through the memetic need in the ongoing process of involution, where meaning and material are constantly exchanging and enforcing their alignment, minor obviations can radically reconfigure the arrangements of power and meaning. New terms of life can be cleaved open. The fun, stupid elements of the performance, and the assertion of life, inclusion and participation means that the involution is not seen or felt as a direct or antagonistic critique. Institutions, such as UCL are not rejected, but rather they are brought into

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[160] (seethingwells.org accessed 01.05.14).

Seething and Seething into them, on their terms, in so doing the definitions of life, of *bios*, change.
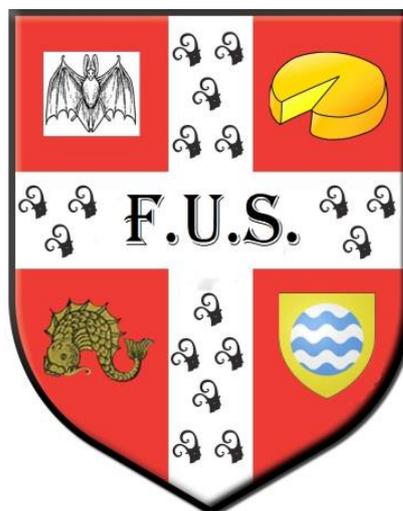
Figure 43: The Free University of Seething Crest (replete with cheese& Lefi heads), upon which the University of Cambridge, based their badge

3.8 After the Event

Towards of the end of my fieldwork I had lunch with Racheal, who had recently been made redundant from her job and decided to become self-employed. She explained how the Seething community enable a base from which people feel that there is 'support' and opportunity to try new things. In considering what to do next she said " I refuse to get a job I'll be bored with" and felt if she did not set up her own business now she would never do it. She asked if she had "really given it a go yet or am I just sat there scared". Seething enables a certain community of relations where people can try new things and extend opportunity to others and themselves. For Racheal, Seething events had allowed her to "discover I'm good at stuff" such as organising and running events. She states:

> "for me getting involved in Seething is the first time I have felt like I belong for probably the first time in my life I have been able to be myself and become a part of that group."

However, describing the energy needed to use her skills and time for Seething events, whilst struggling for work herself, Racheal described how she needed to keep a "balance". Whilst she was able to develop new relations, new work opportunities, find

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confidence and new horizons she also needed time to develop herself. Further, Seething events needed to make room for more people to get involved. Seething events, in lacking formal structure, using flexible meeting spaces and being a product of whatever is put in rather than having a pre-prescribed output (what an event should look like), enable people to contribute as and when they can and retreat when they need to. Seething enables a flexible, adaptable arena in which skills can be used, shared and gained. This shapes both the types of work and personhoods of the suburbs. Seething transfigures the notion of 'work' as understood in the suburban imaginary from a negative anti-life future to a positive, pro-life future. It is neither the liminal outside, nor a radical failure, it is "not this", it is "not that" but is something else, which comes through a position on the threshold.

Harry talks to me about living in a suburb and its association with being middle class and dull;

> "suburbs are all about the opportunity to fail, they are a place where you can try something and it doesn't matter if it doesn't work . Why are people so obsessed with things having to work all the time. Actually on the class thing, I think that really class is about having the opportunity to get things wrong. If you get something wrong around here you'll be ok, that's always the point at the meetings."

Through being 'stupid', bringing into relation that which could not possibly be brought into relation, Seethingers are able to show what they are not. They are not greedy, hyper individuals and conditions for traditional social collectives such as unions, universities and so on are not in place, nor are they desired. Trying and failing is seen as a part of the condition of expanding beyond what you think is possible and involves re-arranging ethical commitments at the scale of the corporal and the local, which provides a network of trust, familiarity and resources. Failure is a demonstration, a showing, a bringing to the fore of that what is not yet possible[161]. It is a seed of something new; it's the start of finding a way to "allow people to be brilliant". The desire to include becomes an anxiety within the moral framework of Seething and constantly demands new forms and ways of doing Seething.

> "that's what we all say we are doing but actually I don't think we are that inclusive at all and that's one thing that gets me actually, I mean how many meetings do we have that aren't in or don't end in the pub,

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[161] this sense is a pre obviating obviation See Wagner 1975.

and we have a particular sense of humour that takes some getting used to" (Harry)

"it's so open, people find it difficult to become involved because people can't quite see where their skill set can help. The problem is we aren't prescribing what we need." (Racheal)

Seethingers are constantly fighting their own possible exclusions; regular roles are wilfully given up to new comers. Newcomers are sought as Steve explained – there is a constant need to bring people in -to let people "be brilliant" - to share, "have a go", "get things wrong" and "shine".

3.9 Making a Swerve

Figure 44: I live in Seething t-shirt reading, "I live in Seething, it's a state of mind".

Seething is a place that is not a place, rather as the t-shirt states it is 'a State of mind;' it effects where you shop, how you help others, how you see the world and act towards being in it. It is a moral and social disposition, which is shared and spread through performances of fun, silliness and stupidity. Play and fun here serve to 'bring in', to include and create affective interjections into the everyday suburban world, in order to play in the gap, re-align and create new forms of being suburban, being local.

Histories of giants, fresh water sardine industries, guilds, ancient universities and such are imagined in the context of Surbiton. The normative structures of social relations,

the myths, histories and institutions are applied to the suburban imaginary and through obviations in the involutory mechanism, the forms of life possible in late liberal suburbs is changed. The controlling context (Wagner 1975) is re-worked and re-ordered through material-discursive practices. In crafting and parading sculptures[162], time and energy is invested, commitment to the community is displayed. The lack of 'sense' or utility ensures that the sculptures remain on the edge, pushing the gap but not delineating what it should be. The invention of tradition is a form of showing life, of creating a carnivalesque moment that endures, not in mixing the sacred and profane but rather in re-delineating the terms of life, making *bios* from *zöe*, inventing culture through the performative work in the involution. Work, exchange and play are re-defined. Value is produced through a quality of life made possible through using affective interjection to craft the local.

Radical interruptions to the everyday rhythms of the suburban non-event and uncanny analogies demand attention. As Yeal Nevaro-Yasin proposes we should aim to;

> understand the fantasy factor in the phantasmatic not as a figment of the imagination, a construct, or a discourse, but as a concrete manifestation of a social practice, as a tangibility, and as real[…]fantasy is not that which exceeds discourse[...]rather, we construe fantasy, or the phantasm in the phantasmatic as a materiality, as an actual tangible object. Here, there is no construct that runs ahead of a material realization. Rather the fantasy element is in the material itself. (2012:15)

Conceptually crafting 'not this' 'not that' occurs through 'stupid' alignments, crafting and moving materials. Stupidity is not failure, (counter to Butler 1993) as it never aims to establish itself. Rather through affective interjections it works to make disruptions to the habitual and memetic involutory process - between matter and meaning. Minor obviations bring attention, a phantasmagorical relation to that which they are not. They expose the gap, through which a transformation can be made. This pushing at the edge transforms the power and possession of sovereign power, those who define the terms of exclusion. As Barbara Maria Stafford says the analogical relation;

> Whether in myth, philosophy, religion, history, or aesthetics - grappled with the problem of how to conjoin an accumulated body of practices to the shifting present and elusive future. Within this developmental, not revolutionary, framework[…]transformation

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[162] Which are often burnt at the end of a parade in a pagan like ritual.

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always arose at the intersection of constancy with instability, coupling continuity to discontinuity. (2001:133)

The minor act vacillates between a normative construct and a failed being (the suburban imaginary) intentionally to highlight the harm of such failures. Stupid is an interruption to failure, a refusal of it, and its productive forbearer. 'Stupid' analogous relations enact a performance where the reiteration of the norms occurs in an awkward, improbable context. 'Stupid' provides an excess (see Boyer & Yurchak 2010) of alignment exposing what the suburbs are not. This highlights the powerful, potentially harmful aspects of the mimetic reiteration of norms. Rather than constraining performances of being, these norms are the very condition through which performativity occurs (Butler 2000:94) and newness comes about.

In the spectre of new affective possibilities new assemblages of being are made, people are fused to each other, are hafted to landscape through drinking, laughing, dancing and being stupid. The notion of hafting is a practice of shepherding through which shepherds graze sheep on familiar land as to build a relation between sheep and land so that they graze better and are more productive (Olwig (2008:81). Through dancing and drinking on the spaces both person and land become something else. A new relation to place is made as Zoe explained about Claremont gardens;

> "Until that event I hadn't walked through that park, now I walk through it every day...it's one of my favourite places"

Being a Seethinger goes beyond the events into the everyday life of being, it affects where you buy coffee, how and where you walk, and your emotive ties to place and to people. Symbols of the stories are displayed in everyday clothing (Figure 45). These new relations, re-enforced through everyday walks, interactions and immersion in the landscape memetically reinforce memory, relations and a Seething 'State of mind'. This produces a change in the everyday detail of life in the suburb, it produces a swerve through the minor act, which is hardly noticed, changing the form of life in the meta-culture, as Althusser states;

> the clinamen is an infinitesimal *swerve*, 'as small as possible'; 'no one knows where, or when, or how' it occurs, or what causes an atom to 'swerve' from its vertical fall in the void, and, breaking the parallelism in an almost negligible way at one point, induce *an encounter* with the

atom next to it, and, from encounter to encounter, a pile-up and the birth of a world (Althusser 2006:169)

Figure 45: Seething Jewellery, worn on everyday occasions, made and sold locally. Sardine earrings (top right), a spoon with love from the Kings Soup (necklace, centre top, earrings bottom centre), Sardine necklace (right), egg & spoon earrings from the sports day

The ethical plane of childlike innocence, of playfulness and being full of creative possibilities is promoted through the 'morally pure' ideal of the child and through the 'bringing in' of the excluded in the form of Lefi the goat boy[163]. Being stupid promotes an ability to be brilliant through investing in the improbable, pushing at the limits and changing the terms of production. As Butler states in regard to transgender performances, they;

> promote an alternative imaginary to a hegemonic imaginary and to show, through that assertion, the ways in which the hegemonic imaginary constitutes itself through the naturalization of an exclusionary heterosexual morphology (1993:91).

Seethingers are not crafting a utopian alternative but a dialogue towards 'better'. They show what they cannot be, such as a union of taxominists, in a suburb with a clear inability to have a sustained business for taxonomy, demonstrating the economic normative conditions through which minor ecologies may be forgotten. Benton the bat,

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[163] Who was fed by children bringing scraps from the village, as they don't judge, they are pre-social.

a local rare bat under threat from a planned development[164], was made into a puppet and paraded at Seething events, where he shined and gained value (following Munn 1986). The Bat was made, quite literally visible (Figure 85) and is brought into a discussion over its value and ethical position and Benton was brought from *zöe* into *bios* (see chapter 5). The materialism of the encounter (Althusser 2006) produces a disposition and forces a moral position, a relation to that which previously had no relation.

Seethingers aim to produce "more resilient communities[…]that reflect the challenge presented by our fractional lives"[165] through a commitment to a particular set of relations, producing particular socialites and persons that are fundamentally local. The "perceived and meaningful community" is composed of neither dividuals (following Strathern 1996), individuals nor transindividuals, but from *locals* who, through a commitment to a particular set of moral positions allow and support each other to be 'brilliant' through forming a *local* body that is *resilient* in an age of late liberal democratic policies where localism means resources are 'up for grabs'[166] (Dickson 2015; Lambek 2008). This is seen clearly through planning developments[167] and the possible dissolution of boundaries, as seen in the article from 1988 (see chapter 4).

Seethingers create a body local in dialogic relation to other social projects whilst asserting their own moral project, being open, democratic[168] and participatory at the local scale. The mechanisms for doing so are kept in check through an inherent tension of never quite being finished, owned or understood, they are "threshold people" (Turner 1969:95). Expertise, ways of doing things and 'fact' are all constantly debased in order to allow a condition of re-arranging. Seething aims not to prescribe moral order but is a performative working out of what the world could be. As such things 'do not have to work all the time' but failure is seen as a seed to new possibilities and possible obviations in the involutionary process. The events, parades and acts of stupidity prefigure a form of moral commitment to something outside the normative, with different constellations of value. The commitments to the local body have their own forms of stress and strain. It takes work to maintain community as an "illusory

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[164] See chapter 5
[165] http://thecommunitybrain.org accessed 2/6/2013
[166] See chapter 5.
[167] See chapter 5.
[168] Egalistarian might be a better word.

objectiviation" (Carsten & Hugh-jones 1995:8) around which subjectivities can form[169], and the effects of late-liberal harm can be reduced, but this work has its own conditions of harm.

3.10 Conclusions

At the end chapter 2, cake was eaten but not discussed as an awkward, out of place, polluting corporal substance in the way of objectivity. That awkwardness, where cake can be discussed but not eaten (because it's as hard as a brick) is the essence of 'stupid'. Alignments are made producing an excess of correspondence (following Boyer & Yurchak 2010) which shows how the rule does not apply to Seethingers who purposefully occupy the threshold. These non-fitting symbols work as an obviation in the ongoing performative movement between material and meaning. This links are complex and extend down lines of association. As such a minor substitution, an obviation can cause a swerve in the controlling context. In the gap, a new space emerges. The normative discursive trope is exposed as socially contingent through the disjuncture. The local emerges in dialogic relation to the sovereign, those who decide on the exclusions, and forces *bios* from within the terms of recognition, changing the nature of the sovereign through the potential of the involution. Being 'stupid', playing in the gap, making a twist, a re-alignment in the moment of transfer, forces the meta-culture to swerve (see introduction).

Returning to the 'moment' in chapter 1, the addition of the story to the map can be seen as an extension of the moral project of Seething and the turn away as a protection of it. Further this meeting and turn away provides the conditions for the obviation to occur, for the rule to be applied. The local body that it protects meets the ASP again in chapters 4 & 5. The next chapter looks at how the ASP again tries to engage local enthusiasts and how Seething involutes the ASP. Chapter 5 looks at how the local that can speak, that has a particular sense of value, is able to speak and shape the material landscape in a council planning meeting.

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[169] This is explored more in chapter 5.

4

Making a Suburb Part II:

Beating the Bounds

This chapter looks in more detail at the ways the ASP and Seething meet. After the moment of refusal, outlined in chapter 1, the ASP team members thought of other ways to populate the map with oral histories of change in the area. This chapter works through this meeting outlining in detail the moment of transfer in the performance of the involution. I show that in the gap between meaning and material, that is, in the process of transfer where meaning becomes involute in material and vice versa, Seethingers work to re-align meaning. This re-alignment works through every day 'being in the world' where affective potentials precipitate into the subjective self. I argue this process is fluid and dynamic and that the everyday aspect of being in the world is deeply political. Both the ASP and Seething, as social projects, change in dialogic relation to each other through these moments as both work with the power imbued in the everyday materiality of being.

4.1 Where are the Boundaries?

Around a year into the ASP, issues arose in terms of generating interest and participation in the online mapping platform. The on-going problem of where to place the analytical boundaries of the suburbs sat on the table (along with the cake) at ASP meetings. I had been encouraged to think through the ways in which I could engage with communities in order to meet the ASP's needs, but no mutually acceptable options had yet emerged as to how to add the "social layer"[170].

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[170] Quoted from the ASP 'Case for Support'. EPSRC reference number EP/I001212/1. 1st November 2010:1

At the time I had been spending time talking to local archivists, historians and members of the Seething Villagers. Whilst the local archive and official historian groups were happy to meet and talk through the various elements of Surbiton and Kingston's histories, the groups were rather small and of a particular demographic, usually retired and primarily from the Kingston area. I found myself spending more and more time with the Seething Villagers who would frequently tell me their interests in Surbiton. Being a group who often organised events in public spaces I spent a lot of time meeting people at their house or a local café or pub and then walking around the area to visit event sites or run errands related to the events. During these errands people would often narrate their personal biography of living in Surbiton with the landscape around us 'I used to live here…. I used to drink in there with so and so' and so on. It was during this period of walking and showing that I started to think through emerging themes in the research.

The interest in the movements of people, the notion of showing and telling, sharing and mapping meant that walking tours emerged as a key ethnographic tool. I floated the idea of using walking tours to elucidate the relationships people had to the local areas to the ASP. A professor and co-investigator suggested I apply to the EPSRC inclusion award grant to fund the walks and develop the maps content. The application reflected a need for the expert's knowledge of academic projects to disseminate into a wider public body and conversely the need to 'include' people in academic research and inform projects of the academy.

The application asked for £10,616, which would be used across three sites. The supportive text in which a project description was given, aligned the walks to the ASP;-

> With support from the *Inclusions* scheme we propose to recruit three 'Local Champions', one for each of our three suburban case studies – Surbiton, South Norwood and Loughton – for a unique collaboration between academic researchers and local community activists that focuses on suburban tour-guiding. Advised by our PhD students (under academic supervision) and trained by experienced walking tour guides, each Local Champion will devise and deliver (at least twice) their own walking tour in their local area and follow these up by leading a specialist community-mapping workshop (one for each suburb) organised through the *Adaptable Suburbs* project. As local history enthusiasts and community activists the Champions would be drawn from non-traditional research backgrounds. Our collaboration will innovate methodologically by developing and testing a web-based, community-orientated 'auto-ethnography', using the suburban walking tours as starting points. This approach will combine PPGIS with anthropological methods in new ways, enabling our Champions to learn new skills and academics to develop existing techniques for gathering information on locality, living patterns and social networks in ways that differ from those offered by traditional academic methods.

The majority of costs went on equipment, mainly cameras and expertise which mainly involved the development of the website (PPGIS) to provide/track/gather walking tour information, such as route lines connecting point data.

I took the grant, which had been written by the ASP, to Seethingers who immediately rejected a number of aspects of the walks. The training budget for professional tour guides to come from central London and run workshops was rejected as unnecessary and further, an imposition of an expert position, which was anti-Seething. Instead, local story tellers and theatre practitioners were invited to run workshops so that people could learn together and share stories and experiences in the local landscape, mixing history, fun, play and creativity. The Free University of Seething hosted the walks and awarded degrees to walkers.

Hosting the walks coincided with the ASP working to fix the boundaries of the suburban sites being studied (see Chapter 2). As such, the idea of walking and attributing value to the immediate material surroundings was aligned with the activities of the ASP (Chapter 2) where movement potentials, land use and building shape were each mapped within the same visual space. The fact that planning the walks coincided with project's delimitation of the local boundaries led to discussions in Surbiton about the boundaries of the area. This feedback loop helped shape the development of the Seething walks as I moved between the ASP and the Seething community.

4.1.1 Lines

I had been looking through historical data in order to find the historical boundaries of Surbiton and South Norwood, my primary and secondary fieldsites. South Norwood had an interesting boundary history, as Alan Warwick describes in his book *The Phoenix Suburb* (1972:11-18). South Norwood sits across the boundaries of three London Boughs—Croydon, Bromley and Lambeth—as a result of the way the bounds of the area were beaten.

Around the late 1700s, previous to the mapping of the counties and the subsequent stabilisation of area boundaries South Norwood's bounds had been marked through perambulation. According to Warwick, around the time at which perambulation or 'beating the bounds' faded out of popular authoritative practice, as maps took over the central role of officious boundary marking, the priest responsible for conducting the perambulation was particularly elderly. As such he was unable to climb a rocky slope which would mark the furthest extent of South Norwood towards the direction of Lambeth and as such the boundary was marked closer to South Norwood than had been understood to be the case since 1540 (ibid).

Today the area remains partially in one district and partially in another in ill-fitting alignment of borough boundaries. These relate directly to the bodily movements and the ability of the elderly priest at a particular historical moment when the authority to mark the boundary moved from the ambulatory priest to central government through the practice of map making. But as Warwick states, once this history is known a walk in the area evokes the history as a bodily memory:

> Tracing that broken dotted line along church road and down Fox Hill, it is almost as through one can follow the reluctant footprints of Revd. Richard Finch, walking close as he dared to the disputed property. (Warwick 1972:14).

The South Norwood Tourist Board[171] (who like the Seethingers were my primary point of contact in their neighbourhood) had stressed to me that South Norwood was officially part of Croydon but was more linked to London. It appeared that the history of beating of bounds had very real and lasting effects on how place was both

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[171] http://southnorwoodtouristboard.com/ accessed 3/5/14. This group use Dadaist and Situationist manoeuvres to promote South Norwood as a premier tourist attraction but also use the same 'stupid' mechanism.

understood and felt in modern suburban London. However the history of beating the bounds was little known in either Surbiton or South Norwood despite its enduring influences in boundary making.

Wanting to know more about this old English ritual, I discovered the practice still occurred through local festivals as a tradition or historical enactment in Oxford and the London borough of Tower Hamlets[172] but I could find little written on it in academic anthropology other than Michael Houseman's (1998) 'Painful Places'. Houseman compares a number of ritual performances which detail the construction of characteristic connections between people and their homelands' comparing the English custom of Perambulation or Beating of the Bounds, the gisaro ceremony of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea and the initiation rites of the Australian Aranda—all of which trouble the ontological distinction of body and land. Houseman explains how ritual, pain and place are intimately wound together and how memory is created through painful acts specifically associated with boundary markers. He says;

> Thus, the 'impressing of memory' as the local idiom would have it, consists in bringing about a certain mindfulness of territory not indirectly, by means of an abstract conceptualisation of the perambulated land, but directly, by means of a certain intimate physical encounter with it. This intent is clearly expressed, for example, in a recurrent feature of processioning in which the victim's head is placed in direct contact with the terrain being perambulated: 'at each halting point, one of the visitants is bumped smartly against the boundary-stone, or placed head downwards against it (Houseman:4 quoting from Brand 1848: 114; also Hazlitt 1905: 523 [sic])

Considering the notion of boundary through my involvement with the ASP, I had come to think about the ways in which local people today may consider the boundary of place and its relation to the more official boundaries of local government. The ASP's problem of the boundary[173] had been discussed a little at the inaugural Free University of Seething lecture where around 40 people were given a brief overview of the ASP and an introduction to myself as an anthropologist. This occurred within a wider discussion regarding changes to the high street and the local area. The problem of the precise details of the boundary was largely seen as an academic one. At the time people seemed

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[172] http://www.allhallowsbythetower.org.uk/events/beating-the-bounds/ accessed 6/2/14
[173] See chapter two.

more than happy to discuss where the boundary between Kingston and Surbiton seemed to be for them. For most, the boundary was marked by a coffee shop along a river walk, but detailing the boundary in any more detail - such as it would need to be for architectural analysis - was seen as something to be discussed amongst experts, or rather, as an academic exercise. Several months later, after the ASP had spent a large amount of time discussing the boundaries (see chapter 2) I returned to the topic with my informants, but via a different route. In casual conversation in the pub, following a Seething event planning meeting, I asked where the boundaries of Seething might be. The answer of course was not straightforward, the question was taken and through the involution, it was brought into Seething and out again, with some obviations on the way.

4.1.2 Meetings & Productive Hanging Out.

As outlined in chapter 3, most Seething meetings happened in the pub, where economies of familiarity of trust are deepened in an atmosphere that sees conversation move in creative ways. People were not there to be sensible or work through an agenda, it was a space to relax and mingle, and as such it was a space for creative thinking, helped by alcohol. Such a space helps create what Sara Ahmed (2004) calls an 'affective economy' that intermixes the biological, technical, social and economic in producing particular dispositions in response to being in the world. Discussions focus on problem solving, on the development and evolution of the Seething story, and delegating certain tasks to be addressed following the official Seething meeting. Staying for a(n other) drink was where much productive work occurred. This hanging out time was more fluid and less committed than the meetings themselves, it was often from these sorts of conversations that 'ideas' would be worked up into stupid events.

4.1.3 Ask a Stupid Question….

I sat on a bench in the pub garden with eight other people; an informant, with whom I had recently done a walking interview, asked, "Where is the boundary of Surbiton?" In answer, people discussed the boundary between Kingston and Surbiton and joked about

invading Kingston. I then asked, "So where is the boundary to Seething?" as I wondered if the place which is not a place could be bound as a "state of mind":

> Anton: "it has no boundary…I mean, how can you put a boundary around love?"

> Me: "ha, perfect"

> Anton: "yeh, it is"

> The conversation moved onto talking through the idea of local boundaries and I told Anton of the case of the South Norwood boundary and the Australian pain rituals I had been reading about through Michael Houseman's work.

> Anton: "Brilliant! They do what?"

> Me: "They disappear into the deserts and pull their fingernails out and bleed into the soil."

> Anton: "Let's do that here!"

> Me: (Laughter) "Let's not."

> Anton: "No it will be brilliant!"

Anton turns to the table, tells everyone to listen, and drunkenly recites a version of the English ritual of beating the bounds, mixing the rituals of the Aranda people of central Australia who "wander and bleed" in order to enter with the earth. Anton's tale makes little sense but there is an energy and enthusiasm that the bounds need to be beaten as a Seething event. Quickly people note that Seething is to be unbound, as Anton says "how can you put a boundary around love?" This poses a problem, one that is simply overcome by deciding that we should beat the bounds of Surbiton rather than Seething. The table quickly decide that as long as it is a Free University of Seething event the bounds of Surbiton can be beaten in the Spirit of Seething. As such the actual bounds of Surbiton cease to be the focus of the event with the idea of getting together, learning, being a little silly and going on a walk. This became our third of four walks sponsored by the inclusion award. The other three were: the 'Canvas walk', 'Fact & fiction', and 'River roads'.

