



# Heterotopia and the City

Public space in a postcivil society

Edited by

**Michiel Dehaene &  
Lieven De Cauter**

# Heterotopia and the City

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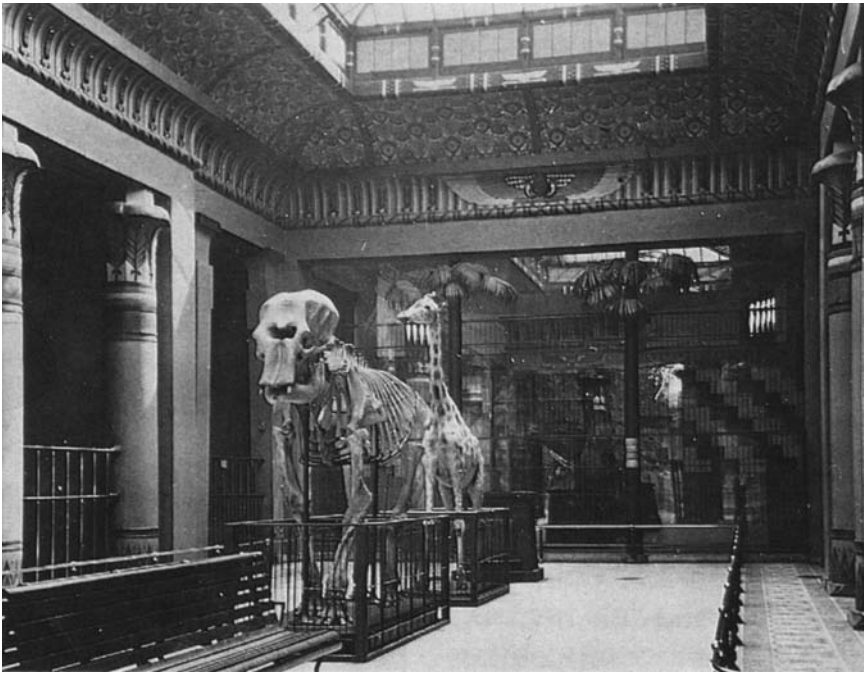
Heterotopia, literally meaning ‘other places’, is a rich concept in urban design that describes a world off-center with respect to normal or everyday spaces, one that possesses multiple, fragmented, or even incompatible meanings. The term has had an impact on architectural and urban theory since it was coined by Foucault in the late 1960s but has remained a source of confusion and debate since. *Heterotopia and the City* seeks to clarify this concept and investigates the heterotopias which exist throughout our contemporary world: in museums, theme parks, malls, holiday resorts, gated communities, wellness hotels, and festival markets.

The book combines theoretical contributions on the concept of heterotopia, including a new translation of Foucault’s influential 1967 text, *Of Other Spaces*, with a series of critical case studies that probe a range of (post-) urban transformations, from the ‘mall’ of the *agora*, through the ‘gating’ of dwelling, to the ‘theming’ of urban renewal. Wastelands and *terrains vagues* are explored as sites of promise and resistance in a section on urban activism and transgression. The reader gets a glimpse of the extremes of our dualized, postcivil condition through case studies on Jakarta, Dubai, and Kinshasa.

*Heterotopia and the City* provides a collective effort to reposition heterotopia as a crucial concept for contemporary urban theory and redirects the current debate on the privatization of public space. The book will be of interest to all those wishing to understand the city in the emerging postcivil society. Planners, architects, cultural theorists, urbanists, and academics will find this a valuable contribution to current critical argument.

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The Egyptian temple of the Antwerp Zoo, 1857 (photograph: c.1903), with the skeleton of its first inhabitant, the elephant Jacqueline.

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Michel Foucault, ‘Des espaces autres’, © Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1994.