The first walk, the Canvas walk, started with one large group but allowed the group to split as long as any subdividing group followed one of eight cameras funded by the award. After a set three hours the group would re-convene to trade conversations about

why they went where they did. The second walk, Fact & fiction, blended fact and fiction along a set route where people could tell bits of local history - or make it up. The final walk, called River Roads, explored some of the histories of the roads by the river and played with some of the characters found in the archives. All walks aimed to allow all people on the walk to involve themselves in the making of the walk thereby rejecting any position of expert in favour of an inclusive and open practice. However, this chapter focuses on the third walk, The Beating of the Bounds. This is in part due to limited space in the thesis, but primarily as beating the bounds aligns to the practice of boundary and place making seen in chapter 2[174].

Once Anton suggested we beat the bounds, people started looking on smartphones to see if the 'bounds' were ever 'beaten' around Surbiton. Already it was clear that, while it needed more research, the bounds were going to be beaten. Suggestions as to its form ranged from funny to extreme to undoable, some wanted to re-create the pain rituals of central Australia on Anton. People laughed as ideas of being tied to land in central Australia and being a Seethinger were contrasted. The application of anthropological narratives here is 'stupid': there is an excess of alignment to show what they are not actually aligned. However the play also shows that despite the difference they do have deep connections to the material environment of the local area. The walk emphasised this further.

4.2 Researching, Discussing and Beating the Bounds.

A Facebook event page was set up to advertise an open planning meeting which would, as usual, occur in the pub. Social media, particularly Facebook, is seen a key way in which the events can be open and inviting to everyone at every stage. Lefi the goat boy has his own page, as does the 'Spirit of Seething' to which event details and event videos are posted. Most people involved in the walks had expressed interest at the first moment in the pub (described above) and made promises to get involved and through advertised and word of mouth many others also got involved. Steve, keen Seethinger and ASP's 'local champion', noted that the walks were different to the previous Seething

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[174] They can all be seen here http://www.seethingwells.org/University_of_Seething.html accessed 3/3/15.

events and as such offered a different way into Seething for a wider array of local people.

Alan had, by that point, already lived in Surbiton for around five years, he has a keen interest in local history and he and his partner, Rachel, had become increasingly involved in local events. Rachel has ambitions to set up her own business running events in the local area. She has an interest in crafts and runs an event once a month in the pub. Alan, being out of work and having a little time on his hands, became the main researcher for the walk, whilst Rachel took care of the marketing and advertising. Steve put us in touch with local businesses - particularly a restaurant that had heavily supported the community in the past but struggled for business over the New Year period. We used some of the grant money available to hire the space in the restaurant for the event. Usually the pub is used for small events, however the availability of the grant money meant that rather than needing to relay on favours the community saw an opportunity to return a favour to those who have helped make events happen in the past. It also allowed a different space to be used, allowing Seething to expand. Here the notion of economic exchange takes a different form to that seen in dominant public conversation about the UK high street as it plays out in national press and as the ASP engages it[175]. A successful business in Seething is one that helps others grow, helps extend the values of community through support, trust and fun.

Figure 46: Beating the Bounds event poster designed by Rachel, displayed by Anna

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[175] See Duncan 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/27/dont-mourn-loss-of-high-street-turn-shops-into-houses accessed 2/2/15.

Close to the event date the restaurant stoped returning my calls and I found it difficult to establish any line of communication. Rachel told me she had walked past and seen that it looked closed. I told Liam, the pub landlord and key community member (his pub was nominated for charitable pub of the year in 2012), who was able to make some calls. He found that the restaurant had decided to close indefinitely and the family had left to their family home in Italy without leaving instruction to their staff. Even though the restaurant had been paid by the inclusion award, I was unsure if it would be able to go ahead, however Liam put in a few more calls and the restaurant made efforts to host the event. I am deeply unsure if this would have happened had it just been me making those calls, in fact I did not even have the correct contacts to do so. Without too much being said, one morning in the pub, which was also Liam's home, Liam said, "Leave it to me, Jeeva, I'll make sure he opens that place for you." He then disappeared leaving me to draw pictures whilst minding his children. He told me it would be ok and three days later called me to let me know it was all back on. I am not entirely sure what was said over the phone calls that he made but the moment serves to demonstrate the economy of trust and familiarity in which Liam, myself and the venue were embedded. Things happen through personal and emotional connections. The conditions of this economy, of personality, guilt, favours, trust and familiarity are factors of productivity that cannot be measured without deep ethnography and were missing in the ASP's measurements outlined in chapter 2.

Rachel designed flyers and posters that were handed out to local businesses and displayed in windows and doorways. Her connections to the local business community, and the fact it was a Seething event, made most conversations with local shop owners very easy as people were familiar with either Rachel or more often, the Seething events, which had raised huge amounts of money for local businesses and further raised the profile of Surbiton as a place. What had originally been met with a look of scepticism about yet another poster request for their shop window developed quickly into an "of course" smile when Seething was mentioned. In fact most people seemed little interested in the event itself but made efforts to note that they liked Seething events and made remarks such as "thank you guys, it's really great what you guys do around here" (Hairdresser) or "keep up the good work" (local café). After the events the posters were taken down by most businesses. Anna, the landlady of the pub, kept the poster up, however, as a reminder of the sort of community events in which the pub is involved. She grew rather attached to the posters, and became defensive when someone tried to

remove one from a toilet door that had become quite tattered. In fact, her pub contained many of the Seething items post-event, which regulars would have to explain to new comers. These material traces where to be found in direct forms - such as posters, and indirect forms - such as symbols of fish, outlined below.

In all Alan and I made five trips to the local history room in Kingston and one trip to Surry County archives, an hour from Surbiton. Over the period of two or three months we were able to find a decent amount of local history on the boundaries of Surbiton which were briefly outlined and presented at the beating the bounds event, held in January of 2013. The historical outline formed part of a welcome pack to the day, which also included several ritual songs, a map of the area and a Free University of Seething Degree certificate.
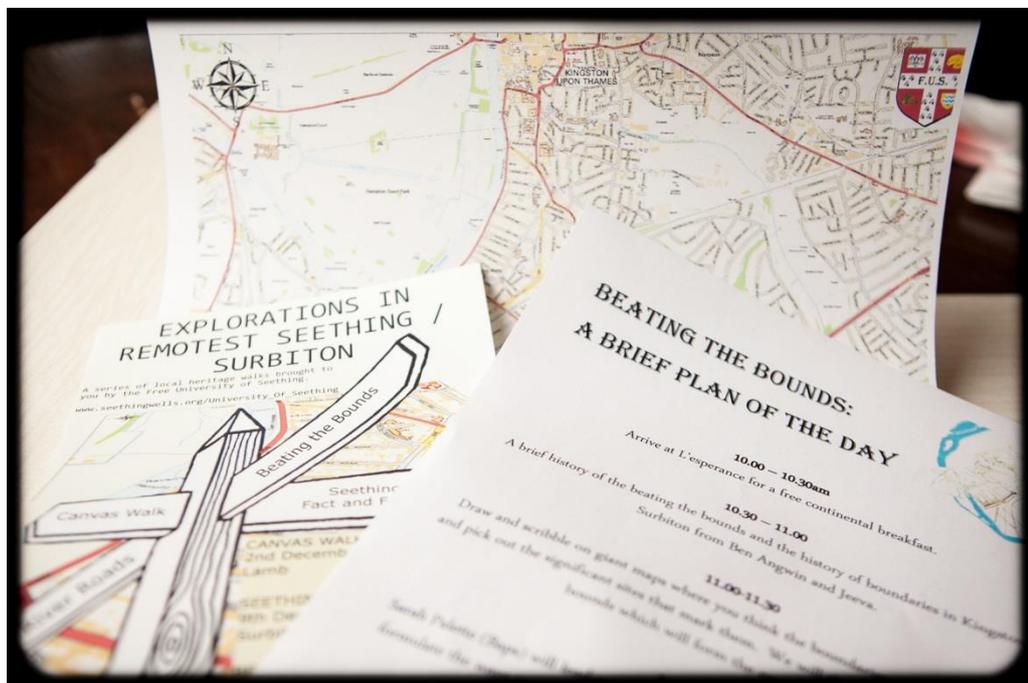
Figure 47: The Beating the Bounds workshop materials. Photo: Tangle Photography

The event occurred on a Sunday morning. It started with coffee followed by a presentation of the history of beating the bounds and the relevance of the boundaries in Surbiton. Then a workshop drew out individual's personal boundary markers and the bounds of the walk were made as a group. The talk set up the idea of place in a historical context and brought the idea of boundary into people's conscious mind. After the event people noted how interesting it was to think about boundaries with many people saying they were interested in other people's ideas of where boundaries lay.

The section below is developed from the research done by Seething volunteers and myself.

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Through the 'beating of the bounds', FUS re-invented an English custom that goes back to ancient times that only recently faded from popular practice and knowledge. Beating the bounds or 'going a ganging' as it was otherwise known, refers to the practice of walking or perambulating the boundaries of a place in order to ascertain where they lie. A group would walk the area of the Parish led by the Parish priest, officials of the church or elders in order to share knowledge of the boundary lines, pray for their protection and for them to be blessed and healthy. The procession also acted as a way to pass knowledge of the boundary lines down through the generations enabling liability and accountability for governance and taxes from and to the local church via defined and authoritative boundaries of place, agreed by the whole community through the walk[176]. In order to remember the exact locations of the boundaries *pains* would be taken upon the significant boundary markers. It was common for young boys to carry a length of willow or birch with which they would beat the boundary markers. Sometimes the boys themselves were whipped or violently bumped against boundary stones, thrown into ditches or knocked against trees as to make them remember the markers of the boundaries. In years to come the boys' memories would be the testament and memory of where boundaries lay. Further, the priest would often recite Psalms 103 & 104 and say such sentences as "Cursed is he who transgresseth the bounds or doles of his neighbour" and hymns would be sung (Houseman 1998:3).

A folk memory of the true extent of the boundaries was necessary to prevent the encroachment and changes to the boundaries from neighbouring Parishes or Manors. The religious purpose of blessing the harvest through perambulation was prohibited by Elizabeth 1st in 1559 as England become increasingly Protestant but the processions continued in order to maintain boundaries (ibid). Today, most observances of such boundary defining are obsolete as formal mapping and legal orders help hold boundaries static although some boroughs, such as Tower Hamlets and some Oxbridge colleges, still practice the tradition of beating the bounds for the preservation of heritage. Although, as we can see from the ASP (chapter 2), the boundaries used in

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[176] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating_the_bounds accessed 6/11/13

policy-facing research are also made through corporal immersions in the environment where a 'sense' is gained for the end of 'non-domestic use' (see p120).

The term *Perambulation* is defined as "a walk to define the bounds of a legal area"[177] and perambulations were commonly practiced by landowners to define the boundaries of their manors. Whilst differing slightly to the Parish 'beating the bounds' in terms of ritual and religious purpose, these perambulations of private lands appear to have a similar function in terms of defining boundaries yet also decreased in practice as the practice of cartography and legal charters increased (see Hewitt 2010).

4.2.1 Surbiton and Kingston Boundary Histories.

In the past, the area of Kingston extended over a considerable area and influence in the County of Surrey. The Domesday Book of 1086 recorded Kingston as part of the personal estate of the King and *not* held by a subordinate. It had three fisheries, two of which paid taxes to the king and one that did not; and today these fisheries are remembered in the modern emblem of Kingston Council. Whilst being geographically within the country of Surrey, Kingston had achieved administrative independence from King John (1199-1216) and successfully become a borough in 1481 giving it a degree of administrative independence. Surrey was divided into areas called Hundreds which were administrative units having their own courts which exercised civil and criminal jurisdiction (McCormack 1988).

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[177] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perambulation accessed 6/11/13.

Figure 48: "Map of the County of Surry showing its division in 'Hundreds" From John Aubrey, The Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surry; begun in 1673-1719. Surry records office.

The Hundreds of Kingston is similar to its present administrative boundary extending south to Long Ditton. However, at the time the boundaries of the boroughs were not clearly defined and even as late as 1837 the Boundary Commission[178] reported 'some confusion' over the boundaries of the borough, as is exemplified by the land dispute between two of Kingston's manors, the Manor of Imworth (also named Imbercourt), and the Manor of Weston[179]. This confusion arose from the need for state government to record and manage stable boundaries through the process of state mapping, as opposed to localised practices of settling boundary disputes through walking or perambulation. Indeed the earliest maps were not pictorial but rather descriptions of walks, *turn right at the tree and walk one hundred paces* and so on. The need to eliminate confusion arose with the need for a universal, stable and scientifically replicable map, made to the standards of objective science (see Hewitt 2010; Daston & Galison 1992).

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[178] Administered through parliament, the latest enactment of the committee was localised in 2010 emerging from the local democracy, economic development and construction act of 2009. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/contents

[179] Reports from Commissioners on Corporation of Kingston-Upon-Thames 1836. Surry 2892. Kingston Local Studies Archive.

In 1964, the Queen of England granted the current charter, forming the new London Borough of Royal Kingston, uniting three former boroughs of Kingston: Malden, Coombe and Surbiton[180]. This new borough included the whole of Kingston and Surbiton *Parliamentary* constituency, which has had different histories and borders to the borough history. Created in 1997, the number of parliamentary seats covering the boroughs of Kingston Upon Thames and Richmond Upon Thames constituency was reduced from 4 to 3, with the Surbiton constituency being lost and subsumed into Kingston[181]. The constituency has seen many amendments, most recently changes to the northern boundary edge to reflect ward changes.

4.2.2 Controversies.

Such changes often resulted in much displeasure from those whose homes fell into newly defined or differing wards. Within these boundaries, peoples' social position, reputations, postcodes, and property values change, but further a sense of local identity was also at stake. In 1988 the newspaper *The Surrey Comet* carried the dramatic headline *'Kingston stunned by news it may vanish'*. Quotes from the article state that the complacency and failure to promote Kingston had led to discussion concerning splitting it up. According to councillors at the time, of which Steve was one, the problem was that Kingston "hadn't done a good job of promoting itself" and "it would be a disgrace" if the historic Royal Borough of Kingston vanished (*The Surrey Comet 25/3/1988*). More confusion occurred with the use of postcodes with an article from *The Surrey Comet* on the 5th July 2005 asking if Kingston was in Surry or not? The article points to the meaning of the 1965 boundary changes asking if it was administrative purposes and quotes a white paper from 1974:

> The new county boundaries are for administrative areas and will not alter the traditional boundaries of counties, nor is it intended that the loyalties of people living in them will change.[182]

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[180] GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Kingston and Surbiton BCon through time | Boundaries of Constituency, A Vision of Britain through Time. http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk accessed 4/2/12

[181] http://www.tudorconservatives.com/#/boundary-changes/4555352876 Accessed 3/1/13

[182] Source: Kingston local studies archive file on Boundaries compiled in 1988 by Anne McCormack. Accessed 2/2/12.

Seven days later the local newspaper, *The Surrey Comet*, reported that the council had decided to not drop Surrey from its address despite the fact that the Royal Mail had dropped Surrey from the Kingston address as long as three decades previous. Local historians encouraged people to add their local area to their address in order that *"...years of history not be wiped out"* (*The Surry Comet* 25/3/1988: 1).

Figure 49: Sources; The Surry Comet 5/7/2005 'So are we in Surrey or not?' by Yvonne Gordon; The Surry Comet 12/7/2005 'Defiant council decides to fly the flag for Surrey' by Yvonne Gordon; The Surry Comet 25/3/1988 'Kingston Stunned by News it May Vanish'

Going further back in time we can see that the current borders relate to the need to define and mark them that arose from the enclosure act of 1836 which aimed to *'Settle and describe the divisions of the counties, and the limits of cities and Boroughs.'*[183] The act served to force a settlement between the manors of Imworth and Weston who contested territory in the regions of Long Ditton and Thames Ditton through perambulating the lands. After a written agreement, signed and sealed between the Lord of the Manors of Imworth and Weston, such perambulations were deemed unnecessary. This mention of perambulating is was the only mention of perambulating or beating the bounds within Kingston and Surbiton that the Free University could find. However it serves to show that in whatever little capacity or scant record, the act and practice of walking has been important in determining the boundaries of place in an official sense in the area.

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[183] Source: Kingston local studies archive file on Boundaries compiled in 1988 by Anne McCormack. Accessed 2/2/12.

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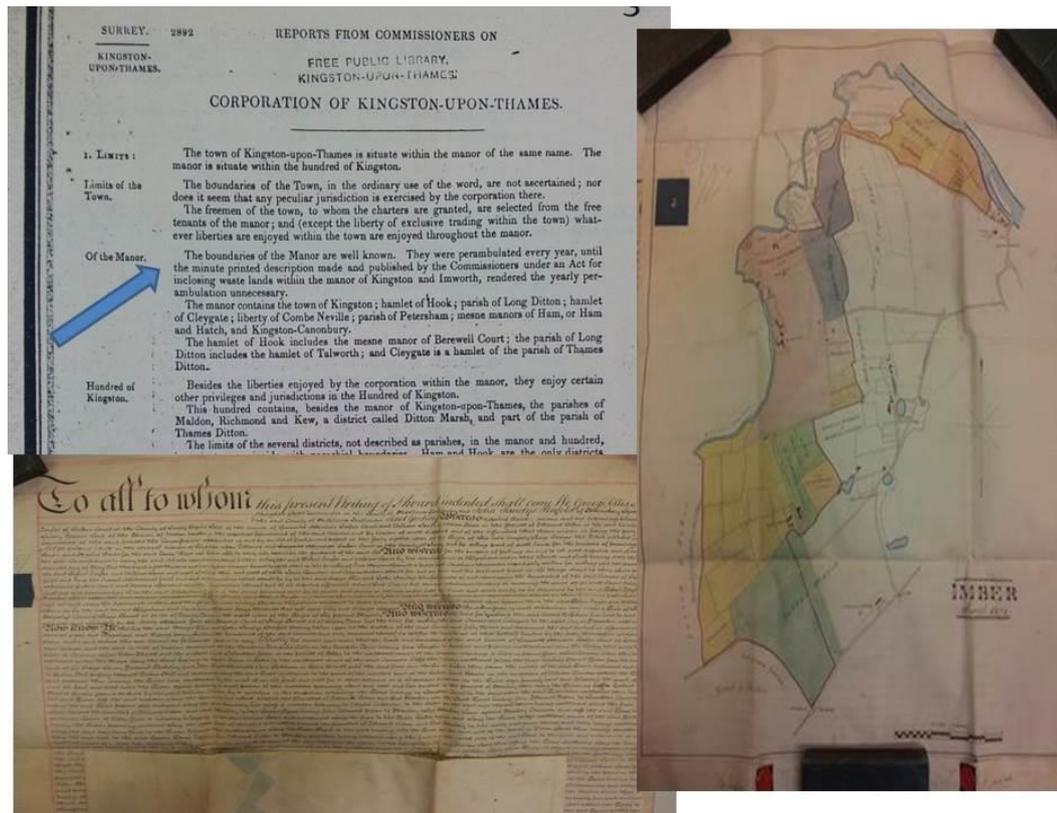
Figure 50: Manors of Imber Court & Weston in Esher & Thames Ditton: Court Rolls & Related Records. Thames Ditton, Deeds & Papers. 17th April 1828. Source Surry County Archive. SHC ref k15/2/7.

The historical pack and talk was devised over many months of archive research. Discussions in pubs and coffee shops focused on the attention grabbing notions of "Kingston Vanishing" and the tension between Surbiton and Kingston as distinct places. If boundary lines change then the indexes of what the local *is* change. The people bound within it would be a different group of people, meaning the sharing of value and reaching consensus as to social order, in both a common law and local government sense, would work over a different scale. The common consensus at the event was that it would not be the loss of "years of history", but rather a loss of sovereignty as Kingston and Surbiton would be refiled, the officious boundary change would have a real impact on the sense and definition of local. Such controversies reminded me of the work of Howard Morphy whose work on changes to land law in central and northern Australia demonstrate how "an effect of power [is] exercised through the concrete arrangements of objects, actions, and subjects" (Morphy 1993: 181). Throughout the fieldwork period many comments were made about the difference between Surbiton and its neighbour, Kingston, about what type of person

lived in what area, the sorts of bins and lampposts they had and how they marked the different areas—it appeared boundaries still matter[184].

Figure 51: The history of Beating the Bounds at The Free University of Seething. Photo: Tangle Photography

4.2.3 Dots (and then more Lines).

After the talk people discussed where they thought the boundaries of Surbiton and Kingston lay. Paper maps of the local area were passed out to six groups with between three and eight people per group. Each group spent around 30 minutes discussing and marking ten places that defined the edge of Surbiton for them. After, each group explained these to the rest of the room.

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[184] In noun and verb.

Figure 52: The Beating the Bounds workshop. Groups would put down place marker (top left, top right), present them to the group (bottom right) and a master map was made (bottom left). Photos: Tangle Photography

Each group used a different colour pen to mark their map enabling a 'master map' to emerge, which compiled the various markers through which we collectively decided a route to be walked in the afternoon. Debate occurred in fun spirits and the location of the boundaries for the perambulation was relatively easy to agree. People picked similar points, railway crossings, the river, shops of note, road junctions and the disused filter beds (some people were very vocal on the filter beds). The river came up on everyone's maps and there was much discussion about which road along the river marked the boundary between Surbiton and Kingston with most seeing Surbiton Road as the edge, although the coffee shop on the river bank was another popular boundary marker[185]. People wanted to cut through the new estates that have been built on the old Chelsea filter bed sites (see Figure 77) to link two points that marked the boundary edge. People discussed if they could get through the site and nobody was sure. The new housing estates were seen to give the impression that you can neither get in nor out; they were not integrated into the existing networks of everyday movement as people rarely passed through them walking from place to place. This isolation was summed up in a joke a Seethinger made about them;

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[185] Most of the 'river roads' were perpendicular to the river.

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"…and here is the famous planning mistake of Seething, they built the car park here but forgot to leave an exit so those cars never actually go anywhere, they were driven in, the building carried on around them, and there we are"

People were familiar with their local area from everyday journeys to schools, playgrounds, parks and pleasant places to walk such as the river bank; but the estates were local but little known. As such we often had to link places without really knowing if it was walkable. Steve remarked as we passed through the estate on another of the walks (Fact & Fiction) that he did not think he knew anyone in the houses there; which given Steve's community presence in the area, surprised me. Was there a spatial integration element, in a Space Syntax sense, to being local?

Those at the event picked major roads as boundaries: such as Ditton and Ewell road. Herne, Tolworth and Red Lion roads were also picked as they had 'nice houses', fitted with routes and linked schools and playgrounds. People made a boundary at King Charles Road rather than Ewell Rd, even though Ewell has more traffic and shops. However, King Charles road is one of Surbiton's oldest roads and in 1870 it marked the edge of Surbiton as a settlement with most land to the east being open fields. Space Syntax analysis suggests that the history of the road affects its position as "well integrated" in the network through "historical embeddedness"[186] although its deep history was little known by the Seethingers on the walk. The road also crosses the rail line and as such may be used by local people as an alternative to the noisier, busier Ewell Road. Such road choices ran counter to the road choices that emerge from the Space Syntax measures of the ASP but old roads did seem to assert some force in the network. The Space Syntax maps idea of 'desired route', measured by closeness and integration seemed to totally miss the affective quality of the roads, such as its pleasant or quiet feel. The corporal and sensorial, in terms of noise, atmosphere and pleasantness emerged as factors of choice.

Boundary markers were identified at notable places along the route such as the home of Rupert the bear[187], an old children's home, an army training centre and even an actual old boundary stone on an old wall at the side of a building which was found by Alan after tracing archival records. The stone lay in a wall that was once part of Surbiton

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[186] A term heard throughout ASP meetings.
[187] Rupert the bear was a popular children's book and was authored by a Surbiton resident, the home of which now has a Blue plaque to mark the spot.

House estate, which covered a substantial area of present day Surbiton. Around 1850 Alexander Raphael sold the estate to a William Woods, a local developer, who built many of the roads we know today in Surbiton (Statham 1996). Woods would feature again in another walk but the stone was an interesting intersection of the old pre-suburban Surbiton and its current boundaries.

Figure 53: The old Boundary Stone being beaten. Photo: Tangle Photography

In general, the route was contained by topological features such as the river, main roads and train lines. However, some quieter roads and routes linking places via routes not usually walked (e.g. through the estate) had also been chosen. The route was selected so that particular bridges or historical houses could be passed. Due to limitations of time and a large number of children on the route it was decided to walk only half of the route. We left the restaurant, made our way over the train tracks down to the river; we then walked along the river and the disused water filtration beds and made our way to the Pub, where a few trays of sandwiches and some hot chocolate waited for us.

4.2.4. The Invention of Ritual

On route, in keeping with the tradition of beating the bounds a number of rituals were performed; however, the idea to pull Anton's fingernails out faded with sobriety. A

meeting, or "Invention of Ritual Seminar[188]", was held a few weeks in advance to share ideas of what do along the walk. Fairy[189] brought dowsing rods; a few people made special songs; Alan brought Sardines to eat at the site of the Sardine parade; and Wallis invented the Sardine Salsa[190]. Alan uses the word Surpleton for the origin of the rituals, as "you can't put a boundary around love" 'Seething' could not be used, nor could Surbiton, as the event was based partly on a mythical history in which no one person can be an 'expert' and aimed to be open to all. Surpleton, meaning 'south of the bell tower' (Statham 1996) was an old name for Surbiton that Alan and I came across in the archives, using this name allows the continuation of invention and maintains the ability of the story to be open to participation.

4.2.5 The Sardine Salsa.

This ritual engages the body in a dance, includes being hit by fake fish and drawing on the Seething Sardine festival as it occurred at the site of the annual Sardine festival by the river bank, this was marked by all groups. The annual Sardine festival sees Seethingers gather on the banks of the River Thames, watch as a boat is rowed around the river bend, and witness that when 'fishermen' lower a net into the river they catch no fish. Then the net is lowered down onto the other side of the boat, encouraged by the loudened singing of 'Sardine Shanties' from the banks the 'fishermen' pull, the now full net, up into the boat. They then take the net full of 'Seething Freshwater Sardines' to the riverbank, transfer it to a cart which is then pulled through the streets of Surbiton by four giant guinea pigs. At a local park Sardines are cooked, handed out and shared and a festival with music, dancing, eating and drinking is had.

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[188] Following the write up period I now wish we had called it "the invention of culture" or the "invention of Tradition"

[189] Fairy once told me that one of the most dear things to her was the Seething community which accepted her position and belief in being a fairy without to many questions "you can what you want here" she said. Whilst telling me the story her friend interjected "at first we thought she was a bit mad, but then we thought well she fits in around here then".

[190] The dance, not ceviche.

Figure 54: A montage of the Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival.

The story evokes the figure of the pro-active and concerned child teaching adults to live in harmony with ecology. Wallis and a local dancer filmed an instructional video of the Seething Sardine Salsa, posted the video on Facebook and the Seething Community website for people to learn (as part of the Free University of Seething) and to help to advertise the event. The video was featured in the local newspaper *The Surry Comet*

Residents are invited on a 'once in a lifetime' exploration to the ends of the town, with the so-called Free University of Seething.

Made-up traditions, including goat-boy Lefi Ganderson, are at the heart of their community projects, attracting hundreds of people over the years. The activities include a revival of the 'Beating of the Bounds', an ancient practice of walking the boundaries of a parish before the existence of maps, to reinforce the community. Residents can learn the arcane Sardine Salsa for the event. Rachal, from the Free University of Seething, said: "It will be a once in a lifetime experience. The 'Beating of the Bounds' is a tradition that ended before Surbiton was actually created. "There will be a breakfast and rituals for the community to decide where the boundaries are, and everyone will be given a hand-out on which they can make notes." The event is lead by a UCL student who is studying Surbiton as a community. Racheal said "The idea of the walks came from him, but the people of Seething made them more interesting, in their own way."

Text from 'Learn Surbiton's Sardine Salsa dance for 'beating the bounds' walk this weekend' *The Surry Comet 12/1/2013. [names changed for anonymity]

4.2.6 Walking the line.

Figure 55: Seethingers about to beat the bounds. Photo: Tangle Photography

Holding a willow cane each, following the tradition of beating the bounds, people followed Alan who held the master map. I made a short film of the event as a whole and at each point of ritual enactment[191] and a Seethinger took professional standard photographs. The group set off to King Charles Road, turned towards the rail bridge crossing and performed a song and hit things with sticks. At various points people formed a circle with the willow sticks and danced around in folk style, changing direction and then finishing the song. People passing by were confused and bemused by the actions: it interrupted rhythms; made cars slow; created noise, and one person shouted "shut up" from a window; passers-by stopped in their paths. The group spontaneously knocked their sticks along the fences and signs, at points children led the adults, Fairy gave lay line readings and people collectively waved at passers-by.

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[191] See http://www.communitymaps.org.uk/Test/beating_the_bounds.html accessed 1/3/15

Figure 56; (top left) Beating a Boundary Stone.

Figure 57: (top right) Beating by the river Thames.

Figure 58: (middle left) Beating a sign

Figure 59: (middle right) A Seethinger beating a fellow Seethinger in a 'Sardine Ritual'.

Figure 60: (bottom left) Locating Lay Lines.

Figure 61: (bottom right) Dancing and singing.

All images: Tangle Photography

We stopped to mark the boundary stone of Surbiton House on a discreet wall that Alan pointed out. It reads "this wall marks the boundary and belongs to Surbiton house, may 19th 1863"; Alan playfully suggests that the wear and tear of the boundary stone is 'clearly' evidence of the stone previously being beaten. Alan suggests that the hooks in the wall were once used to hang naughty children up by their collar, the children in the group smile whilst trying to ascertain if Alan is telling the truth or not.

Upon reaching the river path, Molly, Anna's four year old child, was asked where we were. She says 'Kingston' then changes her mind to Surbiton confirming that we must be on the boundary (FACT). We walked to the end of the river promenade towards Surbiton and performed Sardine-based rituals marking the Sardine fishing site. People dipped sticks in the river, inventing a historical well-known sardine fishing technique. Penny then turned back to the pathway and placed a tin of sardines in the centre of the promenade. The group then danced around then 'ritually' beat Anton around the face with a felt Sardine that Rachel made at a craft event. Wallis then walked the group through the Sardine Salsa dance. Once done Penny, who helped with conceiving of the Seething Songs to sing on route, asked 'where to next' and Rachel responded "to the filter beds, we have to acknowledge the filter beds"; "yes we have to acknowledge the filter beds" reiterated Wallis.

Figure 62: (left) Walking by the filter beds
Figure 63: (right) The filter beds through the railings

The filter beds occupy a large stretch of the busy Portsmouth Road and lead us from the river to our final stop, the pub: the Free University of Seething student union. The group run their willow sticks along the old rusting railings of the filter bed site making a lovely musical sound marking the iconic railings that have become synonymous with the neglect with which the site is associated. The railings have become a symbol of the

community's efforts to mark the rich history of the site (discussed in the next chapter) and their objections to a planning application. The thick layers of flaking paint and rust mark the area owned, and neglected, by Lake Properties, which, on January 11th 2012 filed a planning application for the site. These railing stand in stark contrast to others nearby that are maintained by other owners. Local residents have vigorously fought the planning application, in part because the site was also investigated as part of a large community Heritage project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (at which time there was no knowledge of Lake's plans).

As we walked Wallis, gave an extended explanation to the camera as to the importance of the filter beds to the local area. Whilst she still used humour and jokes in the telling, the history is delivered in a more serious tone as to give no indication that this is nothing but fact.

> W: "…this is very important to the area of Surbiton, it is basically why we have a pub here, which to us is the most important communal area. The filter beds was were clean water was filtered and pumped into London and the correlation of the water being pumped from above the tidal area of the Thames and people not suffering from Cholera err was… the link was made by John Snow back in 18-something, the link was made… it was pumped directly from these filter beds and as a result a big industry built up which is why we have the pub and other distinctive Victorian buildings in the area."

> Me: "Nicely done."

> W: "I also have a Masters in history-ish"

> Me: "Where is that from?"

> W: "It's from the Free University of Seething, (laughs) I can recommend the student union bar."

We arrive at the pub and get a drink whilst Fairy and I draw up the PhD certificates, people mingle and get to know each other and I make efforts to talk to those who I do not already know. A presentation of a Free University of Seething degree is made for all students who completed the walk, including myself. A larger graduation ceremony was had as part of the annual Seething Parade and gowns and robes were made. People received their awards, in full gown, at the festival after the procession (see Figure 67)

Figure 64: Receiving a Free University of Seething PhD. Image Courtesy of Seethinger

Figure 65: The final beating the bounds boundary ritual, the pub garden. Image: Tangle Photography.

4.3 Maintaining the Line - After the Walk

Through the walking events the inclusion award aimed to provide an impetus to upload stories and points of interest about the built environment of Surbiton to the ASP Community Map (CM). The dilemma of the 'moment' as outlined in chapter 1 had not quite been solved. Seethingers had asserted their idea of factishness and storytelling in

the production of the walks, but across the four walks there were many points at which we had good record of peoples relation to the local built environment. I met with Rick, the ASP research assistant (RA) and the technician for the CM, he was also the RA for the inclusion award, which was technically a separate project as it came from a separate funding pot. Rick explained that the tension, which led to the refusal, was still present:

> "Amy doesn't want Mapping for Change[192] branding associated with Seething… we could build a new mini site which is the same as the one we have, just for Seething, and we can strip it of any Mapping For Change branding"

Another ASP member ruled this solution out, stating that Rick would have to spend too much time building this interface and his expertise and time should be placed elsewhere in the ASP; furthermore the idea was reiterated that the Community Map site should be used to add a *social layer* as this was the initial idea behind the walks. At each stage of the CM development I talked to Seethingers – mainly Benny, Steve and Liam – about the options. Liam was interested in the possibility of adding augmented reality to the maps, so Seething characters could be interactively seen through mobile phones whilst walking around Surbiton. Over time it became apparent that despite the initial excitement of both Seethingers and Rick, there was neither time nor recourses in the ASP schedule for Rick to make this happen. This is one reason the tech development for the walks came from a different funding source. At one point Liam responded to my updates with indifference saying "for me I'm interested in augmented reality, I think it's the next big thing... in terms of the walks, if it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen," Later, in a meeting with Rick, Steve asked, "Once this community maps of Surbiton is populated with information: who owns that?" Rick responded "That is a good question. I've had that conversation with Amy." Steve said of the general problems "This is a bit miserable"

For Steve, the idea that the maps were stuck in a discussion about the factishness was dull and miserable, he emphasised that he is excited about the walks but less so about the mapping. The dialogue between UCL and Seethingers started to get in the way of having fun whilst doing these walks, I started to feel I had let people down on all sides, but Seethingers made great efforts to ensure that I felt positive and good about what we did. After months of delay around tech we decided to do the walks and worry about

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[192] The company that designed the ASP CM

recording them later; Steve emphasised "I'm really excited by all this by the way… I'm not giving that away but I am."

Rick did not have the time or resources to manage the programming for the walks in a way that would satisfy everyone's needs. He informed me that an ASP team member, would have little more time for extra meetings on the issue of re-definitions of the mapping exercise. We were suffering what he called 'scope creep': an industry term that describes the shifting parameters of a client's requests. I spoke with an ASP team member to work through the frustrations of not getting the social layer. They felt that in the nature of interdisciplinary academic work there were many 'mis-translations' and that they "didn't realise the degree to which anthropologists have spent time in the field with participants" and had run out of time to spend recourses on this part of the project as other outputs, such as visualisations required the majority of the time, expertise and focus.
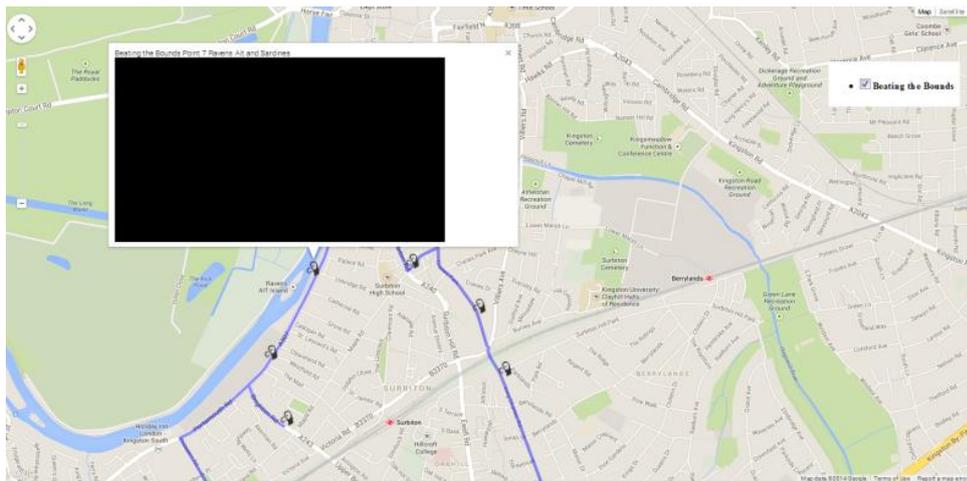
Figure 66: The Web Capable map of walks with embedded video.

Finally, after four months of learning to code, with some major help from Rick, a fully independent map was built from basic Google code with embedded YouTube videos. This was eventually hosted by the Seething community web site. As the inclusion award grant was technically separate to the ASP the ASP community map remained unused by Seethingers (see chapter 1).

Figure 67: Bottom Left: John after being presented with his FUS award at the Lefi festival. Bottom Right: A FUS graduate wearing his robe whilst parading. Top Right: Making gowns at a craft day. Top Left: Rachael doing the work whilst others eat.

It took some time for the maps to appear on the Seething site as the delays with the technical design and the negotiations with the use of the ASP's map had made the mapping exercise less of a priority for Seethingers. For them the act of walking and doing the event was the primary output, further, as will become clear in chapter 5, people were busy both physically and emotionally with organising a planning objection to a development over the filter beds.

4.4 Performing in the gap: Making the Local

Poststructuralist geography[193] has seen boundaries, scale and representations problematized as being normative assumptions far from any inherent *a priori* category waiting to be understood and rather part of a particular way of understanding being in the world. Tilley (1994) contrasts 'scientific' and 'abstract' space whereby scientific space, typified by Cartesian mapping, is critiqued as being decentred from agency and meaning, positioning 'space' as a simple surface for action in a singular sense as opposed to the multiple spaces of agents who 'produced space' (see Tilley 1994:10; Lefebvre 1991). As such the meanings of space could not be 'understood apart from the

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[193] see Amin & Thrift 2002; Massy 1999

symbolically constructed lifeworlds of social actors' (Tilley 1994: 11). Abstracted space, such as maps, are aligned to a productive agentive force—as such, they have power (see Dodge et al 2009). The rise of mapping practices around the 1800s placed the jurisdiction over boundaries of place from local areas, such as Imber and South Norwood, from perambulation to state mapping. The ASP can be understood as part of those practices as it works to produce consistent and clear communication across a universal population at the scale of the PPGIS, the city, which can be aligned to other data sources across that scale. This need emerges from bounding the whole city as object, which is outlined more in chapter 5, and as such the confusing factishness of Seething was refused.
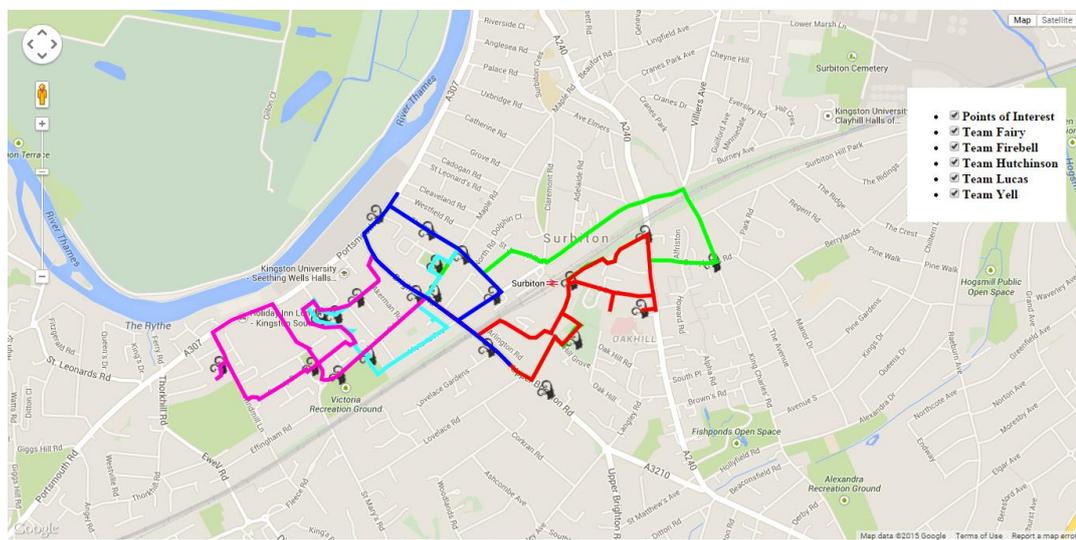
Figure 68: The Free University of Seething Walks, showing the routes of the Canvas Walk.

The walks produced lines of bodies walking and flows of narrative stories. Tim Ingold discusses how a body experiences space stating: "things fall into and out of sight, as new vistas open up and others are closed off" as we walk (Ingold 2007b: 87). Borrowing from Henri Lefebvre, place can be understood as a 'meshwork' of movement which is more 'archi-textural' than architectural (Lefebvre 1991:117-118) where place build up through an architectonics of experience, where phenomenological experience

> mingle[s] distance and proximity, presence and absence, past and present and future, human and nonhuman, the sensate, imaginary and rational, subject and object, producing geographies of heterogeneous associations. (Edensor 2003:167)

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Rose et al (2010), in a discussion of different experiences of a shopping mall, asserts that the rational human subject selectively uses the emotive and affective qualities of spaces for their needs in that they notice some things and not others, being able to block them out. But more than take or leave affective force, I argue that there is a more dynamic manipulation of the efficacy of an affective potential.

Sara Ahmed asserts that the "proximity between and affect and object is preserved through habit" (Ahmed 2010:29). Habit, for Bissell, stepping away from Cartesian dualisms, is the memetic repetition of experience: a space in which "redemption might be cleaved open" in an act that is neither thinking nor bodily but both (2010:2662). Creating an event allows a re-alignment of object-affect through disruptions to habit.

Tilley (2008) advocates a "kinethetic approach" to the interpretation of landscapes through walking. This method goes beyond the traditional cogitative explanations of body and landscape interactions (ibid: 18). He focuses on the body and sensorium (ibid: 47) and critiques Gell's (1998) gallery like approach to art (ibid: 33) arguing for a sensorial immersion in the everyday world.

> What the body can do in the space-time of landscape and the manner
> in which it can act have a profound effect on the character of
> experience and kinds of meaning that experience affords. (Ibid:39).

This approach shifts the idea of *what* the landscape means to *how* it means. My informants actively engage in the affective and sensoral relationships to the everyday areas around them. Tilley's methodology is highly focused on the role of the individual body. Whilst talking through the research diaries I asking my informants to fill out whilst on their own I noticed a strong link between their walks and the Seething events. There is a strong link between group walking and walking with others which can have a huge influence on the chains of associations one feels when walking (See Dobson 2011). As Edensor notes the daily habit and ritual of walking bodies that "dwell in motion" (2010:70) can change when with others. Bodies produce rhythms, beats and attunements, this can be changed or re-alighned by group walking, sharing and adopting the rhythm of another body. Where every day routine builds up into hard chains of association, walking can be a "means to knowledge" (Hall 2009:581) of other ways of walking, feeling, sensing, knowing. My informants actively walked and paraded and did FUS walks in order to adapt another way of seeing and align it with the others in the

group. The materials of the environment may stay the same but the signs change. This change is purposeful, political and corporal (see Rose et al 2010) as Labelle notes

> walking may be a site for a radical placement and displacement of self, fixing and unfixing self to urban structures, locational politics and cultural form, locking down as well as opening up to the full view of potential horizons (2008:198)

The walking diaries would be filled in for one week every three months over a year. It was notable how small aspects of the built environment reminded them of Seething events. For example, the annual Fresh Water Sardine Festival plays with the symbols of the local council: three fish. The symbol of Kingston alludes to the three salmon fisheries recorded at the site in the Doomsday book of 1086 and the famous fishpond of the nearby Royal palace. The fish are used on all official paperwork on signs and on the crest of the royal borough council. The three fish are a common site in the borough and is taken so seriously by the local council that they, according to one diary, demanded a fish and chip shop paint over one of three fish as to not resemble the Kingston emblem. Through using them in the sardine festival Seethingers associate the morality of *'the last sardine'*—namely: living in harmony with their ecology, sharing and caring—with the fish symbol. One Seethinger told me of how upon walking past the fish he would think differently after becoming Seethinger;

> "The council have fish as the nobility of Royal association, power and rule, ownership of this part of the Thames, 'we conquer you with our Bridge'. It's symbolic of their will to *rule* us subjects not just govern us. We can't do it on our own, consensually. Instead, we have to have our Royal chums close by to instil fear and to help subjugate 'those we rule'. Whereas we [Seething villagers] have it as part of folk memory - the once great freshwater fishing community, thriving on its relationship with nature and the democratic Thames – that's not about the literal past, but symbolic and anticipatory community future that was and once more can be. We look forward with our fish, whereas the reactionary conservative council look back – with a prominent fish in the 'coat of arms' that is more martial than social we hope to recover what they believe has been lost… (meaning togetherness, love and balance) This too is totally different from what the council believe is lost, the council is *civic-above-citizen* – ours is more inclusive and wants it to be *civic-for the citizen*."

Figure 69: Kingston/Seething fish. Chip shop (top left), fish on a pavement in central London (top right), Street sign with council emblem (bottom left), Council crest on a gate (bottom right). Images courtesy of Seething informants.

Seethingers re-work the symbols of the local landscape, of governance to change their indexes, to change how they work. They craft affective potentials so that when you walk past a fish on a bridge you think of Seething, a particular type of community over say, a conservative council, creating particular types of local being. Following Butlers work, which asserts that gendered bodies are performed in the site between language and materiality, I play with the word 'matter' and double implication of *meaning* and *substance*. Through re-aligning the affective potentials of the everyday materiality of the suburb as one walks past fish, through parks and down a high street, evoking memories, future focused fish and a particular form of moral community, a particular local citizen, not subject, emerges.

> The very contours of the body are sites that vacillate between the psychic and the material. Bodily contours and morphology are not merely implicated in an irreducible tension between the psychic and the material but are that tension […] The linguistic categories that are understood to "denote" the materiality of the body are themselves troubled by a referent that is never fully or permanently resolved or contained by any given signified. Indeed, that referent persists only as a kind of absence or loss, that which language does not capture, but,

instead, that which impels language repeatedly to attempt that capture, that circumscription—and to fail. (1993:68)

It is the productive gap in the affective moment, where bodies of fish and the local vacillate that gives rise to the potential for the local subject. Affect, originating from the Latin *affectus* was a concept used extensively by Spinoza in his discussion on God's ability to create action in man. In his *Ethics* (2001 [1667]) part 3, definition 3, affect is translated as emotion whereby;

> …the modifications of the body, whereby the active power of the said body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained, and also the ideas of such modifications

This disposition, for the body to move to action, has been developed in the works of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guatari (1987) who make the distinction from emotion stating, in line with Spinoza, that affect is the capacity to affect and be affected, it is pre-emotion, pre-representation but gives rise to political possibilities (Pile 2010:7). What I wish to emphasise is that affect goes beyond a body to body relation (as asserted by Deleuze and Guatari 1987:xvi); the self is constantly unfolding as it moves through the world, meeting people, the material environment, tiredness and so on, blurring boundaries between people and things. Nigel Thrift (2010:291) invokes a Micronesian sense of being, where a body does not exist as an autonomous object but as a network of relations and, following Bamford (2007), Thrift states that bodies can incorporate others and parts of others. I suggest they can also incorporate other material entities as Seethingers gain a sense of the local self through every day interactions with the materials, sounds, smells the sensorial aspect of being in the local material built and social environment.

In Spinoza's conception of affect, the ability to be affected positions the human psyche as vacillatory. Meaning, which precipitates from the creation of a disposition, is up for grabs in the moment of affect. In this way affective potential must be turned into a productive alignment, into either a fish of governance or a future focused fish. Seethingers and fish vacillate as they are made in these moments of becoming. Returning to Spinoza, his proposition 17 of *Ethics* part three states:

> PROP. XVII. If we conceive that a thing, which is wont to affect us painfully, has any point of resemblance with another thing which is wont to affect us with an equally strong emotion of pleasure, we shall

> hate the first named thing, and at the same time we shall love it […]
> This disposition of the mind, which arises from two contrary
> emotions, is called vacillation; it stands to the emotions in the same
> relation as doubt does to the imagination.

The productive state of being local, as a moral position, is produced and extended through the event that enables new alignments by creating affective moments that precipitate in new ways. The 'event', following Caroline Humphrey's (2008) interpretation of Alan Badiou's 'decision event', is characterised as an "occasion[] when the multiple strands of personhood achieve unity and singularity" (ibid:357) so as to "bring about the sudden focusing or crystallization of certain of the multiplicities inherent to human life and thus create subjects, if only for a time" (ibid:359). The Seething events described in the previous chapter work to re-align the form of relations people have to the material world around them, seeing place in a Seething like way enables a local, Seething[194] sensibility to emerge. Being stupid, parading, dancing in parks, both constitute and emerge from the self through "geographies of heterogeneous association" (Edensor 2003:167) as habits of experience are re-aligned. This occurs in Seething events (chapter 3) and through everyday movements. The event enables affect to have new effects, in this way the walks did produce events that told of people's relation to the built environment, as per the studentship (chapter 1). They demonstrated the way in which playing in the gap and being stupid has real effects in making a local Seething 'state of mind'. This subjectivity is one that is deeply imbued with the materiality of the built environment; it is corporal and felt.