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In memory of 'Silencio' Sanchez,  
who gave history an entirely new meaning



# Contents

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<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>I</b>
Heterotopia in a postcivil society	3
MICHEL DEHAENE AND LIEVEN DE CAUTER	
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>Heterotopology: ‘a science in the making’</b>	<b>II</b>
Of other spaces (1967)	13
MICHEL FOUCAULT	
Heterotopia: an ecology	31
JAMES D. FAUBION	
Heterotopia: anamnesis of a medical term	41
HEIDI SOHN	
<b>PART 2</b>	
<b>Heterotopia revisited</b>	<b>51</b>
The many mirrors of Foucault and their architectural reflections	53
M. CHRISTINE BOYER	
Heterotopias of difference	75
MARCO CENZATTI	



The space of play: towards a general theory of heterotopia	87
--	----

LIEVEN DE CAUTER AND MICHIEL DEHAENE

**PART 3**

<b>The mall as <i>agora</i> – the <i>agora</i> as mall</b>	<b>103</b>
--	------------

Heterotopia of the theme park street	105
--------------------------------------	-----

KATHLEEN KERN

Between shopping malls and <i>agoras</i> : a French history of ‘protected public space’	117
---	-----

CLÉMENT ORILLARD

‘A kind of instinct’: the cinematic mall as heterotopia	137
---	-----

DOUGLAS MUZZIO AND JESSICA MUZZIO-RENTAS

**PART 4**

<b>Dwelling in a postcivil society</b>	<b>151</b>
--	------------

The gated community as heterotopia	153
------------------------------------	-----

SETHA LOW

A master-planned community as heterotopia: The Villages, Florida	165
--	-----

HUGH BARTLING

The ‘institutionalization’ of heterotopias in Singapore	179
---	-----

XAVIER GUILLOT

**PART 5**

<b><i>Terrains vagues</i>: transgression and urban activism</b>	<b>189</b>
---	------------

Public-space heterotopias: heterotopias of masculinity along the Tel Aviv shoreline	191
---	-----

YAEL ALLWEIL AND RACHEL KALLUS

‘... those marvellous empty zones on the edge of our cities’: heterotopia and the ‘dead zone’	203
---	-----

GIL DORON

Stalker <i>unbounded</i> : urban activism and the <i>terrain vague</i> as heterotopia by default	215
PETER LANG	
<b>PART 6</b>	
<b>Heterotopia in the splintering metropolis</b>	<b>225</b>
‘Rubbing the magic lamp’: heterotopian strategies in London’s eastern City fringe	227
MAUREEN HEYNS	
Flow Urbanism: the heterotopia of flows	247
LEE STICKELLS	
Heterotopias of illusion: from Beaubourg to Bilbao and beyond	259
D. GRAHAME SHANE	
<b>PART 7</b>	
<b>Heterotopia after the <i>polis</i></b>	<b>273</b>
The heterotopian divide in Jakarta: constructing discourse, constructing space	275
ROBERT COWHERD	
Dubai offshore urbanism	287
ALESSANDRO PETTI	
‘Dead society’ in a ‘cemetery city’: the transformation of burial rites in Kinshasa	297
FILIP DE BOECK	
<b>Afterthoughts</b>	<b>309</b>
Heterotopia unfolded?	311
HILDE HEYNEN	
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	325
<i>Illustration credits</i>	329
<i>Index</i>	333



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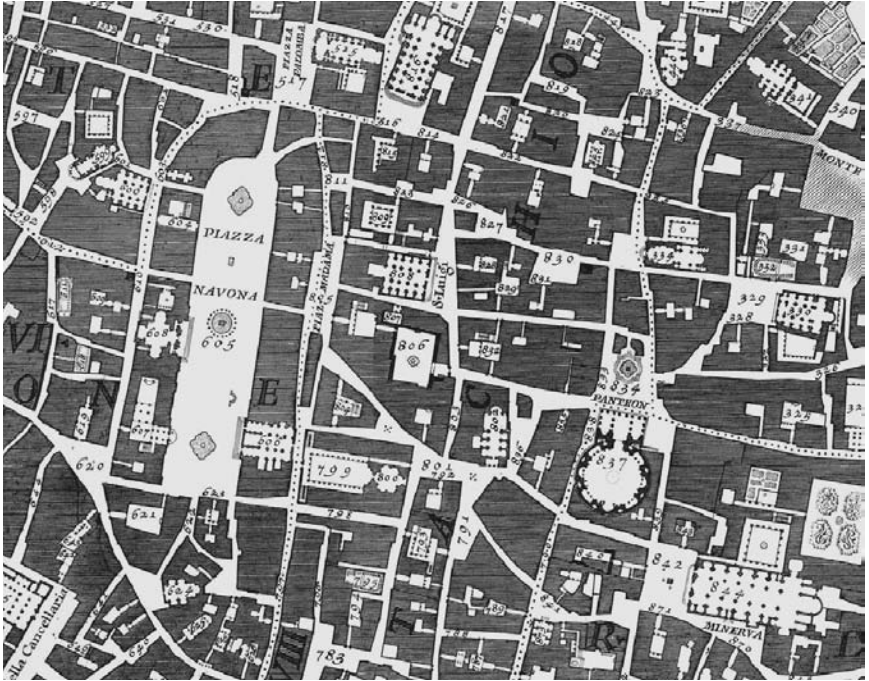
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# Introduction