4.5 Conclusions.

This chapter has demonstrated the productiveness of being 'stupid' in the emergence of a local subjectivity, (outlined in chapter 3) but in relation to the way it works through meeting to other social projects such as local governance or, as outlined in this chapter, the ASP. Seething emerges in a dialogic relation to these other social projects and works in the tension between them. Through the creation of the Free University of Seething the practice of academic knowledge-making found a way into Seething. Through FUS my ambition to gain a PhD was realised and was extended to everyone

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[194] Which works through the local, is felt locally but is not exclusively local.

else. Through this thesis itself, Seething finds a way into the ASP. Seethingers bring themselves into the terms of life of the ASP through playing in the gap, the performative moment of meaning that occurs in the transfer in the involution. This occurred through the extension of the university and academic knowledge practices onto Seething subjects and the through the mechanism of being 'stupid'.

Being 'stupid' permeates the everyday via the re-aligned affective potentials created in moments of disrupted habit. Re-aligned affective force mimetically re-enforces a particular 'future focused' citizen that emerges from Seething, from being 'stupid'. A particular type of local citizen emerges. These new ways, which re-align fish, to be future focused, producing a citizen over a subject, are enabled through the event. In this way Seething is not alone and stupid events can be seen in many places such as my second field site, South Norwood. Here the self-proclaimed 'South Norwood Tourist Board' has declared that they are the true inheritors to the title of 'The Lake District' (an important tourist area in northern England) and have written to the Lake District Authority to tell them so (SNTB 2013[195]). In recent years they have had parties for tunnels, festivals for a dog and a referendum on whether they should join an independent Scotland. There is also a Walthamstow (unofficial) Tourist Board, which celebrate mattresses, a Seething on Sea in Swanage and a Seething Oldenburg in Germany.

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[195] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-22027322 accessed 4/4/13
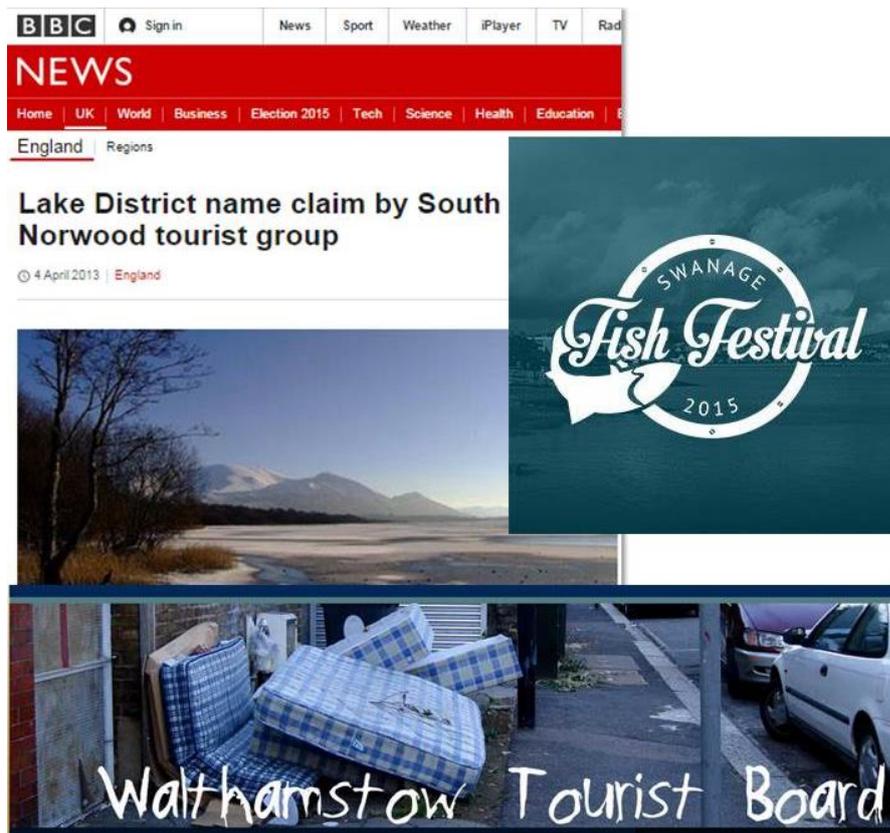
Figure 70: South Norwood Tourist Board make the national news (top left), Walthamstow Tourist Board advertise their Mattri life (bottom) and Swanage celebrate fish (right) [196]

Returning to the moment of refusal outlined in chapter 1, factishness endures as a constitutive part of being local, it enables play and invention, everyone to be an expert and the terms through which exclusions are made cleaved open. As such it is perhaps not surprising that the further engagement of the ASP through the inclusion award, described here, had the same result. The stories were refused, a map emerged, but not on the ASP's platform.

As chapter 2 outlined, the refusal comes from a moral position to create a universal arena of clear communication, the basis of deliberative democracy, which factishness would pollute. The ASP and Seethingers had separate maps as they were articulating different visions of the world, at different scales. Maps work to stabilise relations, to bring things into alignment and into a unified vision (see Dodge et al 2009). Whilst both social projects were working to make suburban life better, they were doing it in different ways, at different scales. The bounding of materials and bodies into place is a

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[196] http://www.walthamstowtourism.co.uk/index.html accessed 15/3/13
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-22027322 accessed 4/4/13
http://swanagefishfest.org/ accessed 4/4/15

corporal act that deals with bringing things into relation in particular ways and managing the politics of affect. This process of walking and bounding is historical and contingent, as shown through beating the bounds, but also occurs today in peoples' everyday interactions with the material environment. Further the ASP also used the body to sense the boundary of 'non-domestic' use. The creation of maps by the ASP is an extension of a historical process of using maps as a tool of stabilising relations of controlling the materials of the built environment, so they can be understood through particular terms of relationally and managed. They have an affective potential of their own, they are neither value free or positionless (see Ginsburg 2004) but as objects work to hold together assemblages of things in relation.

The political effect of managing affect, through corporal experiences, through the representations of place, through mapping, showing and sharing, is not external to the body but deeply imbued into the material and psyche of the local subjectivity as the local body emerges through experience. Where this chapter looks at the ASP and Seething turning away from each other to maintain their social projects, the next chapter sees the effects of that turn away. Seethingers and the ASP are in dialogic relation to each other. The ASP applied a future tense to the potential of the mapping platform, whilst the walks and this thesis are how Seething transfers to the ASP. Both become through this tension, through the gap between them, through the threshold. This results in effects in other moments of meeting between the social projects. In the next chapter, Seethingers, this time being serious local citizens, assert a moral position over a site that is subject to a planning application. This position and the work that goes into making it, is deeply felt as informants talk of "being torn apart" if the site is developed directly aligning the body and the materiality of the local area.

In a council meeting, in a large room in the town hall the ASP and Seethingers meet again in very different forms of their social projects. The social project of the ASP, which informs planning policy, appears as the procedure of council planning decisions. The Seethingers, which produce a moral community and pro-active citizens, *bios* in an Agambian sense, appear as the local citizen (not Seethinger) articulating a moral position on the application. Here, following Humphrey's discussion of Marilyn Strathern's perspectivism, I see how people 'shift' with differing contexts. This shifting, were people are able to present different modes of subjectivity, in Humphrey's case through

the presence of different kin relations to Mongolian shaman, is where the materials[197] stay the same but 'the signs change'. This is enabled through the ability to move in the gap. This "ontological switch" in the subject, where the world is no longer seen in the same terms (see Humphrey 2008:368; Strathern 1996) enables the local to articulate the values and meanings of the material environment, which is imbued into who they are, on the 'other's' terms. Here Seethingers shape-shift in their subjectivities, they are not 'stupid' as they articulate their moral position in regards to the site through a language of values and potentials as demanded of the other, the council.

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[197] Including bodies

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Finding Seething Wells:

The Story of The Filter Beds.

The first ethnographic chapter of this thesis outlined a moment of refusal where the two social projects turned away from each other in order to maintain themselves as cohesive moral projects. These social projects are defined by the ways in which they "provide the context of moral and political calculation" and the "thick subjective background effects of a life as it is lived" (Povinelli 2011:6) and were outlined in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 4 worked through how these social projects, through meeting, work to change each other as they push at the edge of each other's boundaries and alter in dialogic relation to 'the other'.

Through performing in the gap, between meaning and matter, Seethingers cleave open a space for themselves in the social project of the other. They took the authoritative procedures of the academy and applied them to themselves and in so doing they made everyone an expert and gave out degrees, they found a way to be included (through this thesis). The walks outlined the ways in which Seething, as a social project, works to re-align the affective potentials of the material built environment, conceiving of the potentials within it in a different moral trajectory. In this way subjectivities emerge through a different moral position, one that is 'future focused', that is citizen, not subject, one that works to control the terms of life.

This chapter outlines the way in which the social projects of the ASP and Seething meet again but in different forms within a meta-culture: late liberal democracy. The moral trajectory of the ASP is felt again in the mechanisms of planning procedures, whereas the moral trajectory of Seething is felt again in the formation of a moral position on a planning application. Here locals, cohere in order to articulate their moral position in

regards to the perceived values of the land under debate and as such perform citizen, making *bios* from *zöe*.

The effects of the turn away from the moment in chapter 1, which allowed both moral projects to continue, are felt again in this moment. I do not follow the plural social "worlds" of Seething and the ASP, nor conceive of "worlds otherwise" but rather recognise how social projects meet at the edge of their moral projects through the materiality of the suburbs through which both projects work.

Through following the process of the planning application and the process of objecting to it, I focus on the Seething Wells filter beds as a material site through which both social projects meet. The site holds potentials or affordances (following Gibson 1979) for different social projects to expand in various ways. As such the decision by the council is where the conditions of life are worked out. This occurs through a meta-culture of deliberative democratic procedure where the visions of interested parties must be heard. Here, local citizens with a particular understanding of the site and its values articulate that vision on terms the other - the state - can understand. They must align. The creation of an authoritative and legitimate voice is a deeply political act.

As a campaign against the plan formed, a sizable and coherent group emerged that were able to articulate the reasons why this plan for the site was detrimental to the local area. The group contained many Seethingers but, in this setting were not Seethingers but rather locals, citizens and serious. Reference to Seething events and the mechanisms of 'stupid' were absent in the articulation. An officious and legalistic tone was adapted, a community interest company (CIC) was formed, (the Friends of Seething Wells - FoSW), as a different frame (see Goffman 1974) of articulation was needed. Here the materials of the land and the bodies of my informants stayed the same as did their understanding of value potentials and moral links to the land which emerged through being Seethinger. However, in a similar way to Humphrey's discussion of Mongolian shamans, who have different powers and articulate different selves in the presence of different kin relations (2008), and Marilyn Strathern's perspectivism (1996) where different sorts of subjectivities are produced in different networks of relations, I saw Seethingers consciously 'shift'. That is, I saw an ability to understand the need to articulate and present a particular vision of the values and potentials of the land in alignment with those that would be efficacious within planning frameworks. As such Seethingers shifted to be locals, adapting to modes of articulation and practice that

would enable them to articulate value in a meeting with the council. They performed an 'ontological switch' (Humphrey 2008:368) where the materials stay the same but 'the signs change', and as such the world is no longer seen in the same terms (Strathern 1996). The local subject is produced with and from this process.

The planning process ran in parallel to my fieldwork period with the Seething events and my research for the ASP, concluding in the final months with the public planning meeting. My informants were largely Seethingers, non-Seethinger locals were also involved however familiarity with Seethingers and their central role in the objection meant my informants crossed both aspects of the ethnography. Conversations were trickier, more sensitive and occurred mainly in private discussions. I also became familiar with the site and its history as I entered dots on maps and researched the area for Seething walks and the ASP data.

The application was rejected by a council committee and during the celebratory drinks afterwards I was told by a key informant, that I had seen "a community that works". This chapter is a meditation on the utterance "a community that works". It worked in successfully producing a moral position, by preventing a material change that would have foreclosed the potentials of a moral position to be extended, and the community articulated its values on terms demanded of it. However *bios*, a citizen that participates in political life, is not understood here as an output of a process of being Seething but rather as something which has to be constantly performed, in the gap, cleaved open, it takes work. It affects the forms of being and forms of harm in late liberalism through the commitments, stresses and strains people make.

Giorgio Agamben (1995), taking from Carl Schmitt, refers to the sovereign as "he who decides the state of exception" (ibid:11), those who are inside and outside the conditions of life, *bios* from *zöe*. In late-liberalism it is the ability to articulate clearly that enables *bios* to be made maintained and prevent life as *zöe*. It is those who are able to control the terms of legitimate 'knowing' and an authoritative voice who constitute the Sovereign. In the council meeting law is overseen by the council, through planning regulations and frameworks, informed by policy and informed by research such as the ASP. Locals get inside this process and articulate a moral position, enabled by Seething to influence the decision, they make *bios* from *zöe*.

In considering "a community that works" the notion of governance and government is worked through in interlocking ways. Seething events extend and solidify a suburban subjectivity through obviation of the controlling context such as the normative discourses of being suburban. The council meeting decides, quite literally, what material arrangements of the suburban landscape will be. The ability for particular subjectivities to emerge, and values and ethical positions to be extended through the landscape, will either open up or be foreclosed in this moment. The Seething events, in this arena, take on a new potency through their ability to interrupt normative discourses of being suburban, form new patterns of relatedness and build forms of shared moral community that organise and articulate a positon in relation to the local material landscape. This ability creates *bios* from *zöe* and goes beyond conforming to the citizen expected of them but also aims to make a small change in the meta-culture (following Althusser 2006, a swerve) through changing the moral trajectory of it and its value priorities.

The council procedure that demands a local engaged community as part of the democratic process is the mechanism that decides what is and is not to be. Law retains the ability to decide the conditions for *bios*, that is, the form of political being which is apart from bare life. Bare life, or *zöe,* is life outside of a political sphere, i.e. equitable to animal order or natural existence. In order to lead the 'good life', to be involved in politics, life must take a certain form; articulate and present, discuss and participate in a particular way. It must align to the values and moral trajectory of the 'we' of the national project, 'we the people, we the nation' (following Mouffe 2005), the population, managed by the state. This chapter considers how being local emerges in a context of need for "a community that works" in the threshold between different social projects at different scales.

The decision decides if the community can extend values and ethical forms of being through the material landscape or if that part of the world belongs to another social project and as such how the meta-culture, the 'we', will unfold into the future. "A community that works" in this setting, is one that can come into the political moment and work to articulate, to the law, that the "good life" should not only be protected, but what it should also include. Seethingers relate to Agamben's conception that;

> Modern democracy presents itself from the beginning as a vindication
> and liberate of zöe, and that it is constantly trying to transform its

own bare life into a way of life and to find, so to speak, the bios of zöe. (1995: 9).

Seethingers do not totally subject themselves to the law nor do they radically depart from it, rather they walk the line, or vacillate, between the limits of the possible, stretching the possible forms of legitimate traceable ways in which value for the "good life" can be made. Through Agamben I ask how the subject is imbricated in a process of power and becoming? The subject cannot transcend or escape power, nor seeks to, rather power is imminent and contingent upon the becoming of the subject, in my case the local.

Seethingers (distinct from 'the local' of the planning meeting) evoke the figure of Antigone who, in the play of Sophocles (441bc) is between 'two deaths': the social and the embodied. In her pursuit to give her brother an honourable death Antigone defies the law of Thebes and her father's decree to leave his body on the border of the city to rot. Antigone's position as between family and state, between life and death represents a non-normative figure disrupting accepted models of kinship and life. In her refusal to answer a question on the burial of her brother she asserts a position that is neither inside nor outside the law. Her love is not allowed through current social arrangements but the act of being on the threshold of inside and outside brings light onto the socially contingent nature of the law. Antigone's deviance is used to illuminate the law as socially constituted and the constituting practices and frames through which it works. Echoing Agamben's discussion of the role of constituted and constituting power, the sovereign not only has exclusions but is made up of those exclusions. 'The local' as a vacillatory body constitutes the citizen needed to constitute the sovereign, or the law, in late liberal democracies. Further, 'the local' is able to redefine what the law might be within the limits of the possible.

The contingent nature of the law then provides a space in which that which is discursively possible, life, can be extended through playing in the gap. Antigone's threshold position brings to light the contingent nature of power and the law. Given this I ask if her position can be actively sought as a form of, what Lyng calls edgework (1990), where the boundaries between life and death, legal and illegal are pushed by risk takers, extreme sports enthusiasts and so on. I argue, if taken seriously, being 'stupid' pushes at the limits of the sensible, laying the ground for a socially survivable aberration of 'the local' within the meta-culture. Just as Antigone's position on the threshold does

not gain the sovereignty it seeks, as the problem of translation of "transposable and reproducible" values and language persists, it does expose the limits of the legitimate (Butler 2000:77). In her position, Antigone appeals to the laws of the earth and to the gods and vacillates between them; her subjectivity, like that of the local, emerges in the gap where sovereign power is - and needs to be - in order to be universal and accepted as the law. The local attends to the law and to the wider law of the "good life" and what that can and could include according to the demos.

In being 'stupid' Seethingers confront the limits of the intelligible, the articulable and the possible. Seething as an imagined past ideal state never to be realised can be worked towards the future through the extension of values, ethical positions and subjectivities that emerge from a particular conception of being local in the present. Further, being local *is* a legal state, one that gives you a position at the table of the law, the sovereign, those who are able to decide, in this case in a council planning meeting. I argue that Seethingers move the boundaries of what is in and outside of life. As Butler states of Antigone;

> she functions as a chiasm within the vocabulary of political norms. If kinship is the precondition of the human, then Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human, achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human[…]She acts, she speaks, she becomes one for whom the speech act is a fatal crime, but this fatality exceeds her life and enters the discourse of intelligibility as its own promising fatality, the social form of its aberrant, unprecedented future (2000:82)

Seethingers go outside the norms in being 'stupid', this is a non-tragic death, it's a death of the sensible, and in so doing they show its contingent limits. The law becomes malleable, able to extend the *bios* of *zöe* into new, previous improbable arenas. However, this extension of *bios* to *zöe* occurs with differing degrees of success in different iterations of social projects. Whilst Seethingers may challenge the socially normative ideas of life in the suburbs, when faced with a planning application they must articulate their moral positon in a particular way. The position of the 'articulate local', which, unlike that of Antigone, is actively sought in order to gain political efficacy, takes work. This work, which is maintained in order to re-produce a form of politically viable subject, means that other social subjectivities simply cannot emerge. The local activist in a local meeting cannot be the father at home at the same time. Whilst maintaining the potential of the material landscape to extend a moral community for the child of

tomorrow, the next generation, sacrifices, priorities, commitments and judgements of how to spend ones time are made. As such the child of today, at home waiting for the parent to return, suffers. Being 'local' emerges in a constant performative dialogue with the sovereign over the terms and limits of life, this sees particular forms of harm endure. The end of the chapter locates these forms in the stresses and strains that show on some of my informants and asks if this is a necessary part of late liberal democracies.

5.1 Part 1: The Making of a City Suburb.

5.1.1 Finding Seething Wells

During the initial days of fieldwork at a Seething gathering, whilst gluing paper to giant wicker sculptures, I was asked, upon explaining myself an anthropologist from UCL, if I knew Wendy. "She is doing a course on heritage at the university here" says Steve before his attention is turned by newcomers to the craft day. Later Felix tells me the parade has made it onto the heritage masters at the local university, at first I think this is part of Seething myth building but in fact it is true. Over the coming months a number of people tell me that after three or four years this can be 'officially' called heritage according to UNESCO definitions; "we've gone beyond non-sense and into heritage" said Steve. I meet Wendy at the Seething parade, she had been told about me. We talk through a recent Heritage Project[198] she has been involved in around Seething Wells Water[199] and she introduces me to Benny who, heading up a small team of volunteers, researched the filter beds over the last six months through a community Heritage Lottery Grant[200].

5.1.2 All Eyes on The Talken Mines.

The filter beds occupy a large area of land running alongside the Thames River and the busy Portsmouth Rd for just short of half a mile. Its current footprint took form around 1872 after extensive building and research by chief engineer and innovator, James Simpson. In 1827 Simpson reputedly walked over 2,000 miles to research the

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[198] Capitalised throughout to refer to the Seething Wells Heritage Project specifically.
[199] http://seethingwellswater.org/Seething_Wells_-_Surbitons_Hidden_Heritage.html accessed 3/4/14
[200] A UK wide grant that encourages community heritage projects.

UK's water filtration systems. Pioneering slow water filtration, Simpson built Pimlico water works and later, between 1852 and 1856, developed the system for both Lambeth and Chelsea water companies. This involved pumping water from the Thames[201], into settling beds for around six hours, then the water was filtered through six layers of fine sand, course sand, shells, fine and course gravel at a rate of around 1,700 gallons per hour. The water was then pumped to many areas of London at around 7,500,000 gallons a day.

By the 1880s the site contained 20 filter beds, 16 engines and around 600 miles of pipe. The impact of the industry on the landscape was significant[202]. The traces of the industry are noticeable all over the local area today through architecture, large areas of low flat land, old pumping stations and the odd exposed pipe or infrastructure. The site next to the river, marked in red on Figure 71 whilst disused, is still much like it was during its operational days and the site is under planning application. The filter beds in the background of Figure 71 are now housing estates and the filter beds to the right, above the site have been developed into a marina which lies just over the border, in Surry, with its own council. The area between the beds is now student halls of residence and has significant architectural features remaining from the water filtration period.
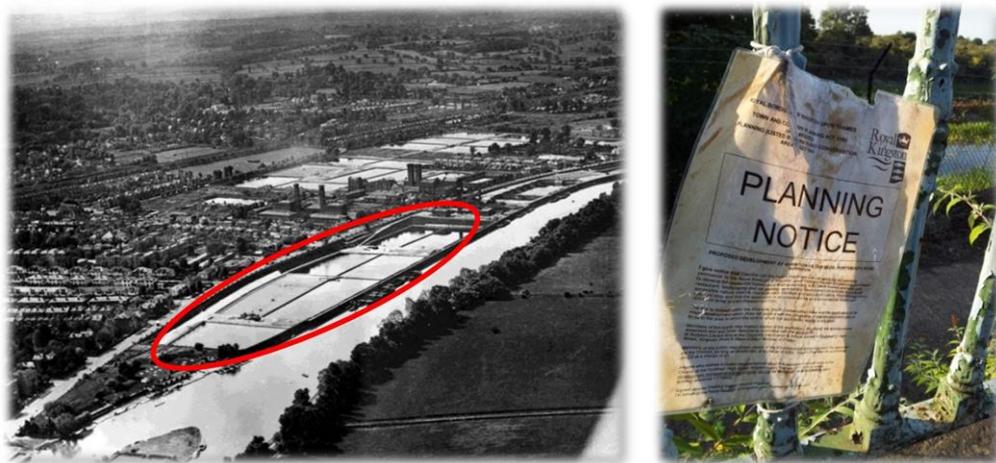
Figure 71: (right) Planning application notice on the site.

Figure 72:(left) Seething Wells from the air 1930s. Source FoSW, open source, Kingston Museum and Heritage Services.

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[201] Surbiton is just short of the tidal point and therefore fresh water.
[202] http://seethingwellswater.org/Seething_Wells_-_Surbitons_Hidden_Heritage.html accessed 3/4/14

Figure 73: Student halls of residence and old pump houses (top left)

Figure 74: Housing estate on flat land, just off James Simpson Road (top right)

Figure 75: A change in fencing between Kingston and Surry (middle left)

Figure 76: The Marina (middle right).

Figure 77: The filter beds of Kingston (bottom left).

Figure 78: The Student accommodation area, old buildings visible (bottom right).

The site remains inaccessible to the public and is well below the level of the adjacent pavement. The Portsmouth Rd is very busy and as such the filter beds are infrequently seen on daily routes around the area. The site is owned by Lake Properties who

purchased it for a reputed £1 million. Lake had planned to develop the site into a 64 home, 92 berth marine that would generate over £10 profit (*The Surry Comet* 5/3/14).

These filtration beds, given their undeveloped nature were the focus of the Heritage Project which emerged within the community prior to the knowledge of Lake's plans. Almost concurrently, the Heritage Project and Lake were working on the site in their respective ways, and by the point that Lake submitted an application for the sites development, the area was well in local public consciousness through the Heritage Project.

The filtration beds came to be the focus of the Heritage Project, Steve explained, long after he had begun wondering what the site was. Having grown up in the area Steve knew a little local history and knew that the site was once labelled Seething Wells on a map from the 1800s. He also knew that this name had long gone from the common lexicon and explained to me that this name, in its ambiguity of association was "perfect" for the "State of Seething", the place that's not a place but a 'a state of mind'. It was something around which the Suburb would start to matter. Steve explored the area's history and started to imagine Seething stories. Being as it was essentially a big hole in the ground, he imagined a disused talcum powder mine[203]. 'A brief history of Quarrying Talcum in Seething' was placed on the Seething website alongside the other Seething tales and legends. The tale involved the discovery of talcum by a child, resulting in the building of miners' houses nearby. 'Lefi's Law' emerged from a workers' struggle to receive fair pay, turning the talcum mines into a co-operative venture. Over a few years the legend of the talcum mines spread into many aspects of Seething life; a mining guild would parade a banner at festivals, a traditional colliery band would play and people would throw talcum at local events.

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[203] Talcum powder is a mineral compound commonly used as a drying agent in cosmetics, it would be commonly applied after a shower to keep skin dry.

Figure 79: The Seething Talcum Colliery Band parading on Lefi day (left).
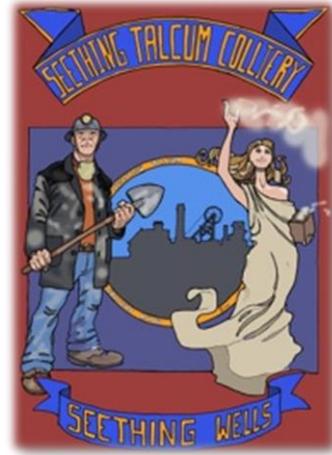
Figure 80: The Seething Talcum Colliery Band Guild Banner (right)

Mimicking the traditional banners and music of historic working class movements in the UK, the talcum mines are typically Seething in their 'stupidity'. Steve often talks about his discovery of the real story of the filter beds through the 'stupid' Seething story at the start of public meetings. The audience laugh, smile and wonder. The creation of wonderment allows a neat segue into the fascinating, but inevitably dryer (no pun intended) history of the filter beds.

Steve explains that spending time in the local archive, talking to experts at the local university and heritage groups he slowly started to realise that "this is massive". Repeatedly the site was talked about as "a resource to the local community". Steve linked the site to his personal growth and sense of belonging stating "as you get older you develop a need to know about where you live". He evoked the notion of slowing down and paying attention as a form of care for the local area. He explained how for 20 years he;

> "walked past some lovely blue railings by the side of the road and never paid them any attention[…]I never really took the time, stopped to look, or paid attention to the site…[Slowing down] allowed it to come into focus, […]we've got something on our doorstep here".

Slowing down, a change of rhythm disrupts the normal habitual life of a suburban body and brings about the possibility of a new relation to place. Through that a new form of subjecthood can be realised (see Hubbard & Lilly 2004, Lefevre 2004). This rhythm,

speed and slowness is also found in the Seething parades where affective interjections are made to everyday rhythms and disruptions of habit (see chapters 3 & 4).

Through the Heritage Project, the site's relation to the history of clean water, epidemiology and modern engineering were revealed. These stories, as well as the interest in the site's ecology, architectural history and its role in the development of London re-locate Surbiton as a historically valuable site with rich potentials for the future. Steve talks of the unique bats which 'chose Surbiton as its home' "it's not just a piece of history, it's alive today". He animates the site with life and value at a range of scales but on Surbiton's "doorstep".

It was the communication of 'massiveness' that allowed a site, which many people had little interaction with, to become imbued with rich histories, values and links to the local. Through its future potentials to extend value, through history, ecology and fame the site become animated and tied to the future of the local. Meetings, Seething parades and chatting at pubs and other events were key ways through which the value of the site got circulated, discussed and worked out. Through talking about the developments, plans, objections and opinions at Seething events the site became imagined in ways aligned to the future orientated community of Seething. Steve echoed a feeling of the community's responsibility for the site:

> "I don't want to be telling this story to my grandchildren, about how brilliant this site is, with its history and how it gave clean water to the world and when they ask… what happened to it, I have to tell them, well we didn't realise how important it was, we didn't do anything, I don't want to be that person".

In this moment, of 'being that person', a choice is offered in terms of the local body attaching itself to the land through a commitment to protect, enact and spread the values of the site. As the values of the site are worked up through the site's circulation a moral commitment emerges to protect those potential for the next generation, the child of tomorrow.

5.1.3 A Brief History of Surbiton & The Filter Beds

Seething Wells appeared on some of the first maps of the area, despite it being of little population, under the name 'Siden Wells'. The site was reputed for being of exceptional

water quality and of a spring, the exact site of which remains unknown, although Benny told me he suspected in was on the filter beds as "it never freezes in that corner". The nearby Hampton Court Palace, a royal residence, was famed for good health, escaping various epidemics and attributing its good health to the water of the Thames[204]. As Lambeth water company looked to move their supply of water to London from outside the capital, James Simpson, a well-known water engineer, presented his case for a location at Seething Wells due to the abundance of clean water, good infrastructure and ability to pipe water to Brixton's (South London) reservoirs whilst avoiding hills. The water company bought the land from the Earl of Lovelace, passed eviction notices to around 200 dwellings on the site and started work on the site around 1848 which continued until 1856[205].

Excavation work was done largely by migrant workers who swelled the local population with skilled workers from mining communities, predominantly from the north east of England. Surbiton developed quickly from farmland to a developed settlement due to the death of Christopher Terry, owner of Maple Farm whose land became available just as railways expanded. Plans to locate a station at Kingston, on the London to Southampton line were defended by the gentlemen of Kingston in order to protect their coaching trade. A station was placed in what was then farmland and coaches would run between Kingston and Kingston upon railway, which later became Surbiton station (Statham 1996).

Maple Farm was purchased by Mr Thomas Pooley for £10,000 who quickly made himself a fortune building much of the housing and road infrastructure which comprises Surbiton today. However not being a gentleman of Kingston, he was much disliked locally and was made bankrupt and he fled to France (ibid). Pooly's road names were changed and there remains little or no direct link to Pooley in the area other than the houses he built. Pooley's unfinished second stage of house building, linking the roads leading from Maple Lane to the river, were completed later by William Woods. Woods built large grand houses by the Kingston end and poorer workers' houses by the Surbiton filter beds. These 'river roads' as they are known locally, formed a

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[204] http://www.thecommunitybrain.org/PDFs/local-area.pdf accessed 3/3/14
[205] http://seethingwellswater.org/Seething_Wells_-_Surbitons_Hidden_Heritage.html accessed 3/4/14

metaphorical ladder from Surbiton, a workers industrial area towards the more affluent and upper class Kingston, a difference which is emphasised today[206].
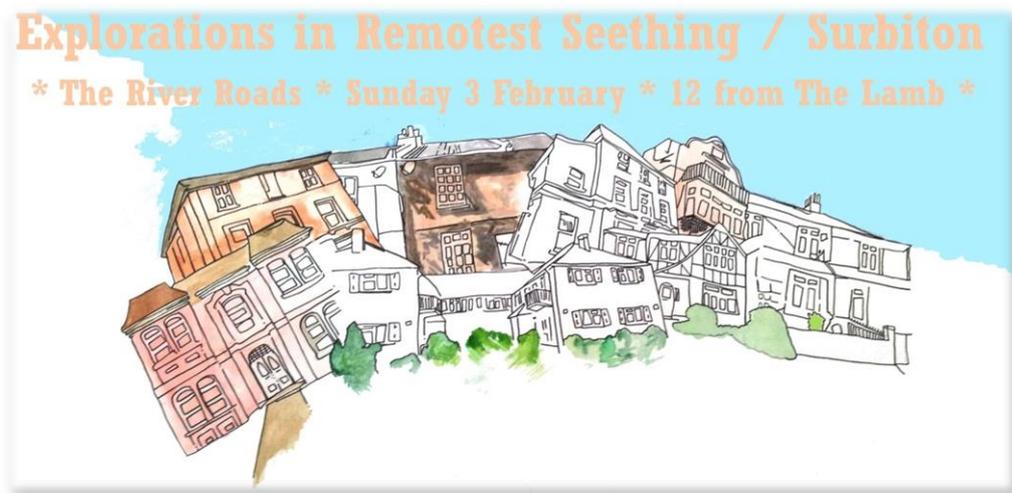
Figure 81: Poster design for the River Roads walk, with a range of housing styles.

Today Kingston is still seen as very much the more officious area to Surbiton. The Seething guild banners, the mythical history and Seething's fish all stand in relation to the 'Guild Hall of Kingston Council', its historic link to Saxon Kings and the town logo which contains three fish originating from the fisheries recorded in the Doomsday book (Statham 1996). The river roads have a range of architectural styles ranging from workers' cottages to entire streets with 1930's mock Tudor Jones style, the archetypal suburban house (see Figure 81). The evening sun often shines right down these streets and casts impressive scenes over the filter bed area. The houses themselves have a rich relation to the ecology of the filter beds as Sue tells a group on one of the Seething walks (the River Roads walk).

> "The thing I like about this house is the swifts, I think the filter beds contribute to them liking it here, they do everything on the wing, they don't land at all. We've got a balcony at the back and you can sit on there and they wiz past, they come all the way from Africa, just to our house."

Later Sue tells me she worries about the swifts as adaptations to the houses mean that the gap in the eaves of the gable ends are often sealed off preventing the swifts from roosting. The materials of the built environment have a direct relation to life in the suburb, closing such gaps is damaging for the future of suburban life. People share

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[206] The River Roads formed one of the FUS walks.

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stories about the area through community projects, walks, chatting in pubs; they take interest and spent time researching online and in the local archives. A relation with the filter beds developed through the circulation of narratives in the area that goes beyond that narrative. Photographs of the sun setting over the site were frequently posted on Facebook during the period of the planning objection (notably less so since). The entire position of 'suburbiton', as a suburb without the history or depth of Kingston, as the place governed by the centre, but not the centre, is related to the filter beds in some way. The filter beds spill out of the site and become inextricably linked to people, their lives and their sense of belonging, one that is different in form to the Seething events but similar in function. The filter beds are a site 'to be proud of' that tie Surbiton to a global ecological mass, to histories of health and to London. They tie past generations to future ones which local people feel responsible for through their 'guardianship' of the site. They are deeply imbued into a sense of 'the local'.

5.1.4 The Filter Beds & The History of Clean Water.

The first known instances of water filtration in the UK at industrial level, are found in Paisley, Scotland (WTO 2009)[207] around the early 1800's. The existence of pathogenic bacteria was unknown and murky water was seen to hold health giving properties. Clear water became desirable with the rise of bio-medical understandings of health and disease. Slow sand filtration technologies were first used in 1828 by James Simpson for the Chelsea water company's operations at Pimlico (Huismans & Wood 1974). By 1858 regular examination of water supplies were common, following the work of Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch and Theodor Escherich whose work in microbiology located the link between illness, body and bacteria. Simpson, having examined filtration systems across the country, developed a new system at Seething Wells. Water was pumped onto the filtration beds from the Thames where it sank through sand, shells, fine gravel and course gravel to the base of the beds meeting ceramic pipes which drained the water to local pumping stations and holding reservoirs.

Unplanned by Simpson was the development of an algae and slime that lay over the top of the beds. Whilst the original motive for filtration was the eradication of visible dirt in

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[207] Filtration of Water Supplies WTO 2009.
https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/wksp_goods_sept09_e/aoki_e.pdf accessed 5/7/14

line with new tastes following developments in microbiology, this alga consumed and broke down bacteria thus reducing the bacteria in the water 10,000 times. It was this alignment of ecologies and technologies that led to the discovery of cholera as water borne disease by Dr John Snow in his famous essay of 1855[208].

5.1.5 Cholera, John Snow & The Emergence of GIS, Epidemiology and Public Health.

The circulation of the site's narratives increased its value through drawing out alignments with values and visions of 'then' and 'now'. The major story emanating from the site was that of cholera and epidemiology, which I work through in this section, drawing on the parallels in the story with the themes of this thesis. These parallels are the acts of telling stories, of needing local trust and familiarity in order to get things done, and processes of creating a legitimate and traceable account in order to get the law to act. Circulation of these histories shows 'the law' and its workings to be historical and contingent processes. The story of cholera and the details of practices of 'knowing', 'showing' and controlling knowledge in order to control and regulate materials and bio-political bodies through governance is ongoing in the constellations of power today. The creation of legitimate forms of 'knowing' and 'control' take work in order to align and legitimate across social realms at various scales.

Britain encountered cholera epidemics in 1831, 1848-49, 1854 and 1867. The incidence of death was around 50% of those infected, with 7,000 deaths in London in 1831. It was a commonly held belief that cholera was miasmic, that is, transferred through the air via foul smells which had long been aligned to the poor and disease.

> The morning breezes blowing towards town at sunrise mingled with
> the mist and the poisonous breath of creatures of the marshes
> (Vitruvius, De Architectura 2004 [circa 15BC])

Antonie Philips van Leeuwenhoek's development of microscopes around the 17th century meant microorganisms could be seen for the first time. However cholera was still considered miasmic until John Snow's studies. In 1846 Snow appeared as an expert witness before a "Committee of the House of Commons" which was preparing the

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[208] Information from Heritage website http://seethingwellswater.org/Seething_Wells_-_Surbitons_Hidden_Heritage.html. Accessed 7/8/14

1846 "Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Bill" and asserted his argument that, despite inducing sickness, nauseous smells were not linked to "favour or disease" despite their nauseous effects[209].

At the time London, as it is understood today, was divided into different administrations. The Old City, The Metropolitan Regions and the Square Mile all had different city commissioners, infrastructural plans and approaches (if any at all) to managing waste, people, buildings and so on. The then Poor Law Commissioner, Edwin Chadwick, urged the different administrations to clean up their territories, however it was not until 1848 that the commissioners recognised the dirty water supply. In 1848 the City Sewers Act saw widespread infrastructural development of water systems. John Simon took up the post of the "First Medical Officer of Health for the City" and developed a system of investigation and statistical survey, which allowed powers for investigating the houses of the poor on a previously unprecedented scale. The Seething Heritage Water project often cite this moment as the first elements of modern epidemiology drawing its global importance to Surbiton's "doorstep".

These narratives link the work of Simpson, clean water, global epidemiology, the history of the city, and modern biological health to the filter beds. Surbiton, through water could flow through London and the world via clean water. Unprecedented investment in the filtration technology for public water required infrastructural changes, pipelines, reservoirs and sewer systems. This led to the administrative merging of the City of London, the Square mile and the Metropolitan regions. A new scale of governance emerged as the city become a whole unified system through material infrastructures.

However, Chadwick was still a follower of the miasmic theory and as such cholera was not linked to water supply. John Snow's observations convinced him that sufferers would need to share water or be in close contact to pass on infection. In his first version "On the Mode of Communication of Cholera" (MCC1) Snow traced cholera to sewerage contaminated water holes and advocated for leeks to be repaired and a promotion of personal hygiene. However Snow still lacked sufficient data to convince those in power that his understanding was correct[210].

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[209] Testimony record Accessed http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow/snows_testimony.html 5/3/14

[210] http://www.thecommunitybrain.org/PDFs/DrJohnSnowandSirJohnSimon.pdf accessed 16/4/14

A year after the Seething Wells filtration beds started pumping water to Lambeth, Snow started his 'great experiment'. Laborious and systematic collecting of data located the sources of water supply across London as Snow aimed to isolate one source of water carrying cholera. Snow contrasted the health of people who drew water from the Lambeth Water Company supplied by Seething Wells, with those supplied by Southwark & Vauxhall water, who drew from the Thames at Battersea (see Figure 83)[211].
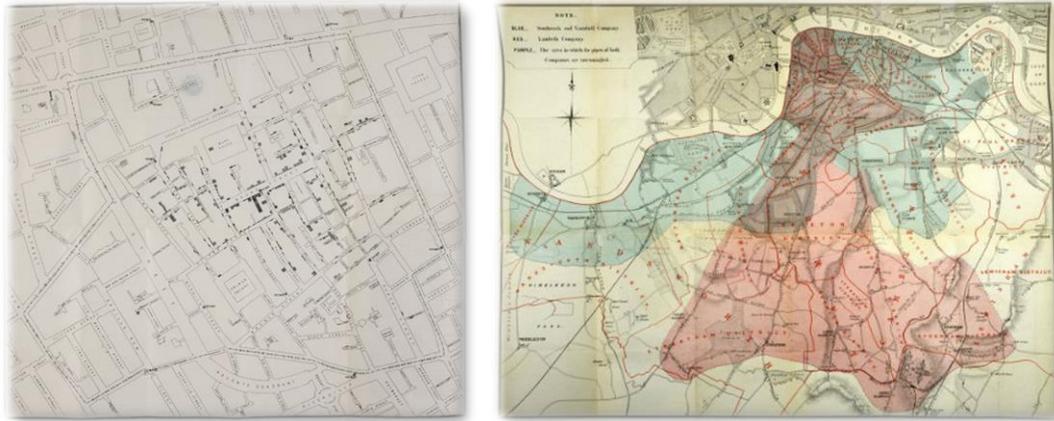
Figure 82: Left: John Snow's original map "On the Mode of Communication of Cholera, 1855" © The British Library Board

Figure 83: Right: John Snow's, "Intimate mixture of the water supply of Lambeth with that of Southwark & Vauxhall Co." 1854.© The British Library Board

Influenced by the work of Francis Bacon, Snow adopted a scientific method by aligning two populations, Lambeth Water drinkers and Southward & Vauxhall Water drinkers, keeping all other variables the same in order to see if there was a difference in incidence. His 'grand experiment' was interrupted by another epidemic and with some urgency Snow focused on the area near his medical practice in Soho. Snow famously traced this to the Broad Street pump after inquiring about the water sources from local houses. However, given that water supply was competitive Snow initially had trouble accessing such information, being taken for a capitalist opportunist. Henry Whitehead, a trusted local curate, was convinced of Snows reasoning through his own deductions. Through the trust and familiarity the local population had developed with Whitehead, Snow was, quite literally, able to open doors and get samples of water (Snow considered oral information on a residents supplier was insufficient and inaccurate). After initial investigations showed it to be sound in structure, Whitehead ordered a further investigation into the pump on Broad Street, which showed a small leak into the tank

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[211] Downstream from Surbiton and much more polluted.

from a cesspit of infected faecal matter. Snow was able to prove that the pump was the source[212].

The ability of Snow to access local data and relate it to data across a wide scale brought an empirical weight to his statistical data. These alignments were made more visible through the use of maps. Snow's 'Ghost map', showed the spatial locations of deaths by cholera (Figures 82 & 83). These maps cited as early examples of a Geographical Information Systems (Chang 2007), from which the ASP's Community Map draws a lineage. Through the image the incidence of cholera was aligned to other data: water sources. Discernable patterns and links became visible and a new form of science was born. Snow had laid the foundations of modern epidemiology and GIS. Snow traces clean water to Seething Wells, and to the technology of James Simpson. Surprising ecological alignments cleaned water of bacteria. John Simon's 1856 report "Two Cholera Epidemics of London, as Affected by the Consumption of Impure Water" made no mention of Snow who did not receive credit for his work until it was published in the Lancet in 1861. This work contributed to Pasteur's germ theory linking germs cause diseases (1864). Cholera Bacillus was identified by Pacini in 1854 but not recognised until 1884 when its discovery was attributed to Robert Koch who won the noble prize for Physiology and Medicine in 1905. In 1884 that science embraced the techniques of epidemiology, micro biology and public health as the forms of knowledge became accepted and their authority recognised. The site filtered water to central London until the 1970s and the technology developed then remains the basis for many water filtration systems today[213].

5.1.6 Conclusion to Part One.

In excavating and narrating the story of cholera the Heritage Project locate the history of epidemiology and public health to Surbiton's "doorstep". They imbue the site with a heritage significance that needs to be preserved for future generations. It has an ability to increase the fame and value of Surbiton and the locals responsible for it (following Munn 1986). This responsibility is linked to the health of the city, the nation and global bodies. Through narratives the values of science, global health and clean water can be

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[212] http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html accessed 14/11/13
[213] http://www.thecommunitybrain.org/PDFs/TheCholeraAndCleanWaterTimeline.pdf accessed 4/5/13

traced and located to the site. Bodies, across a range of scales are bound into 'populations' through the narratives and the material infrastructure of the site. Values of health and life, enabled through science and the management of infrastructures across populations lend an enduring naturalness to the management of a bio-political population. Surbiton is, quite, literally, put on the map.

The Friends of Seething Wells co-ordinated the objection to the application and gained support through circulating the site's stories and its aligned values. Through this the planning decision takes on the moral weight of the site's fame and moral trajectories understood as global and universal in scope and the responsibility of the 'the local'.

In *French Modern,* Paul Rabinow (1989) describes the emergence of cholera in 19th century France. In order to regulate it, the city became a unified object that could be managed and regulated in relation to the flows of water and human waste. The regulation of flows, the emergence of modern science and the increased role of the state in managing the bio-political body gave rise to a modern subjectivity. Laporte (1978) links this subjectivity directly to the management of material flows. This regulation, mirrored in London, required the unification of different municipal areas into a governable city. The form of governance, towards a city as a unified object to be regulated (Rabinow 1989:6), was justifiable through the conception of society as sui generis. That is, society in its modern form linked biology and population. Taking from Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1978; 1985;1986) "population", which needed to be managed, gave rise to its own norms of regulatory practice, "certain practices of reason", "fields of knowledge" and "technologies of pacification" (disciplinary and welfare) (Rabinow 1989:9). These operations freed themselves from historical constraints and gained universal status as reasonable and objective needs. The ground for legitimacy was laid so that a planned and managed city, through state funded experts (see Adler 1998)for the public good, emerged as the regulatory mechanism of modern society (ibid:12). Mapping facilitated analysis from the particular, a street or building, to the universal, the whole city. The ability to deploy such scientific techniques and scale in and out required skills and expertise. The ASP is today's iteration of this.

Working from Foucault's conception of bio-politics "that is, the growing inclusion of man's natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of power", Agamben (1995:119) asserts that politics has moved beyond a realm which man can move, from *zöe* (bare life) to *bios* (politically qualified life). Agamben asserts that a universal state of exception is

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the condition of modern democracies where the population are "bare life" to be managed by power;

> …only because biological life and its needs had become the politically decisive fact is it possible to understand the otherwise incomprehensible rapidity with which twentieth-century parliamentary democracies were able to turn into totalitarian states and with which this century's totalitarian states were able to be converted, almost without interruption, into parliamentary democracies. In both cases, these transformations were produced in a context in which for quite some time politics had already turned into biopolitics, and in which the only real question to be decided was which form of organization would be best suited to the task of assuring the care, control, and use of bare life (ibid:122)

This care for, control of and use of "bare life" is the state of regulation that Rabinow describes. "Experts" are brought into the sphere of the state, the law, including academics through particular economies of 'knowing'. The law and fact become indistinguishable (Agamben: 172). The whole, the population, becomes 'the body' that needs to be maintained as healthy and unified.

However the public are still the demos of democracy and as such are neither subjected to nor comprise power but are on the threshold of both being "bare life" and *bios*. The local is both responding to, and subject of, the process of care in late liberal democracies. This care is delivered toward a "population" through systems of governance. The local represents a part of a body which is the sui genesis social fact of modernity. This population must be maintained as healthy at a national scale, this 'fact' is a constituent meta-value of late liberal modernity. 'The local' fights for the right to be included in life, through vacillating on the threshold between *bios* and *zöe*. That is, the local shifts and contorts into a language that can articulate its own desire to extend its particular subjectivity and value, within the sphere of qualified life of the 'we', the *bios*. The local is produced in the ongoing dialogic relation between power and bodies, where the social moral good is conceived at a particular scale of the state. Authority emerges from the need to regulate the biological body in relation to the material infrastructure of the city and state. Modern subjectivities, the frames of moral order through which legitimate authority emerges, emerge through the ordering principles of the regulation of flows of material and bodies (Laporte 1978). In a need to assert a moral position from a particular social project, 'the local' (in my case Seethingers) recognise the role of the

state and aim to re-define the particularities of regulation. In so doing they re-define what the sovereign - the law - is or does, thereby allowing the sovereign to maintain its universality.

In the next section I work through how the local, on the edge of the possible, pushed at the boundaries of that which is in or out of the law during the objection against the filter bed planning application. Through being 'stupid', Seethingers built a strong shared moral community which enabled the site to be seen in particular ways. This moral vision was extended through the local community in a serious (not Seething) way. The force of the moral vision, the act of circulating the site's history, expanding its values, creating wonderment, disrupting rhythms and making affective interjections produced a local body that was able to articulate this vision to a council planning committee. This allowed maintenance of the site's potentials in alignment with a local moral vision. In this process of objecting to the application, a local subjectivity emerges. This subjectivity both carries a moral vision and is able to recognise the moral vision of the meta-culture and articulate towards it. However the making and maintenance of this local, ambitious in making *bios* from *zöe*, able to speak across different social projects, takes a lot of work.

5.2 Part 2: This Site Matters

5.2.1 Building Values & Spaces

Since its disuse the site has grown rich in rare plants, birds and bats. The variety of manmade features such as tunnels, conduits, still water and layers of sand provide a range of habitats for wildlife. Chalk, imported onto the site, and key in the development of the talcum mine story, provides the conditions for a variety of grassland flowers and plants[214]. Rare species, such as the Gadwell[215] are commonly seen on the site. In particular the site attracts the rare Daubenton bat which feeds over still water and roosts in the old pumping tunnels. Similar habitat is increasingly rare across London.

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[214] Including the Pyramidal Orchid a London Biodiversity Action Plan priority species https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/design/sustainable-design/Documents/Biodiversity-action-plan-2010-2015.pdf accessed 5/3/14
[215] A bird listed on the 'Species of European Concern'.