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Fragment of the 18th century Map of Rome by Giambattista Nolli (1748) with the churches of Borromini prominently surrounding the Piazza Navona, the Pantheon a bit further to the east. The church interiors are drawn as cavities within the solid built mass of the city, making for an elegant visual expression of the ambiguous status of these 'sacred' spaces that defy easy categorization within the private-public/black-white binary logic of the map. The Piazza Navona was built on the vestiges of a stadium, the circus of Emperor Domitian, which demonstrates that heterotopias can over time develop into public spaces.

# Heterotopia in a postcivil society

Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter

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The last decades of the twentieth century produced a vigorous debate in architecture and urbanism on the transformation of public space: on the one hand discourses that lamented the ‘end of public space’ (e.g. Sorkin 1992) and, on the other, contrasting opinions that advocated new forms of public space located in private spaces for collective use (shopping malls or sports centres) or in alternative spaces such as wastelands or parking lots (e.g. Chase *et al.* 1999). Some authors voiced warnings against the alarming developments in society at large, which seemed to threaten the basic assumptions on which democracy and the welfare state are founded, while others tended to take a more optimistic position in accepting the challenge to design for new programmes in the realm of leisure, sports, shopping or transportation.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, in the face of the war on terror, global warming as a planetary disaster and the obscene spreading of poverty turning our world into a ‘planet of slums’ (Davis 2006), this debate and the terms under which it was conducted increasingly sound like a requiem for a civil culture. The concomitant proliferation of urban studies, and discussions on such vague notions as ‘urbanity’ – the celebrated attribute of metropolitan life – seem to accompany the difficult farewell of an urban civilization and the brutal awakening to the emergence (and emergencies) of a postcivil society – a term we gratefully borrow from Frederic Jameson (1990). This requiem for the city, the lament of public space, placed the public–private dichotomy at centre stage, but has at the same time worn out its analytical force. The contemporary transformation of the city displays a profound redrawing of the contours of public and private space, bringing to the fore an equally treacherous and fertile ground of conditions that are not merely hybrid, but rather defy an easy description in these terms. It is on this treacherous terrain that Foucault’s notion of *heterotopia* can shed a new light. The concept seems to offer the opportunity to both recapitulate and redirect the ongoing debate.

Michel Foucault introduced the term ‘heterotopia’ in a lecture for architects in 1967, pointing to various institutions and places that interrupt



the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary everyday space. Because they inject alterity into the sameness, the commonplace, the topicality of everyday society, Foucault called these places ‘hetero-topias’ – literally ‘other places’. When we review all the examples mentioned – the school, military service, the honeymoon, old people’s homes, psychiatric institutions, prisons, cemeteries, theatres and cinemas, libraries and museums, fairs and carnivals, holiday camps, hamams, saunas, motels, brothels, the Jesuit colonies and the ship – we get an idea of the vastness of the concept. But one also gets the feeling that it lacks definition and is perhaps too encompassing. The term ‘heterotopia’, since it entered architectural and urban theory in the late 1960s – more as a rumour than as a codified concept, for the lecture remained unpublished until 1984 – has been a source of inspiration in urban and architectural theory, but also one of confusion. The task of this book is to try and clarify the concept somewhat. We see heterotopia as being at a crossroads of the conceptual flight lines that shape public space today:

*The reinvention of the everyday: the ordinary and the extraordinary.* The reinvention of the discourse on the everyday, largely coinciding with the English translation of Lefebvre and de Certeau, is inspired by a discontent both with the elitism of contemporary neo-avant-garde architecture and with the shameless commercialization of popular culture. At the same time, the discourse on the everyday is an attempt to counter Foucault’s emphasis on the extraordinary by mapping the vital potentialities of the ordinary (McLeod 1996). The question to be asked, however, is whether the discourse on the everyday does not remain an aestheticization of urbanity and whether any attempt towards an ‘architecture of the everyday’ or ‘everyday urbanism’ (Chase *et al.* 1999) does not merely reinforce the ever more encompassing simulation of normality. Or, in other words, can the everyday of today survive outside heterotopia?

*The privatization of public space: ‘oikos’ versus ‘agora’.* While often particularly exclusive, heterotopias belong to the inclusive character of the *polis*. The *polis* – the ideal of the city-state – tries to realize the good life via equilibrium between *oikos* (private sphere, household, hence economy) and *agora* (public sphere, the place of politics). ‘Economization’ is the erosion of the distinction between these constitutive terms of the *polis*, as is clear in the term ‘privatization’. It is a sure sign of a crisis of ‘politics’. The rise of the term ‘governance’ instead of ‘government’ is a symptom of this crisis, and ‘management’ its apologetics. In this context the evident embrace of the language of governance within urbanist discourse appears far less innocent. In the ‘postcivil society’, the heterotopia resurfaces as a strategy to reclaim places of otherness on the inside of an economized ‘public’ life.

*The rise of the network society: place and non-place.* Foucault’s concept opened up a new field – an insight into a simultaneously archaic and modern way of organizing space. In the introduction to his lecture, Foucault evoked a history of space and pointed explicitly to the rise of network space: after

the hierarchical space of the Middle Ages and the space of Cartesian extension in early modernity, the third stage is the 'space of emplacement', the grid, the network. One could venture to say that today Foucault's analysis reaches its obvious conclusion. Within network space, heterotopia has to a large extent changed its function. Rather than interrupting normality, heterotopias now realize or simulate a common experience of place. Because of its special nature, heterotopia is the opposite of the *non-place* (the famous concept coined by Marc Augé). Today heterotopia, from theme park to festival market, realizes 'places to be' in the non-place urban realm of Castells' 'space of flows' (De Cauter 2004: 59–63). In other words, heterotopia embodies the tension between place and non-place that today reshapes the nature of public space.

*The postcivil society: heterotopia versus camp.* Besides the proliferation of heterotopias that provided normality in the (atopic) network space, we now see a proliferation of camp-like situations. The camp properly speaking is, according to Giorgio Agamben, not an extension of the law like the prison, but rather a space that is extraterritorial to the law – a space where the law is suspended (Agamben 1998). While the encampment emerges out of the nature-state and moves towards the city, and therefore fulfils a proto-political role, the camp marks the disintegration of society in the state of exception. The camp is, in other words, the situation in which the division between private and public is suspended. It is the space where the city is annihilated and the citizen reduced to 'bare life'. Today, more and more people are exposed to the conditions of bare life: the homeless, illegal immigrants, the inhabitants of slums. From military camps via refugee camps and from labour camps to detention centres and secret prisons, the camp is the grimmest symptom of a postcivil urbanism, which follows the disintegration of the state.<sup>1</sup> Heterotopia, so we argue, is the opposite of the camp and could be a counterstrategy to the proliferation of camps and the spread of the exposure to the conditions of bare life.

All these conceptual polarities determine heterotopia and make it crucial to understand the urban reality of today. In our contemporary world heterotopia is everywhere. Museums, theme parks, malls, holiday resorts, wellness hotels, festival markets – the entire city is becoming 'heterotopian'. Heterotopia has, indeed, become very obvious and central in our society. This central position of heterotopian space is not new. Most of Foucault's examples are important institutions of the city: the graveyard, the museum, the library, the theatre, the fair. This centrality is most elegantly represented on Nolli's famous map – a representation of Rome in the eighteenth century: the churches of Borromini prominently surrounding the Piazza Navona, with the Pantheon a bit further to the east.