At the Heritage Project meeting Steve emphasised how these histories, bringing together as they did the histories of epidemiology, public health, clean water, planning, GIS and unique ecologies, could be a source of 'pride and purpose' for the local area. Steve opened this and many other meetings in a similar way, by speaking of his discoveries:

> "…if this is true, this is one of the most important things I'll know in my life. I spoke to the local heritage service, and the university and the local council and no they didn't know about it, but their reaction was similar, if it's true, it's remarkable… we applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is not an easy game, but we were lucky as they got a sense of the importance of this[…] We've got something on our doorstep that people in Surbiton should feel incredibly proud about[…] I grew up in a town that when people said 'where are you from' their reaction was always 'ah Benthalls'[216] and I always had that sense of disappointment that I would be known as a plastic bag the rest of my life, but actually this is a story that gives a real sense of pride and purpose[…] we've got something on our doorstep that the world is interested in - epidemiology and the beginnings of public health[…] which is remarkable because in the old days I used to walk along there and see a set of blue railings and it is really easy to look at them and go 'urgh whatever', which is just one way of being disinterested. Now I will stop everybody and draw them over there and say 'look at this', this is not just a piece of history it's alive today, it's massively massively important in our lives […]this isn't the end of the project, this is the beginning, allowing others to get interested and involved in it"

The site's story was repeatedly told at events, in pubs and everyday interactions. Through a spreading of fame, wonderment and making values and visions align the stories offered an affective interjection into the suburban lives of others. Importance and responsibility was imbued into local bodies. This responsibility was one of protecting values that went beyond the local, beyond the present. It extended around the world and came from the past to be passed onto "the next generation". This importance allowed Surbiton to be 'brilliant' and to shine as its importance was recognised by 'experts', such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, but it needed to be recognised by other experts, the council.

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[216] A local shopping centre.

In the above excerpt Steve momentarily collapses his body into the plastic bag; "I would be known as a plastic bag"[217]. In this moment he and the fame of the area are one and the same. The increased fame and positive alluring values of the site allow Steve and other locals to be something else, to be guardians and more, to be this history and the embodiment of those values. However this 'sense' of it mattering to people locally and there being a sense of ownership and entanglement with the site, needed to be developed. The site was traced to global ecological values, to the health of humanity through synecdochical workings. Those building the objection now needed to build traces and links from the site to the local body. This was done through the sharing, spreading and moving stories and bodies through the material environment. The development of a strong coherent local body, aligned to the same values was vital in a successful objection to the application.

5.2.2 The Spreading & Sharing of Value

The site's valuable heritage, ecologies and its ability to provide 'pride and purpose' needed to extend into a community. Following Carsten & Hugh-Jones (1995:8) the community forms as an "illusory objectification" of social relations in that 'community' emerges as a noun that, through its ability to encompass different bodies and relations has an ability to solve social conflicts. However, this is not to say that there is no 'community' prior to this, rather 'community' takes a form, contains inclusions and exclusions specific to temporal and political frames and need in a particular moment of need. Seething events can be seen as laying the foundations of trust and familiarity in which other forms of community, such as that required by a planning meeting, can cohere and talk. Similar forms of being 'stupid' in the suburbs can be seen in other places (outlined in chapter 4) where groups such as the South Norwood Tourist Board are involved in protecting the local municipal halls and a local pub from development.

Through walks, parades, heritage events, plays and discussions in the pub, stories were shared, associations made and values were built. This enables a coherent local body to emerge quickly and coherently in a particular and extemporaneous political moment from a background of a cohesive moral community such as Seething. Seething events, as

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[217] Months later I asked Steve about this and my ideas of how he was related to the landscape, he agreed and we talked about how much his body feels the local landscape.

sites of regular co-presence allowed a casual non-confrontational exchange of views and opinions about the site; conversation could stop and start and be linked tangentially to other issues in the news or locally. Seething events were never directly political and efforts were made to keep the issues of planning decisions and Seething events apart so that all, including those who might favour the application, would be welcome at Seething events. However, as outlined in chapter 3, Seething events would enable regular mingling of bodies and alignments of thought where information would be exchanged. Spaces such as the pub had a similar effect, people would ask "who is this person posting the flyers?" and so on. As discussed in chapter 3, the pub was an environment where community 'spirit' could be located, which manifested as the sharing of knowledge, skills and the building of common aims. The people who made up The Friends of Seething Wells (FoSW) would disseminate and find knowledge of local happenings, find help with web design, finance and organising in such spaces, but only as individuals and never explicitly in the mode of a FoSW member. The site's fame and histories, were circulated and reinforced, provide it with enduring value in the local population even if people did not directly associate themselves with the campaign.

Zoe was involved in the development of the play 'Seething Wells and the defeat of King Cholera' as part of the Heritage Project's outputs. The play was produced through the help of the people involved in the local performing arts industry, a strong element of the local economy (the area holds the annual International Youth Performing Arts Festival). Zoe was integral to the process of being able to draw on local skills and produce the play through her social links and professional skills. During a map elicited interview, we discussed her sense of localness and the presence of the filter beds at the top of Figure 84;

> "the filter beds, this was an afterthought, it's been a big part of what I've done here but it's a little out of my hands here. I was involved with performance in the coal shed, since then it's become a political objection to a planning application, which is not an area I know that much about, but it's not my thing it's important but I'm not involved - nothings stopping me getting involved - you pick your battles, my battle is creativity and culture […] over the last few years I've thought about the words 'space' and 'place' and people need spaces, physical spaces that will benefit emerging companies and how you can transform places. It's about building a playground, spaces where people can play, and to play is so important."
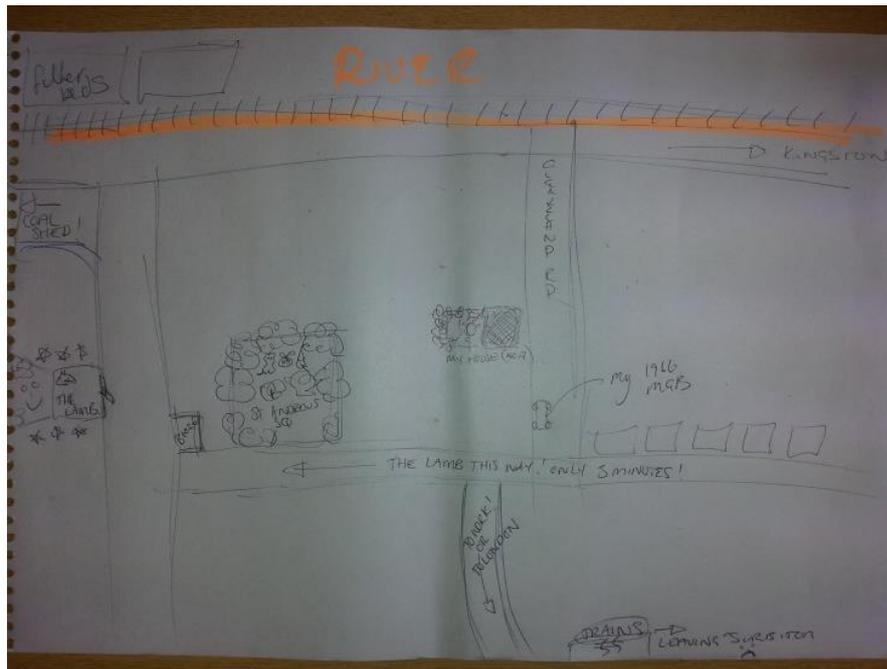
Figure 84: Zoe's map of Surbiton with distinct filter bed railing [sic] and other features of her locality.

Zoe's perception of her contribution to the development of the planning objection was that 'it is not her thing'; her contribution is the battle for making spaces for performance, creativity and play. However, this aligns to the values embodied in future visions of the filter beds as an educational centre which, while not forming part of the objection,[218] has been speculatively floated around through casual conversations as a way to extend the potential of the site in a particular moral trajectory. Her contributions to the play help spread the story. Zoe is an active community member and the sorts of community she and other Seethingers engender are linked to the implicit potentials of the filter bed site. Returning to the idea of the pub, Zoe calls it 'a site of solutions';

> "It's not to do with the drink, it's to do with the space, it allows people to relax and allows people not to think their ideas are stupid. What you have in a pub is a really wide range of people, what you get are solutions to problems. Those skills all exist in a pub, it's about the arty farty people but it's also about the solutions."

The pub, as location of ideas, collective effervescence, where "drunken emotions can be argued to align individuals with collectives – or bodily space with social space – through

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[218] As there are no grounds to the consideration of alternatives in planning objections, rather a case needs to be considered on merit alone.

the very intensity of their attachments" (Ahmed 2004:26) is a key space of play and idea formation, such as what the filter bed site could be. It is here where seeds of possibility work up through bodies of aligned moral trajectories, to have a force that posits a different vision for the way a site's potentials will unfold into the future; it is where communities cohere. Seething events provide a similar arena.

Locally the bats of the filter beds are referred to in the singular as Benton[219]. A local ecological expert and bat watcher set up an online blog in which Benton has been anthropomorphised, he speaks and answers questions[220], and is a key local figure to be seen at events, in schools and around Seething life.

Figure 85: Benton at a Seething event, being paraded, catching bugs and The Ancient Guild of Taxonomists banner.

Benton provided inspiration behind the creation of the Seething guild of taxonomists, which is paraded adjacent to a giant puppet bat in Seething events. The London bat society hand out information and leaflets and people have their picture taken with Benton, particularly children, making relations between Benton and the 'next generation'. This ecological link works in relation to a moral position around providing a sound ecological earth to the next generation, the children of tomorrow, here global

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[219] From the Daubenton bat species.
[220] http://bentonbat.blogspot.co.uk/ accessed 1/2/15.

discussions around climate change precipitate down into a localised site as Steve states at one of the planning objection meetings addressing around 150 people:

> "The site now… its ecology… Francis and others have done a lot of looking at that site, studying it and thank goodness they did, 'it's so easy to rush past and look at it and think it's tatty. For many years I did that, stop look at it through the blue railings. It is fundamentally a site of international importance, this is not just us saying this anymore, it's the Welcome Trust saying this, its UCL, it's the Heritage Lottery Fund, this has been a neglected story![…] 80% plus of the play [audience] didn't know the story, one of the comments was 'it makes me feel proud to live in Surbiton' because that's actually a big part of this. We don't want to be known as Margo and Jerry from the Good Life[221], we want to be known as the place that gave clean water to the world […] The other plan is a dream, wouldn't it be wonderful if there was a real celebration of the history and heritage of that site, somewhere you can go to and understand the energy and drive of Victorians who said, 'ok it's going to be hard but we are going to use the same energy and engineering they did for cathedrals and use it in a municipal way, and these buildings will resonate and have purpose' and wouldn't it be lovely to actually see some of the buildings on the ground work, the industrial archaeology that's in there, and have schools go there and learn about that."

Speakers at the meetings link the site to global issues of the past, present and the future. Benny states that in the same week as the meeting he heard that clean water is one of the three main goals of the new Libyan government. Benny quotes from the Welcome Trust's exhibition 'Dirt' in that "clean water is the representation of a civilised society". Benny explains:

> "One of the big issues we are going to face in the future is water […]In Surbiton we have a site that celebrates water past, present and future, a place where we can go 'yeh, we're proud, we're part of the past, but we are trying to solve the problems of the future as well[…]once they [the filter beds] go, that is it and I for one fear that in twenty years' time people will look at it and say 'and you were the ones responsible for giving away that heritage.' This is a story that resonates, you can hear the voices of Simpson and Snow but you can take that forward and see how they were tackling the problems of the future."

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[221] A comedy TV show in which Surbiton provided the archetypal boring suburb to two sets of neighbours.

Through the narration of the story, and the emotive links and assertions made, the indexical qualities of the site's materials are re-aligned to moral economies on a wider scale. The responsibility for ensuring the moral good is protected falls onto the local persons who have the material site, holding the stories and the potentials, on their "doorstep", the story is "ours", a "resource for Surbiton". It is local, it is owned. The Victorian notion of the enterprising and innovative engineer is evoked linking their "drive and vision" to that of the community. They must fulfil their ability to be pro-active visionary citizens, which is a call for *bios* to be made. Through alignments and drawing boundaries around and between people and narratives, such as the history of micro-biology, epidemiology, public health and science, the local emerges in relation to the moral economies of human culture at other, global scales. This occurs through the materiality of the filter beds - their potentials and their future. The need to 'protect', extend and realise these potential values is what coheres the 'local' community. As Malcolm, the deputy major of the borough, who is openly against the application states:

> "They've done us a favour really, [the planners and property developers] they have given us a common enemy. If they hadn't done their public consultation they wouldn't have got all these different people in one room."

The local emerges in dialogic relation to the demands of late liberal pressures and forms of deliberative democratic procedure. The production of a common enemy enables a productive articulation of a 'not this' position. The values, meanings and representational capacities of material arrangements are re-aligned and brought to work from their varied and wide ranging contexts, into a coherent local context. The community, as a common 'body local' stabilises around the practice of articulating their position.

Whilst not overtly political, bat puppets, plays, regular talks amongst friends, slowing down, narrating histories and stories, condense and cohere disparate elements into a context of the local, into the practice of the self and of the good life. However, the underlying notion of participation, inclusion and acceptance mean that this political element of re-aligning indexical qualities occurs through a purposefully a-political frame. This was shown in the Heritage Walks based around the site.

5.2.3 Heritage Walks.

As part of the borough's wider programme on heritage, Benny and Tim, key members of the Heritage Project, held two days of walks along the filter bed site. Unable to access the site directly, the walks traced the history of the beds whilst walking alongside them and through the areas where the architecture could still be seen. Tim and Benny both made efforts to stay to 'facts' in order to not be political. Privately they stressed to me that they felt the stories deserved to be told, and whilst they themselves had opinions on the site's future they hoped people would enjoy the walks and make 'their own mind up'.

Figure 86:: Heritage Walking Tour outside an old pump house

Finishing outside an old pumping shed and coal shed, host to the community play and now a gym, Tim thanked those that came and took questions. Asked by many about the site's future, Tim "put his cards on the table" and described his involvement with FoSW. He gave his opinions on how Lake had "wilfully neglected" the site in order to give a more favourable local opinion on development. Whilst encouraging people to get involved with FoSW he maintained a position of the storyteller. Later, over a drink in the pub, we talked about how to archive the walk, improve it for next year but mainly how the day went. Tim asked "was I neutral enough?" concerned that he may have let his position and passion get the better of him as storyteller. I reassured him he had done a good job of staying to historical fact.

Facts in themselves have efficacy and the fact that "metropolitan open land" needs "special circumstance to be built upon" as a fact demands a moral position in relation to the application. It is a positon that must be taken as part of, and on behalf of the

'population' which the nation state works through and for. The rich ecologies and fascinating history seemed even more impressive in the moment of walking and wondering, whilst staring and feeling the site. The sensorial immersion in the site allows the site's potentials, narratives and sensuous qualities to align. Knowledge and the ability to make judgements about such sites is done by 'experts', and, as Boyer (2005) describes, expertise and knowledge have been de-coupled from the sensorial body through the endurance of the mind-body dualism that sees the mind as the tool of rational empiricism and the body as the object through which emotive, hot irrationality comes to cloud judgements. This phenomenological engagement with the landscape, I argue, cannot but help to be political through its sensuous alignments made through walking and talking (Hall 2009). This was brought to the fore when the planning officer, who would advise the council on the decision, visited the site. Tim went along, he could be asked questions by the planning officer but he was not allowed to ask questions to her. He later explained how he felt deeply nervous throughout the site visit.

In general there was tension throughout the community at the time of the application. At an unrelated event some months later I met Betty, who favoured development of the "tatty and derelict site". Recognising me from the walks she expressed her view on the political position of the walks:

> "The 'Seething wells water people… whatever they are called, don't seem to realise that Lake own the site and have the right to develop it… it's theirs, they can do what they want with it… It would be great if we all had the money to buy up sites and have nature reserves everywhere but it's not going to happen."

For Betty, the ownership of the site was unrelated to any sense of localism and pride that might emerge through the narratives she heard. The "tatty and derelict" site needed investment in order to change and Lake could provide that. Ownership of land and the ability to invest in what you own as you like were drivers of moral force here. For Betty, ensuring that people who had property could invest in it should be the role of the state. However neutral Tim tried to be, his facts emerged from a different moral trajectory.

Most of my engagements with my informants revolved around the fun and 'stupid' Seething events, hanging out in open relaxed meetings in pubs, drinking and parading

around street dressed as guinea pigs and making up nonsense on social media. Seething events were meant to be fun and inclusive, to 'bring people in', and with this spirit I advertised the walks through the open Free University of Seething Facebook page as the walks were about learning. Within hours I was asked politely to take the post down in case the walks be booked up by Lake, thereby filibustering the event. Further it needed to be removed to unlink Seething with the political and serious heritage issues.

The delivery of narratives, which move and spread stories, enables the alignment of bodies, the built environment and moral communities into networks of responsibility. Locals are asked to look after what is on their doorstep, with all its potentials, on behalf of those who come after, the children of tomorrow. The movement of bodies through space mix "geographies of heterogeneous association" (Edensor 2003: 167) scales, and temporal frames into a sensorial, corporal moment where affective dispositions are felt and moral subjectivities emerge. The associations and morals felt occur though the memetic association of histories, materialities, bodies and stories of the morally good. The local emerges as a moral need in relation to different communities of morality, which locate in the local subject.

5.3 From The Global to Local to Staying Away.

In one sense the walks were understood to be political as the site itself was political but in simply telling the story Tim hoped that 'neutrality' could be maintained and the narratives released would enable people to 'make their own mind up'. The tension around the site led to certain storytellers such as Steve staying away from the campaign despite being very much against the development plan. This staying away created a gap between the 'stupid' stories of the Seething events and the serious stories of the Seething Wells site.

> "'I'm marmite, some people love me, some don't like me at all. I wanted this to be something that wasn't associated with me, rather I associated with it. But it wasn't my thing, a Seething thing, this is for everybody"

The tensions over the site were felt in corporal and visceral ways. Over the course of my fieldwork key informants, who I had got to know through the fun and 'stupid' Seething events, were suddenly less able to meet, or apologised for cancelling meetings.

I would usually see my informants during the playful Seething events where we would catch up, smile, and have fun. Seething events, in contrast to the council planning meetings, or FoSW meetings, had no leader, agenda or stated political purpose. Rather, such political aims were the subject of mimicry (see chapter 4). Towards the end of the fieldwork, and since, my informants have discussed with me deeply personal issues - marital problems, troubled homes, mental health problems and stresses to personal relationships. In talking about the process of dealing with the planning objection my informants talked of feeling sick or "being ripped apart", evoking strong connections between the landscape and their wellbeing.

During Seething events people would not dwell on the planning application, this was pollution of being 'stupid', being inclusive, relaxing and having fun and of Seething. It was something to talk about separately. Informants, like Paul later told me that he did not want me to see him stressed or arguing with others in meetings. He explained that at times he was not feeling up to meeting me as he "would have been no fun". Conscious of my anthropological eye my informants were keen to present a happy Seethinger, and furthermore their time was stretched and they were increasingly stressed. After personal relationships had grown and the objection campaign was less time consuming we talked through the distancing, the gaps in meeting up. Tim said the presence of the "listening anthropological ear" allowed him to "reflect back" from a different angle.

Nearer the council meeting Steve became firmly involved in the objection process, often chairing public meetings. In many ways he embodied a representation of the community amongst a panel of politicians, science and heritage experts and other community groups, such as the river users[222]. For Steve, his work with the community "was all about people" and he "struggled" with the motivations "of money and greed" which he associated with companies like Lake. On the day on the council planning meeting itself Steve wore, as he had for months, a black shirt. Suffering from bi-polar depression Steve uses his shirt colour to show his mood to people who know him well. A black shirt indicated a low mood. Knowing this meant I could offer support in whatever way I could. Leading up to the meeting Seethingers made efforts to not rely on Steve for help with events.

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[222] Sports clubs, sailors and so on.

5.4 The Meeting.

In the weeks leading up to the council meeting, friends met in each other's houses, conversations were had behind closed doors and people committed huge amounts of time to their preparations. On the day of the planning meeting itself I arrived at the hall from Kingston station, not Surbiton. I walked into the impressive 'Kingston Guildhall', a huge 1930s art deco circular building that famously holds the coronation stone of Saxon kings[223]. I saw many familiar faces making their way up the steps; officials met us and sent a steady stream of people up a solid and imposing staircase to a corridor outside the meeting room. People were dressed formally, and greeted each other in a serious and understated tone. There was warmth and affection but the atmosphere was starkly different to a Seething event. I caught Steve waiting nervously outside the main hall as he moved from person to person, thanking them for coming. With a smile and hug, I asked how he was feeling; "Sick" he replied and walked off to greet someone else with a smile before I could say anything. He was putting on a brave face, and throughout the meeting Steve, wearing a black shirt, stood by the door, bit his nails and occasionally cried.

Figure 87: The Council Planning Committee meeting in Kingston Town Hall.

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[223] Believed to be a coronation Sarsen Stone from Anglo Saxon times (900's).

I sat with Zoe at the back of the packed hall taking notes as fast as I could write. The Guildhall is the home to council meetings, receptions by the mayor and official ceremonies, the room was imposing and officious and the tiniest noise would echo through the arched roof. The language used during the meeting matched the architecture and strict protocols governed who could speak when; the rowdy crowd of over 200 people were repeatedly told that they may *not* speak or aim to influence proceedings, yet they heckled and jeered in smatterings of noise throughout. Behind me around forty people stood without seats muttering, tutting and shacking heads. Tim and Benny, on behalf of FoSW and as a heritage expert respectively, gave five minute testimonies against the development, along with other invited groups, whilst murmurs of 'rubbish' and 'lies' were shouted amidst repeated requests for silence.

I scribbled messy notes on proceedings as fast as I could. Zoe, returning from her eighth cigarette leaned over and asked "what are you writing in your little book there". She was familiar with me and my anthropological note book. Zoe, who initially did not want to be an informant, had become one of my closest friends and a fantastic informant, over my fieldwork period. She knew to not look through my book due to confidentiality but we often discussed my fieldwork thoughts. Suddenly amid discussions of "special circumstances" and "Metropolitan Open Land" from the front of the room, she took my book, and wrote 'I'M WORRIED' in big letters. With this inscription Zoe undercut the empirical, officious language and brought me to her feelings, her worries, her future, the future of her community which she worked hard for and loved. I stopped writing and we both went outside into the cold winter air. Zoe, who had recently given up smoking, smoked another cigarette and we had a quick walk. "I'm really scared they're going to allow it, I'm not sure I can handle that". Little was discussed as we could not reassure each other and we knew it - it was out of our hands. Upon returning to our seats, I made no notes and started to feel anxious and I became hot. Looking up I noticed people moving in chairs, wrangling their hands and fidgeting. The bodies of the crowd were tense and agitated. Steve was pacing up and down whilst trying not to attract attention. Tim and Benny, who were speaking, seemed remarkably calm, presenting sober rational selves. The council planning committee were attentive but cool, calm and relaxed to the point of alienating. They looked over their glasses and asked questions to each party; people jeered when they thought they did not press hard enough.

After three hours, the room was as busy as at the start: full. Despite most having worked all day, it being a Thursday, tired and stressed, people stayed and endured. The council committee retired to another room to make their decision. The 'public', as they were addressed by the council official, mingled in the room and outside the hall, many smoked, even non-smokers, opinions were given but assurances were slim. People kept their uncertainty about the decision under their breath and looked over shoulders as they discreetly told me they were not too confident. People were sensitive to this incredibly stressful and charged emotional moment.

We were called back into the room, and returning to our seats we sat through some formalities only waiting to hear one thing. The council rejected the application and the room erupted in cheers, people stood from their chair to turn and hug each other, smiling, dropping shoulders, breathing out and congratulating each other. There were some more formalities but we were soon done. We headed to a local bar to celebrate, the Kingston equivalent of the Surbiton pub. A sense of relief worked through my body as the 'fight' had been won; people turned to each other and asked if they were ok. Over a drink of champagne, which someone bought for everyone, people talked about feeling tense and nervous all the way through and there was a palpable sense of relief. Sitting back in his chair with a small smile Steve grabbed me and said assertively, "what we saw here today Jeeva" looking up, not letting go of my arm, "is a community that works".

5.5 After the Decision

Whilst I had seen a "community that works", the work that it took to achieve this meant people's free time and schedules had been stretched. After the decision I was able to catch up with informants and talk through some of the stress and tension that emerged during the campaign. Over a long lunch, overlooking the filter beds, Tim described how his involvement in FoSW had caused difficulties at home. His wife didn't drink and Tim explained that most meetings were in pubs, or would move there afterward. As the pub was a useful place for solving problems, easing tensions and forming a sense of togetherness Tim felt it was productive to go. However this caused tensions at home. He expressed his regret that he had not spent as much time with his son as he would have liked as he grew older.

He apologised to me for not being around; I assured him it was fine and said he had to look after himself. He later expressed his relief at being able to talk to someone who was both inside the community but also slightly outside, as he knew conversations would be private and that he wouldn't be judged for expressing these tensions. He explained:

> "The meetings were divisive and at times rather personal, we split at times. I didn't really want you to see that, also it's not my house. It's weird being the figure head where people come up to you and say well done for the FoSW thing; you become known to people you have never met before and people really appreciate what you're doing but then at home my wife doesn't appreciate it and thinks I should be at home. Even though I get a lot from it."

The Friends of Seething Wells (FoSW) were formed as a Community Interest Company (CIC), a legal status that has emerged since the 2005 Localism bill[224]. This grants groups a formal standing and access to business bank accounts. CICs are only for the public good, not for profit, but business-like mechanisms allowed alignment to formal legal procedure with a community as a coherent group. Tim explained that this did not necessarily allow FoSW to do anything they would not have done already other than the provision of a bank account and its use as a "presentational device". However he explained that the CIC allowed the group to think beyond their original motivations of objections and start to think through what the site could be used for. As such the group pushed ahead with meetings and discussions on the local heritage service, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the local University as they planned on developing a strategy to put the site into community hands through the organisation. This organisational form is very different from the one found amid the 'stupidity' of the Seething events. However the two are not totally separate. The Seething events serve as spaces of fun, familiarity and trust, skills are shared as are narratives of local history, ecology and local enthusiasms. This regular co-presence of local bodies allows values and moral dispositions to emerge in a shared form to the extent that when a local body is needed to present at a council meeting one is able to form. That is to say the process of deliberative democracy demands a local body to articulate. This demand is met through

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[224] See Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004.

a shared sense of the local developed in arenas of affective mingling where a local dispositions emerges.

Despite the ability of FoSW to cohere a community, Benny explained how he had been careful not to get too involved in FoSW. After a heritage walk Benny sat overlooking a sunset shimmering off the filter beds and explained how he needed to move away from the objection;

> "It's a funny one…I just had to move away from it all really, I just don't know you know, I don't know what I would do if it doesn't work"
>
> Me "what? if they win?"
>
> "yeah…, if Lake win, I'm not sure what I'll do, I'm not sure I can take that, I'm so involved, too much, it would tear me apart to be honest, I've got so much of me in there, to see it just built on and all that lost, I'm not sure I could take it to be honest. I have to be careful; I'm trying not to give too much of myself"

5.6 Conclusion.

This chapter has traced a second moment of meeting between two social projects whereby the process of shaping and managing the material landscape occurs through particular frames of discursive articulation set out by those who control the terms of discussion. This power is the power to decide the exclusion, that which is not of legitimacy and as such the sovereign appears as state apparatus, working at a particular scale of moral good, with particular notions of value and objective, rational procedure.

The local emerges in relation to this and through shifting subjectivities, from Seethinger to local citizen, works to be able to articulate value in the arena of the hegemonic social project. In doing so they are a constitutive part of it and affect it, bringing themselves into the terms of political life, they make *bios* from *zöe*. However this takes a lot of work.

In order to expand a moral project, the potentials of the land under question, for which the local is responsible, should be left open and available for the child of tomorrow. This requires the maintenance of a moral community that can cohere and act in the face of possible foreclosure. This is enabled through the sharing of value through the

circulation of narratives, occurring through the parading of puppets, the telling of stories and the regular gathering of bodies. Nancy Munn (1977, 1986) shows how Kula shells are imbued with value through the process of circulation and exchange in the Trobriand Islands. Similarly in Surbiton values change and are enacted through movements of bodies, stories and the making of alignments (following Latour 1999). The local emerges in a meld of body, land and narrative, with links to the values of clean water, modern epidemiology and global ecologies coalescing in the local, which is responsible for the kin of tomorrow. Regular meetings, Facebook, talking bats and puppets allow this circulation and aligning across scales and over time linking land, body, histories and futures into a moment where the local must act now.

The local body, as a necessary part of deliberative democracy, is required to articulate value within a particular framework of language and legitimacy where facts and values can be aligned to the 'we' of the people, the national demos. These facts may be different to the 'facts' found in Seething myth and legend but it is the productivity of the Seething community that enable those facts to merge with a 'local' sense of moral trajectory through a local body. The ability to form a community enables an articulation of a 'not this' position where alternative visions are pressenced.

Translation is required so that the values of one moral project can be sustained through discussion when meeting another, as set out by planning law. This translation at the edge of projects requires work, effort and energy. It must be serious, not 'stupid', irrational and emotional which takes time, effort, stress, strain and emotion resulting in particular forms of loss and harm as the child of today suffers as the child of tomorrow is protected.

However as part of the process of the democracy, 'the local' inherently contains a contradictory position as the constitutive body of the sovereign. As Agamben describes, the location of freedom is not in man, but in the citizen, who must engage with the state in order to not be subject to it, thereby making the state function through the universal process of dialogue;

> The fact that in this process the "subject" is, as has been noted, transformed into a "citizen" means that birth which is to say, bare natural life as such-here for the first time becomes (thanks to a transformation whose biopolitical consequences we are only beginning to discern today) the immediate bearer of sovereignty[…] It is not possible to understand the "national" and biopolitical

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> development and vocation of the modern state in the nineteenth and
> twentieth centuries if one forgets that what lies at its basis is not man
> as a free and conscious political subject but, above all, man's bare life,
> the simple birth that as such is, in the passage from subject to citizen,
> invested with the principle of sovereignty (Agamben 1995: 128)

Agamben describes how the modern democratic states link blood and soil in the judgement of the worthiness of a man to be a citizen, this according to Agamben led to the German Jew being a figure that could be killed but not sacrificed. In *State of Exception* (2005) Agamben describes how the ability of political power to define the state of exception means that late liberal democracies are in a position to revoke the rights of the citizen, which comes with the ability to make or shape law. For the suburban local it is the need to maintain the 'good life' which demands they maintain a productive citizen position.

However whereas Agamben states there is condition of bare life, I argue that as citizen becomes the bearer of sovereignty (Agamben 1995:129) through being on threshold they are able to push at the limits of life. The local takes a vacillatory position whereby they are both working within the terms of the law, as articulate and understandable and simultaneously outside the law at the limits of the discursively possible. It is here where we see the social productivity of being 'stupid'. This vacillatory position requires constant work, through performance and re-performance both in the arena of the law, which defines exclusions, and in the arena of 'stupid' (that which can be abandoned) which produces new moral trajectories as coherent forces, the two of which are always in relation. It must both penetrate and be able to penetrate a foot in each social project[225]. This work, which produces stresses and strains, is the demand of the late liberal freedom. It produces the sorts of subjectivities and forms that (following Marx (1867) 1977:57n34) one thinks *ought to exist* in order to extend value.[226]

The local as ethical substance, the prime material of moral reflection (See Povinelli 2011: 10) must be maintained and must make *bio*s from *zöe* within the terms of the sovereign; 'the good life' must be maintained. The local must maintain its ethical substance at the scales of the local, the national and the global. It is this maintenance of ethical substance, as being communicable and articulate across scales, which produces the local

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[225] This is where the anthropological relation to the other is most keenly felt.
[226] Marx, in a footnote, refers to the forms of labourer that were produced and new moral codes of the 'good worker'.

that stands on the threshold of ideal and actual, of *bios* and *zöe*, of life and death. It is this existence in the gap, between being and not being that the local emerges as a necessary subjectivity of late liberal democracies. This comes with a degree of potential to make swerves in the trajectory of the moral force of the meta-culture, but at the cost of other forms of care, of other subjectivities that we think ought to exist and ones we don't yet have the room to think about. In maintaining the moral trajectory of one social project within the terms of the other, bodies feel stress and strain and miss out on maintaining other moral trajectories, such as the child of today, through commitment to making *bios* from *zöe*, a commitment to 'being local'.

Conclusion

This PhD was written in a gap. As I gathered my paper and pen from the table at the ASP meeting I would move, replete with cake that could be ingested but not discussed, towards Surbiton where cake could be discussed freely but not always ingested. On route I would make my ethnographic notes and start to synthesise points for analysis. This movement positioned me, as researcher as a vacillating body between two social projects. Both aimed to make the world better through controlling the forms and relations of the material environment, but in very different ways. In the former, cake was not discussed as it would pollute the seriousness of the endeavour of forming the position of the intellectual and the deployment of expertise into the discourses around of planning policy. In the later cake was to be discussed as a symbol of having a go, being included, participating in the community but not always ingested. Even if the cake is 'crap' it still works.

The ASP works through forms of 'knowing' and at scales of relation that are distinctly different from that of the Seething Villagers. The ways in which cake does or does not circulate how the flow of meaning and matter is regulated is the very form of how social projects craft their worlds. The ongoing process of involution requires a regulation of materials but further allows obviations of the normative. These materials are not simply the stuff *in* the world, but rather they are how we get to know the form and force *of* the world. These material practices then are at once a way to make and know the world that they both emanate from and create, particular types of being. As such these practices are at once epistemological, ethical and fundamentally ontological or onto-ethico-epistemological (following Barad 2007).

This PhD focuses not on the centre of these social worlds but rather my argument is that people inhabit the edge of social projects as they are involved in the ongoing process of making social world come into being. People are neither in this or that world but engaged in the multiple coherencies that are possible in the potential of the involution, the gap between meaning and matter. Social projects are not so much

looking to fully understand the other, but rather to ensure that the trace remains, that meaning and matter are stabilised in productive alignment that allow social projects to endure (following Mol 2003). Social projects are constantly involved in meeting other social projects, breaking down and re-building. This position on the edge, on the threshold, allows both a being in and out of a social world, for people to neither be mute nor included but rather to involute. That is, they can gain voice and traction to make their world become in a particular form through applying the logic of one set of values, one trajectory of a world that is becoming to themselves. This deployment of the other in relation to themselves sheds light on the disjunctures between them. It exposes the gap and in so doing life is made from a position on the outsider. The suburban worker gains life, Lefi is brought in, *bios* is made from zöe. A position on the threshold demands attention.

This demand is subtle and often invisible, it can be controlled and erased. The first chapter of the thesis, the first 'moment' around which this thesis pivots, focuses on a moment of incommensurability whereby the ASP refuse the story added to their public participation map, on account of it not being 'historical fact'. For the ASP 'fact' needed to have a consistent meaning across all possible users of the map, hence the playful use of 'fact' by the Seethingers was refused. This moment of refusal, based on the need for commensurability is at the heart of the democratic ideal where a Habermassian 'ideal speech situation' (1990:40) allows communication across the various communities in the map under a clear, universally rational, empirical truth. For Seethingers 'fact' was an inherent play on meaning which was socially productive in its vagueness. Here the 'stupidity', pushing on the limits of the discursive worked to include suburban life against a popular discourse of ahistorical dull suburbs. It worked to debase notions of expertise and authority.

In this moment of refusal both social projects simply turned away from each other and carried on. Despite not working the map did not fail as it continued to provide the potential for the participation required by the democratic production of knowledge, offered by the ASP, by differing its potential to work to the future, democracy would come. This tensing allowed both social projects to exist without clashing whilst simultaneously producing a foreclosure of one project by another. The projects are in constant dialogic relation to each other and shift and re-form in response to possible obviations of their logic.

The story was not allowed, it did not produce the clear communication needed. In chapters 3 & 4 I expand on the 'stupid' stories and how, through their position on the edge of the sensible, they push the limits of discursive normativity, refuse expertise and knowledge claims and obviates legitimate known forms.

Throughout the thesis it is my own position as anthropologist, vacillating between two social projects, in the transfer of the involution, that produces an ethnographic moment, a need to understand the disjunctures. Through incommensurability this thesis focuses not on the ontological centre of the other and how the suburb, as object, is able to 'dictate a *plurality* of ontologies' (Harare, Holbraad & Westell 2007:7 emphasis in original), rather it looks at the edge, where a representation, a story, is refused in order to maintain one project at the cost of foreclosing the other.

The map, as the material means through which the production of legitimate knowledge occurs, made a promise to make visible the nuance of the demos through a commensurate, clear, shared aesthetic. This promise requires that all contributors concede to the conditions of communication. Making visible also requires making invisible that data which is not rational, not commensurate or sound through a particular 'epistemic grid of knowing' (Butler 1993:66). This commensality is an outcome of the demand of totality, which is needed to close the gap between the universal and the particular. It is the ability to move between the universal and the particular that gives Baconian empiricism its force (Daston and Galison 1992; Jay 1988). This force lends expertise, held by those who know how to trace and move through phenomena, who are trained in the rules, an authority to produce knowledge on behalf of the demos. This authority both makes and coheres a 'we' of democratic societies (Following Laclau and Mouffe 1985) binding the bodies of a nation into the same moral project. However producing this commensality, erasing the gaps, takes work. There are stresses and strains. Where one commitment is made another cannot arise as seen in chapter 5 where the child of tomorrow was protected at the expense of the child of today (see p256).

In hovering in the virtual space that opens up 'between the potentiality and actuality of an alternative social project' (Povinelli 2011:8), this PhD argues for a focus on moments of meeting, an anthropology of the edge. When faced with the ontological dilemma in

anthropology, as posed by Harare Holbraad & Westell (2007: 12) that "we do know of the powder one talks of when they call it power" matters less than the fact that someone wants the powder, or the material of landscapes of the suburbs, to be considered a certain way, in order for it to be efficacious in a particular way, and make certain worlds become, and others not. This contestation, over the powder, or the suburb, unfolding in line with the moral trajectory of a particular social project, is had in the ongoing process through meaning and material are linked. This process, the involution, contains gaps which can be stabilised (chapter 2) or obviated (chapter 3).

This PhD deals with that which is fundamental to the anthropological discipline, the condition of the other. How do social projects account for the other, represent the other and bring them *in* to the moral project. What are the exclusions, cuts, losses and constitutive outsides in this process and how does that precipitate into forms and distributions of harm. Crucially how do these relations produce what Foucault (1985:26) calls, ethical substance - the parts of oneself, feelings, emotions, desires that one takes as the material of one's moral conduct. How are they imbricated in the production and maintenance of particular subjectivities, such as the Seethinger, the local, the expert, the knowledgeable and so on? And how do such subjectivities, such positions, create a legitimacy of being which allows moral communities to expand, setting the terms of life and non-life in the process?

Throughout the thesis I have not looked at how social projects expand as such, but rather how social projects do not expand, how they meet resistance at points of attrition and disjuncture with other social projects and how social projects foreclose. This foreclosing and cuts is a form of crafting that occurs through the hard work of making images, maps, puppets or arguments in which affective interjections are made, relations made present and subjectivities built. This work is the practice of stabilising or destabilising meaning, it is material and it is ongoing.

Chapters 2 & 3 focus on the production of realms of knowing and the mechanisms that drive social projects and allow moral communities to cohere and endure. Chapter 2 looks at the production of the suburb as phenomena that can be studied and made to work. Images are produced from complex data and they need a particular eye to read them. They presence and extend values through a traceable process. Understanding and tracing relations involves work that requires expertise, the expert then acquires a form of legitimacy and is able to advise on making 'better' places and as such produce a

material force over the suburb. My PhD studentship was a part of this 'becoming expert' and the PhD, if deemed sufficiently rigorous and passed will see me become expert. The knowledge produced, the information about suburban lives, contributes to the ASP in its rigorous assessment and expert knowing the values and meanings of the use of the suburban built environment, it helps make 'better'. As such the PhD exists in the gap, the moment of transfer and carries with it the social normative notions of knowledge that maintain the trace.

Working from the university, the ASP produced, managed and manoeuvred large data sets that related different aspects of the material city to ascertain productive relations. Producing knowledge that works from complex data requires commensality , its needs to work through a common matric of value (Epseland & Stevens 1998) across different elements of the data. This involves making alignments, selections, cuts and exclusions which become even more necessary once data is scaled up (following Stathern 1991). Practitioners in the ASP move between scales, from street, to local, regional, city scale and into national policy. Data is abstracted from the complexity of the world, but a constant value and vision remains in the trace. The production of ontologically real phenomena, such as a movement potential, a street, a suburb, with known qualities and traceable potentials allows coherent and legitimate action towards and around those phenomena. In many cases this was the arrangement of a building shape, to street to city infrastructure. In the case of the ASP's map it was a community, one that was engaged and participated, that was the desired form of ontologically real phenomena. The production of these phenomena allows a protection and expansion of values, ways of being in the world to endure for that social project. Connections to regional and national government and policy think tanks place the ASP as part of the apparatus of government that manages the population. This management of the material landscape, the suburb, as part of the city, occurs in the name of the moral good of the 'we' of late liberal democracies and relates to the emergence of the city as object that cohere a population in a connected body of flows and distinct relations. Management of bodies, cities and materials is explored in a more historical context in chapter 5, whilst techniques of map making, making visual and in particular the role of the body and sense are explored more in chapter 4. How and what is produced from these interactions between social projects, what foreclosures and refusals this involves requires reflexive awareness in the detail of producing knowledge ad such knowledge is linked to particular social projects. This is increasingly important for the academy and

anthropology with the emergence of new funding structures, such as the project that funded me, linked very directly to state infrastructural management. These decisions of what is *in* and what is *out* is decided in seemingly banal ways, however it is this banality that hides the efficacious normativity of its ethics, my vacillatory position, allowed me to step out to look in. It was the instability in the moment of transfer that allows critical reflection.

The legitimacy of the social project, the governance of the city, is gathered from a long line of academic reasoning and the social-political conditions explored in chapter 5. This legitimacy is constantly re-performed through the work on data by the ASP. Combined, arranged, run through algorithms, re-run, data was made into images from which relations could be seen, spotted and understood and would become referential to themselves as "gestures that invite further gestures" (following Burrows 2014). They allowed the ASP to 'know what questions to ask'. Simple aesthetics were produced from complex data that bridges the seen and the unseen producing an efficacy and potency to the images. Being expert involves the long process of trial and error, judging which cuts to make, what trace should flow through the data and making commensurate data that produce images. Traceability and rationality allow images that can move, be placed in publication, presentations and meetings with planners and policy advisors who then in turn fund more research and make policy which effects the material arrangement of place as they legitimately know "what sort of places to encourage" (ASPM1). Following Chatalet (1993:166) these images both follow and produce "lines of force" in their ability to produce order and make seen previously unseen potentials from complex relations.

These images, in their complexity need explaining through the expert. The images promise (following Harvey & Knox 2012) *better* through providing a way into complex data through a complex but traceable empirical process, delivered and understood by the expert. This process isn't chaotic, or capricious but traceable, scientific and dead serious. The production of the suburb as phenomena allows management and control of the material landscape on behalf of a population who are related to the phenomena through this work. The work involved and the seriousness of the endeavour requires a removal of the sensual aspects of the research. The body as irrational, unscientific, unaccountable and unreproducible is removed from the images. The body remains present in their production as in the account of defining boundaries through 'a sense' of

the area and the request that cake not be included in my ethnographic notes[227]. This cake, like sitting around a table, tea, chit chat, manors, jokes, professionalism and so on, prevented tension at ASP meetings through producing concessions from team mates who were asked to re-run data again and again until they could produce data that 'works' to make 'better'. This ability to 'work' is the very potency of the images and the ASP that preserves particular notions of economy, success and work and the particular suburban subjectivities', material arrangements and moral orders of a particular late-liberal social project. These removals, or refusals, of cake and stories of goat boys produce a particular politics of being in which 'knowing which questions to ask' remains the preserve of the expert who does not discuss cake and sticks to facts.

The third chapter, the social productivity of being 'stupid', looks at another social project, that of the Seething Villagers, and their relation to the material landscape of the suburb. Here forms of expertise and knowing are obviated through the involution (see p47) by acts of 'stupid'. These acts promote inclusion and participation in a suburban life that rails against a suburban death. Taking the non-heritage (see p149) of suburbs as their starting position the Seething events mimic more established symbols of authority, governance and historical movements. In this close alignment, this mimicry is able to destabilise the normative positions of symbols and expose their social contingency. They do not stand totally outside of the society of which such symbols are a part but rather on the threshold of what it is they symbolise, how they work and what they do. Seethingers do not reject late liberalism, the suburbs, local governance and so on, rather they seek different forms of it and they seek spaces for it to shift. They are neither radically outside social life, nor a radical newness on the inside. Through undermining expertise and refusing to accept the common discursive trope of the suburban non-place (Following Augé 1995) they work to obviate the controlling context (following Wagner 1975) of the prevailing and ever threatening 'suburban way of life'.

Involutions not only fail to re-iterate in accordance with social laws, they mimic but further twist, producing swerves (Althusser 2006), they produce an excess of the rule when applied to those who the rule abandons. This is 'stupid', it doesn't make sense. When I first arrived in Surbiton and asked the Seething community for permission to conduct ethnography, to be written into this PhD, I was asked to give a lecture at a local pub. Others also talked, a university of Seething was established, gowns made and

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[227] Later allowed

degrees handed out to all, from 4 to 70 years old. The explicit link to social law, the symbols and mechanisms of universities, means that Seething is able to obviate expertise. I was able to conduct ethnography, but not be expert. A PhD is a great idea, they thought, PhD's for everyone (see figure 42). In the final weeks of writing this thesis the material objects of the Seething community graced the entrance to the Anthropology department so that all visitors would have to walk past videos of goat boys and Guinea pigs skiing down roads as a display of cutting edge anthropological research. An event was held where informants sat alongside myself and reflected back on the experience of producing anthropology and another event saw members of staff at UCL reflect on its material culture collection through the Seething practices and its material culture objects. At the end of this event PhD's were awarded in 'The Anthropology of Seething' from the Free University of Seething, this included myself awarding my UCL supervisor a PhD. I received mine when in the field, complete with award ceremony, gown, hat[228] and scroll, the materials of such events (See figure 64).

The position, on the threshold of sense, is productive as it is able to influence the epistemic grid through what links and associations are made and the world comes about. For Wagner (1975) culture is invented through the ability to make an act of significance. Inventing through playing with the controlling context, the authority of the university expert to speak on their behalf, is the key thing here. For Wagner the controlling context is where the actor's intention and awareness are involved in the judgements and priorities of the conventional world (ibid:45). An involution then applies the rules of one social project to the other in order to bring about a demonstration of how the rules don't apply. This presencing and showing exposes the socially contingency of those rules and as such demands a consideration of that which was previously outside. Mixing the values of one social project in and through the other works to perform the *bios*, the life considered and included, from the *zöe*, non-life, that which can be abandoned. In so doing it not only brings itself in, but obviates what it is that it is brought into. The content of this PhD is the material output of the obviation. The moment of refusal is still present, it hasn't gone away and it has been considered. The ability to make judgements and change priorities is to bring *bios* from the *zöe*, this is the productive aspect of an involution. The notion of an involution builds on Wagner who sees invention and convention in a binding dialectic through which the process of semiosis is relativized (see Wagner 1974:38). This process is an ongoing budding from a whole, or

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[228] It's all about the hat.

hegemonic position, in order to change the whole, that is the whole buds a particular to "swerve" (Althusser 2006) the whole through a momentary unmasking of contingency which allows otherwise hidden potentials to be enacted from relations.

Through interruptions to everyday non-events of late liberalism (shopping, the monotonous traffic and so on) Seethingers create affective interjections, crafting spectacular stories and giant puppets and disrupt the everyday rhythms of streets, bodies and places (figure 5). Through parading, singing and dancing Seethingers develop emotive relations with landscapes of the suburb changing their everyday interactions with it in corporal and sensual ways (figure 29). Through taking a refusal and involuting the terms of that refusal, they demand inclusion.

Through regular meetings at events and in the pub people develop familiarity and trust enabling a network of opportunity that allows people to expand, 'to be brilliant' and crucially "where you can fail". Play, newness and invention are encouraged and the pub provides a space for creative freedom and collective fun, where drink and drunkenness has a positive role but may not carry the same moral trajectory, of producing good, elsewhere, such as in the home. Here a place is made where certain desires can lived out yet this contains its own exclusions, such as those who don't drink, are uncomfortable with the form of 'stupid' or the child of today at home (see p257). The gap between the possible and the actual is slightly closed, following this gap enables an anthropology of desire, control, possibility and power and how they work through everyday material practices.

Chapter 3 & 4 align and slightly twist in form from chapter 2 in the discussion of meetings, how people sit around a table and how people consider cake in the productive of a common moral position. Both the ASP and Seething aim to align their moral community and draw participation in their social projects and make the other work on its terms. The ASP came back to Seethingers for further engagement offering 'inclusion walks' which were again obviated by the Seethingers, as demonstrated further in chapter 4. Chapter 3 stands in relation to four in terms of the demonstration of the involution but in standing after chapter 2 it shows how both projects aims to bring in the other into their own moral project.

The idealised moral 'State of Seething' is embodied in the figure of Lefi ganderson the goat boy, who is the constitutive outside, the difference, brought in. A Hobbesian fall

into the imagined suburban death, comprised of the soul crushing commute to work, the endless monotony of urban landscape and the isolated living of the late liberal capitalist worker is prevented through a thorough enactment of the participatory and inclusive ideal, extended to Lefi, the shadowy outside brought in. The particular stories of Lefi and fresh water sardines may be particular to Surbiton's Seething but the stupidity is not. My second field site, South Norwood was also 'stupid', declaring themselves independent, as the suburban beauty spot of the UK. Elsewhere Walthamstow celebrate the typical suburban mattress, on the South coast Swanage is affectionately known as Seething on Sea whilst the town of Oldenburg in Germany takes Seething like festivals into its community calendar. The mechanisms are remarkably similar, stories are fun, inventive and playful, they encourage participation and equality debasing expertise and asserting a form of sovereignty over their landscape, literally in the case of South Norwood (see *Croydon Advertiser*[229] 2/6/14). They always play with the dominant symbols of the area in regard to popular image or local government. They are always spectacular and disruptive, if not antagonistic. They re-align the indexical qualities of the materials of the suburbs into ones that create different moral communities, relations and subjectivities. They take the values of one moral project and apply it to themselves to show how they do not apply and so make the disjuncture present, un-ignorable and therefore apply. Whilst the mechanisms are similar the particulars are always local to the place. The question needs to be asked how a similar form of 'stupidity', of playing, occurs across many places that may not know of each other.

From these involutions, values emerge with the capacity to supplant those which are normative and sedimented in the controlling context. This is why it pops up everywhere as a useful mechanism, where a particular desire or value, a particular social project is about to be lost, cut or subsumed. When there is nowhere for it go, no alternative meta-culture to employ, it simply carves a place for itself by exposing the gap by applying the rule to itself to make a disjuncture, a gap.

'Stupidity' is not searching for the establishment of something radically new, it may be an alternative social project but the demand is one to be included, to obviate not obliterate. Rather than be a radical new conception of social order, is rather a twist to it,

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[229] "South Norwood Tourist Board announces referendum on SE25 leaving Croydon...and joining bonnie Scotland" www.croydonadvertiser.co.uk/South-Norwood-Tourist-Board-announces-referendum/story-21176151-detail/story.html accessed 2/6/2014

"Swerve" and as such an extreme commitment to its ontological premise at the most fundamental level. The demand to be included, to be considered life, to be the *bios* not the *zöe,* is a commitment to the democratic principle and to maintain the universalism that it demands (see Butler et al 2000). This re-insertion of the nuisance prevents the slip of late –liberal democracy into totalitarianism (see Chomsky 2014). The alternative that does not want to be included then must remain outside, radically other, like the giant – Thamas Deeton who Lefi defeated. As the sovereign decides on the conditions of exclusion it is the presence in the shadows, of the 'the other' - on the other side of the threshold but still in sight - which coheres the sovereign. The sovereign and the excluded are always in relation (Agamben 1995: 115) they are made through each other.

Whilst not entirely new[230] these forms of 'stupid' as an indigenous demand are perhaps more efficacious than ever. If, as Mouffe (2005) and others assert we live in a post-political age where there is only one conception of socio-political order, late liberal capitalism, then being other, a radical alternative is not a sustainable position[231]. The most productive thing to do to eliminate harm is to obviate late liberal capitalism through the mechanism of the involution. Following Butler (1993) the law provides the discursive occasion for resistance but that resistance is in the form of obviation as there is no other place to go (Boyer & Yurchak 2010). An anthropology of the edge looks not at other worlds but at the gaps and flashes of alternative that happen within one world, that in turn makes that world something else or not.

To obviate, that is - to make symbolic substitutions within the involution, to make a swerve, takes work. Conceptual crafting of a moral community, in which glimpses of an alternative world occur, emerges from the tangibility of the field (following Navaro-Yashin 2012). The social and bodily heat of a shared drink, surprise of seeing a puppet on the high street and the fun of dancing in a local create affective disposition and new alignments.

In pushing the limits of the discursive this playful 'stupidity' asserts ownership, this was displayed when the Seething community created a university and presented me with a PhD. These obviational intentions, through which authority and possessions are

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[230] See http://www.britishpathe.com/video/surbiton-goes-gay accessed 18/3/15 for a stupid carnival from 1930's Surbiton.
[231] See Australian prime minister call life on remote indigenous communities a 'lifestyle choice' http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/mar/10/remote-communities-are-lifestyle-choices-says-tony-abbott accessed 18/3/15

dismantled and re-assembled, are worked through in more detail in chapter 4 whilst chapter 5 pushes the notion of 'the local' as a vacillatory position standing on the threshold further still. Chapter 3's local stands between two visions of life in order to make one that is neither 'this' nor 'that' but something else as part of being local, whereas chapter 5 sees being local as part of late liberal democracy. Again the PhD, like the Lefi story, scales up finding different forms of social projects and different locations of the 'other'.

Chapter 4 provides a nuanced example of the process of obviation of the controlling context that stupidity provides in relation to the participatory demand of the ASP. As people in Surbiton are asked again to participate in the ASP's project through walking tours Seethinger's make a swerve through the involution, rejecting expert leaders and delivering facts on their own terms. In awarding me the PhD they simultaneously engage and refuse, this neither yes nor no position, exposes the gap between the two social projects with their differing mechanisms of making better and the productive work emerges from their position on the threshold. This stubbornness and obviation stands in contrast to chapter 5 which sees the work of the ASP and the Seethingers in different but related forms. Here the ASP's work is seen again in the moral community that can be found in the national 'we', implicit in the academically informed planning policy. Whilst the Seethigners project can be seen again in the ambitions and articulated demands of the local 'we', the 'we' of the people of the democracy. The local subject as citizen, in chapter 5, is one that cannot be as stubborn, not turn away or obviate so easily. In the council meeting the material arrangement of the suburb will be decided one way or another. Here the materials stay the same but the signs change (following Humphrey 2008) and they must be discussed through a particular understanding of value, through particular indexes of meaning and value in relation to a particular scale of community, the nation. These particulars are the established norms of the conversation. It is here that the turning away (as seen in chapter 1) comes to matter again.

Secondly chapter 4 traces how the historicity of the body/land relation and the politics of place is deeply entwined with movement and the body both historically and today. The corporal and sensual experience of walking land and has long been associated with the emergence and stabilisation of a boundaries that allow places to emerge as distinct phenomena that can be known, represented and claimed, (Solnit 2000). This relation

sees body and land as intraconnected[232], that is, not as prior entities but as entities that emerge from a constant relation to each other. However this connection to land demands a moral assertion of ownership, control and rights to manage materials of the 'local'. The ability to represent and control place has increasingly moved into the realm of the state and the expert who remove traces of bodily performance and personal memory as contingent in the formation of place and boundaries in favour of a traceable and reproducible form of measuring and knowing. Modern mapping, as a technology of governance enables cuts and erasers in its forms from ordinance survey and its role in land enclosure (Hewitt 2010) through to the ASP and its mapping of land use potentials.

Mapping practices create alignments of population to phenomena, such as suburbs, high streets, movement potentials, economy, value, which are to be managed for the population. Whilst the ability to define place moved from people walking to state mapping a crisis point occurred in Surbiton in 1988 when it was 'stunned by the news it may vanish' (*The Surry Comet* 25/3/88) when a change in borough boundaries were proposed. This potential loss of place was located to the inability of people to show they could manage the borough and its services and that was a place at all. Fear emerged that 'years of history would be wiped out' that indexes of local would change and as such the local would be erased. Here the local needed to reassert itself in an age of devolved state power to the local, who need to prove they can be local at all, this is most recently manifested in the localism act of 2011[233]. Increased political devolution will give rise to new forms of contestation over the materials of the landscape to which one feels a part. This will occur at numerous scales from the re-emergent nationalism of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum to the re-assertion of the borough of Kingston as a place in the face of its imminent disappearance in 1988. This chapter shows the political potential in the tactics of stupid acts, counter mapping and other performative acts that work to control, enact and shift the meaning of the material landscape. The indexical links of the local, are up for grabs. Representations are produced and used to produce discourses of legitimacy regarding ownership or management of space however such discourses can also be used by others in de Certeau like tactics (see 1984), or Wagnerian obviations (see Wagner 1975). Crucially this is an assertion of sovereignty as part of the demos, a call for a particular to be included in the universal, an obviation to swerve the whole, to be included. This material link to

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[232] Intra is preferred here (following Barad 2007) to interconnected as the later pre-supposes pre-existing entities of body and land.

[233] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted/data.htm accessed 3/3/2013

indexical change is what allows the materiality of the world to become something else. This something else can be brought about through the involution of the rule in order to obviate the controlling context. People understand the potential and importance of material culture in these moments where the signs can shift, where the gap in the performance opens up. Sometimes this is dramatic, such as in the fall of the Berlin wall, sometimes it is stupid but clear, such as Julie Shackelford's (2014) example of a man wearing a Syrian flag hat in the ongoing Syrian revolution, but sometimes they are 'stupid' and banal and not explicitly political, like Seething.

The second key moment around which the thesis pivots occurs in chapter 5. Here the effects of projects like the ASP and Seething come to matter. The two social projects meet again in different forms but this time there is no walking away. The local must enter a room and articulate the importance of a particular material arrangement of the suburb to the council, who enact law on behalf of the national population. The local as citizen here aims to extract the *bios* from the *zöe*, performing the engaged citizen, making the local work as a political body engaged in the democratic process. The local, sitting in the council chamber (as citizen, not Seethinger), aims to show how the material arrangement of the suburb holds potentials within it, values that need to be protected for the future generations, in the face of another vision of the value of a site of land. It is here that the work of Seething, as a moral force, sharing values to be protected for 'the children of tomorrow' comes to matter. Further, through this process both the need and the effects of producing a 'community that works' can be felt. This chapter asks after the harmful effects of the work that is needed to produce coherent moral communities, of being on the threshold, of making obviations in involutions to force openings. It asks if the gap is not a place through which utopian alterity can be glimpsed, but rather is the realisation of a demand for a constantly performing citizen where forcing the *bios* from the *zöe* is a constituent part of late liberal democratic society.

In order to be the citizen who is able to perform this *bios* moment an incredible amount of work must be done. Values and visions of what is we want from the future must be discussed, dreamt, shared, spread articulated. Seething, being 'stupid', being local is a key mechanism of doing this. This work, and its demands, creates a figure of the local which I compare to that of Antigone, caught between two visions of kin, the child of today and the child of tomorrow. In forming a "community that works" in both the sense of noun and verb, the vitality of the affective performances of the Seething

community as a constant performative practice of being citizen that enables a particular moral subject position can be seen. A Seethinger, through affective interjections in the common discursive, aesthetic and material world of the suburb is able to avoid a fall to a suburban death. This is able to scale up and carry a dream of the State of Seething as a moral position, into an articulation of what we want a particular material site of the suburb to do for 'us', the people. Its value potentials are able to be seen and articulated through the voice of the local citizen in a planning meeting. In so doing the work undertaken, planning, meeting, arranging, campaigning and so on, means that the local in the meeting, protecting the values of the site for the child of tomorrow is not the local at home looking after the child of today. This is where the cost of this local position, stuck between two visions of kin in being the citizen of the demos, can be counted.

The position of the local is demanded by the procedure of local governance, a constituent part of the form of governance that manages the population of the suburb, the city, the nation in the best interests of the 'we', the people. This management is informed through the advice and research of experts, such as those in universities who are increasingly encouraged to form research which is useful to policy and the national project. Maps that show value, that allow participation are the material manifestation of the tools of this endeavour. Expert knowledge, produced through traceable empiricism often erases the sensual and corporal aspects of knowing, or that which is lost or cut away in the process of forming stable objects that can be known and can move. The elimination of nuance is more than a problem of scale, it is also a problem of what it is we want to know, what traces we want to make and what values we want to protect, enhance and extend. Images, knowledge, values that become mobile, are able to move through and over a population and enter into the practices of control. Here the ability to control the material arrangements of place, such as the filter beds, stands for something more, the value of the local in relation to the whole. This has to be worked for through establishing a claim over the conditions of 'knowing' and making value stick. This practice of making moral projects, creating legitimacy and forging the ability to control, is what makes the *bios* from the *zöe*. The local, on the threshold, must always stand not in Seething, in the ideal state, but on the edge of alterity and what exists now, performing in the gaps. We are always moving towards our dreams but we are never in them.

The thesis is one that looks towards the edge, the edge of the social projects, where they meet and foreclose the other. These contestations, over which social projects (plural) can endure, occur within the materiality world. It is the gap between social projects which demands a constant performance of being human. But it is this gap that also gives a sense of freedom. Within a world of multiple social projects, overlapping and at different scales, always shifting and emergent, there is a sense that the overarching social project of today has room for manoeuvre, to make the ideal future realised, be it Seething, or the democracy. This commits us to a process of work, effort and strain to shape our dreams. In this state, on the edge, the state of constantly performing the *bios* of the *zöe*, of shaping our dreams our nightmares lie just outside, in the shadows, as the threat to moral order. The law can not only have transgressions but must have them, but there is a limit to the other, to the newness. It is the work at the edge, pushing/forcing, that produces a subtle form of harm as bodies vacillate between normative and new, between the child of tomorrow and the child of today.

This PhD then, in being the product of a gap made present, considers the gap between two social projects, between concept and material and between present and future forms of commitment. In writing from the gap this PhD suggests a consideration of the role of anthropology itself in the consideration of the 'other'.

The outside 'other' also has a vacillatory position, it simultaneously must be the substance that we are not, that is, it must always be not life. It simultaneously must be unseen and yet known about, present but absent. Lefi was banished but was morally good. As soon as it is made visible it acquires a relation and an ethics. This demands that it accounted for and brought in, otherwise the project, like democracy - that must include - collapses. This results in a constant shifting of the outside, like from Lefi, to the giant. This outside, always half known, shifting and shadowy is what constitutes us. The other is always on the limits of the knowable, to bring it *in* shifts it elsewhere. The continuing engagement of anthropology in the 'other' aims to obviate who we are, the other is the way to apply the assumed universal rule with an obviation in order to create a gap via the involution. The potential to obviate the normative assumptions of late liberal society, to listen to the other speak, lies squarely in our dealings with the other, not the other on the outside, nor the one on the inside but the other on the threshold.

This position, my anthropology on the threshold, between the ASP – Seething, vacillating on both arrows in the involution, offers ways in which new light can be shed

on forms of authority, how moral projects endure and with it how the uneven distributions of life and death, prosperity and suffering endure or change. The 'we', the people, as an idealised point that must be moved towards demands an 'other'. This 'other' sets the terms of what can and cannot happen, of moral conduct and order and the distribution of ethics. Life is not only lived but also is closed down. 'Love which cannot be bound' is the conundrum here and it finds its limits in the 'other'. In writing from the gap I conceive of Anthropology as a mechanism to unpack how light is or is not shone onto that which is considered ethical substance. As both Seething and the ASP, as projects, push on in their various forms of making the world better I hope to have contributed to the pushing forward of a vibrant anthropology that considers not only life as lived, but the conditions and costs of that life, that is the ethical substance of being alive today. I hope I have fulfilled my brief of contributing to knowledge of how life in the suburbs is lived and the role of the materiality of the suburbs. More than that, I offer an anthropological obviation through a thesis that plays in the gaps and moves on the transfers of the involution. I hope you found parts of it stupid as much funny as revealing and as such I hope it offers potentials to re-align to obviate, to think and think again through the constantly emerging voices of those we encounter out there and in ourselves as we involute.

Postscript

Towards the end of my time writing this PhD a new Seething legend was also being written. There was a problem in the original Seething tale. Here the ancient village of Seething existed in a pre-Seething state, that is, the selfish, greedy Seethinger did not adequately know how to love the other. Pre-Seething was a dystopian village of hyper individualism, full of monadic busy people, ignorant of the other people around them, only looking out for themselves and so on. These people, being selfish as they were, excluded anyone or thing that was different to themselves. Lefi Ganderson, being half-boy, half-goat and looking different was the symbol of this exclusion. However, Lefi, and the pre-social innocent children who befriended and helped him, were able to teach Seething a lesson. Through ridding the village of the terror of Thamas, the giant, Lefi was able to teach the Seethingers to love, the outsider, the other, for they hold the warmth of humanity, even though they are only half human, look so different and may not appear 'like us'.

This tale is written in books, told at schools and most famously is the central story of the annual Seething parade. Thamas the giant fronts the parade, terrorising and interrupting the everyday suburban scene that lies in its path. Cars slow, people turn away from their shopping and look, take pictures and ask, 'what is going on'. Behind the giant a tail of 500-800 people walk, carrying puppets, giant cheeses, bats and all manner of Seething related items. People are invited to join in, to participate, it is the wondering, the oddness, the openness, the gap of what this could mean that draws people in and it gets them involved. Every year, at the end of the parade, people begin to boo the giant as he is about to be defeated by Lefi Ganderson.

Now to the problem. When the story was first penned it was dedicated to a new born child, Millie, the daughter of a prominent Seethinger. Now five years old, Millie has grown up with the Seething story and told me that "Thamas is my friend" as she pointed to sandpit and explained that this was actually a footprint he left when he was banished. Millie, who became upset when people booed Thamas during the parade, would ask her parents to make the adults 'stop'.

Here again the child, innocent of social norms, was telling the community to accept Thamas but this time not in a tale. Suddenly the Seethingers could see that they had acted towards Thamas in an un-Seething way. Millie had made this ethical relation present and visible and as such created a paradox, the constitutive outside is supposed to be just that, outside, whilst the ideal was of total inclusion. A new story was penned through a group meeting in the pub. It was decided that Thamas was not really evil, but rather he was misunderstood. Thamas, they wrote, was from a broken home, his parents treated him badly, his brothers left him and so on and this is why he was angry. During the writing of the story people talked of the London riots of 2011. During these riots people took to the streets, looted shops, burnt houses and shops and took things without paying for them. The group made the analogy that, like the 'kids' in the riot Thamas had no part of being Seething, he had reached what Slavoj Zizek (2012) calls a symbolic deadlock, in which Thamas had no way of acting out what is expected of him by the prevailing ideology. He could not be Seethinger as he was the very outside that was needed to have 'the good life' on the inside. This disjuncture produces an excess of the outside position which inevitably results in a violent act, here Thamas destroys the mountain but in doing so also kills himself. He is erased.

In contextualising the history of Thamas, Seethingers break the symbolic deadlock and the love of Seething can spread to him, he can come in, he can be included[234]. In so doing the parents of Thamas, who treated him badly, now become the outside. We know little about them other than they are not Seething, they are the outside, the shadowy other, from where Thamas came. During the writing of this thesis the constitutive outside had moved up another scale from Lefi to Thamas, and now from Thamas to his parents.

I wonder why they are so different?

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[234] The fact that he is dead is worked around through the presence of his brothers, stories of forgiveness and non-linier time, which is possible in stories, although at the time of writing this is still being worked out.

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Appendix 1:

Methodology

The methodology for the thesis appears as an appendix as the main body of the thesis is the transfer within the involution. The methodology must remain outside of this to remain coherent as a methodology, which is the scientific method through which the involution was produced.

I used a range of methods in gathering data, however throughout all approaches I maintained an ethnographic approach in that all methods, from archive research to map building. This enabled a reflexive position of an embodied performance of knowledge building and working within different "infrastructures of certainty" (Castriadis 1987). Outputs of the research process extend beyond the production of the thesis. I contributed significantly to the development of data for the ASP much of which does not appear but can be found in other publications (Dhanani & Jeevendrampillai 2012; Jeevendrampillai et al 2012a; 2012b). I also conceived of a continuing engagement with my non-academic informants as an ethical commitment to their project which, on the threshold of academic knowledge's, looked to work with the academy. I have helped advise a number of MA Anthropology with the Seethingers. There have been two public events in the department. "Ethnographer meets Ethnographed" saw the community telling anthropologists their experience of anthropological engagement. "The Story of Seething" was a open lecture about an exhibition held in the department where the Seething stories, and the anthropology of Seething was explained through comparison with UCL's material culture collection. The lecture enabled a discussion as to the role of material culture anthropology illuminating both Seething and material culture anthropology in new ways for all involved. Lectures, talks and walks also occurred through the Free University of Seething which also linked up with Kingston University for a number of seminars. These engagements were through both FUS and UCL, funded by the UCL Beacon Bursary. Going forward I will continue to work with the community on museum and exhibition ideas through the London Mayors Fund. In

regards to the ASP, I have worked with them in conference proceedings, radio interviews and the production of academic papers.

The Methodology for the PhD consisted of over two years doing fieldwork as this was extended into the academic work of the ASP. In all I conceived of 18 months of ethnographic work with Seethingers, 3 months with the South Norwood Tourist Board and 24 months ethnographic work with the ASP. I gave myself a fieldwork cut-off date in regard to data for the thesis for methodological clarity, however contact remained.

ASP & Technical Work

Working closely with ASP members, I was involved in the decisions and data selctions outlined in chapter 2 through the bi weekly meetings. Specifically I sourced the historic maps for the periods 1870, 1915, 1960 from EDINA, an online database of map tiles. These were then loaded into a GIS (geographical Information System) platform over which information from historic business directories records were added. This involved finding records through local archive services and entering the data into tabulated form. This data was then converted again into spatialized 'dots' which would enable the geolocation of the data in relation to the historic maps. The GIS visualisation allowed a movement between layers of data including data produced by other members of the team. The technical process was seen as a development of similar techniques of historical GIS and took between six to eight months (See Griffiths et al 2010; Schlichtman & Patch 2008; Shaw 2009; see also appendix a). This was overlaid over the space syntax analysis to gain an understanding of how movement potentials and land use practices relate over time. The software used for this involved ArcGIS, which required some training, as did the development of databases and data storage systems.

Simultaneously work was undertaken on the development of the Community Map through basic coding and user testing. This map is available online via the Adaptable Suburbs website[235]. A Seething map was also developed which required a different skill set as well as some self-training in film editing and web coding using CSS code[236]. This enabled a form of Oral History gathering (see Nevins 2010)

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[235] http://www.ucl.ac.uk/adaptablesuburbs/community_maps.
[236] http://www.communitymaps.org.uk/Test/index.html

Initial field visits to all 26 areas in the ASP allowed a familiarity and engagement with the suburbs of London (see Seamon 2007). I would also regularly visit other suburbs in relation to other work done on the ASP. The ASP project involved regular communication with the planning and urban design community usually through project blogs and use of social media[237] as well an annual 'Advisory Board' meeting which steer the research to enable a cross over into public policy.

Archive work

Frequent trips to Local Studies Achieves and analysis of historical materials (see Appendix ii) such as press cuttings, photographs maps, local studies packs and unpublished written word on the area provided historic detail. This also informed a deep understanding of the histories of the material built environment which enabled ethnographic context. This was also enabled through working with local historical groups, artists and active groups in the areas during early fieldwork (see Papailias 2005; Dirks 2002; Pearce 1995).

Local enthusiasts, regular users and staff became familiar my research and connections were made through such avenues. Frequent trip to archives were done alone, for the ASP, usually detailing business directory records. Significant trips were made with Seethingers in order to research the Surbiton area for the FUS walks. This also enabled me to help with FoSW objection information and engage with local historians in the production of a new book on the area. On trips with informants I would observe what they looked for in the archive, taking an ethnographic approach (see Marshall 2011), other times I would conduct historical research myself in order to gain context on the information arising in the ethnography.

Ethnographic Participants

Once I had spent some time in Surbiton it was clear that the Seething was the locus for regular community that were based around a common care for the local area and

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formed a distinct moral project. Through deep 'hanging out' (see Jupp 2007; 2008) over 18 months, I grew familiar with the events from planning to the effect it had on people. Through volunteering my time I was able to meet the vast majority of my informants. Upon asking initial permissions I was invited to do a 'lecture' in the local pub to which around 50 people attended. This gave rise to the Free University of Seething which provided a useful mechanism for regular contact with informants and a structure to the more pro-active elements of my ethnography.

Apart from 'hanging out' I conducted around 15 walking interviews each around 2 hours each which enabled a more personal insight into people's engagement with the material built environment. These were recorded via Dictaphone (see Anderson 2004).

Around 13 informants also completed walking diaries. These were a written record of the walks they did around the area that reflected the thoughts and relationships they engendered whilst alone. One diary was completed every three months for a year. Whilst much of the detail did not appear in the thesis the process enabled a deeper understanding of the emotional relationship people may have with their local area which informed chapters 4 & 5.

A series of one on one interviews were also conducted were I asked informants to draw their local area and talk me through the drawing. This elicited an annotated memory map of peoples relationship to place. In all I conducted around 20 semi-structured interviews 10 of which were with maps. My background in arts development, event production and experience as an urban walking artist helped with the conception and development of these processes.

Ethics

Given the nature of the events it wasn't always possible to inform everyone that I was an anthropologist however the Free University of Seething went beyond simply telling people but further allowed people to shape the form of my reseach. I was in effect supervised by Seethingers (see Cook et al 2001) and awarded a PhD in the Summer of 2014. This requires a consideration of authorship (see Anderson et al 2010).

Any information recorded was always done so with consent. For the purposes of anonmimity I have annonimosed the names of informants and on occasions

disagrigated one informant into two or more to minimise infered identification. I have used quotation marks around ethnogrpahic text but not around theoretical text, I have done this in block quotes as at times I have taken theoretical academic text as ethnographic text in this thesis. As stated above many of my informants have been following my writing stage and have advisd on this period also. This was unexpected but welcomed. All data has been stored seculurly.

Appendix 2:

A map of Seething Legends with a local cycle route.