The Nolli map figures on the cover of this book for yet another reason: the black and white contrast of the original map is a graphically eloquent representation of the description of the city in terms of the public–private

binary opposition. The interior spaces that have been drawn as white appear on the map as part of the continuous matrix of urban public spaces, and have been conventionally interpreted as an extension of the outdoor public spaces. This reading misses an essential point. The interior spaces that are left white – the churches – are not public or private, but heterotopian. What this map so eloquently shows is the necessary connection and partial overlap between public space and heterotopian space. Heterotopian spaces are necessarily collective or shared spaces. Their heterotopian character, as Foucault clearly explained in his fifth principle, was contingent upon a precise mechanism of opening and closing. That closing means excluding the public, a delineation of otherness and a closure vis-à-vis public space, while the opening is an opening unto the public domain.

The observation of the centrality and semi-public character of heterotopia runs counter to the dominant treatment of the concept within architectural circles, which have often understood it as synonymous with the marginal, interstitial, subliminal spaces that, by their eccentric position, defy the reigning logic of a dominant culture. In this common interpretation, we believe, the essential function of heterotopia within the city is obscured.

In placing the emphasis on the centrality of heterotopia in the contemporary urban condition, however, we have to overcome an equally problematic pitfall that travellers in heterotopia have to face: when putting on heterotopian spectacles, everything tends to take on heterotopian traits. The following axiom, therefore, has been our guide: not everything is a heterotopia. At stake is to find out whether the concept of heterotopia could be made consistent or whether it should, on the contrary, be given up altogether because its vagueness has only brought confusion and continues to do so.

The book is structured in seven parts of three chapters each.

*Part 1: Heterotopology: 'a science in the making'.* The book opens with a new and annotated translation of the text that is its prime source of inspiration: Michel Foucault's 'Of other spaces'. In his radio talk of 1966, which was the embryo of the text, he dreamt of 'a science in the making', *heterotopology*, which would be concerned with the study of 'other spaces' (Foucault 2004). James Faubion's contribution situates this (for Foucault) rather atypical essay within its biographical and historical context. Heidi Sohn focuses on the reception history of the (in origin) medical concept and ventures to reread the term from the viewpoint of its appearance in *The Order of Things*, a book that was published a year before the text was written.

*Part 2: Heterotopia revisited.* The chapters of the second part present a commentary on Foucault's concept in light of its contemporary relevance

to a discussion on architecture, the city and public space. What constitutes the otherness of these other spaces? What is their role in society and their place in the city? Heterotopia appears to be open to very different readings: a first perspective retraces within the oeuvre of Foucault heterotopia's representational, mirroring role and goes on to speculate about its consequences for the production of architecture, finding in the *Exodus* project by OMA a rare but pertinent example (Christine Boyer); a second approach situates heterotopia in the tradition of de Certeau and Lefebvre, in the subliminal, infra-political margins (Marco Cenzatti); and a third reading views it as a central, if often 'eccentric', institution of the *polis* (De Caeter and Dehaene).

*Part 3: The mall as agora – The agora as mall.* The mall has clear heterotopian characteristics. However, in spite of all its phantasmagorical qualities, the mall seems profoundly embedded in everyday culture, in the commodification of everything, the reproduction of conformity and consumerism, rather than being a celebration of alterity. In the different contributions of this part, heterotopia appears as a helpful concept to understand the mall as a newly emerging (semi-)public space type, supporting old and new practices of public life. Kathleen Kern focuses on a case where the street, the mall and the theme park merge. Clément Orillard investigates the mall as paradigm for public space in the French post-war New Towns. Douglas Muzzio and his daughter Jessica look at the mall in its most phantasmagorical version: the mall in the movies.

*Part 4: Dwelling in a postcivil society.* Home is the place of everyday life. Today, however, the private sphere, the place of intimacy and invisibility, is changing: there is a deep-rooted logic of gating and fortressing in our society, caused by the sharp dualization of society, the fear that comes with it, and a tendency towards individualism and social distinction (Setha Low). Gating as social defence, however, is redressed with the attributes of Disneyfication: themed holiday living (Hugh Bartling). Beyond the well-known phenomenon of gated communities, we see the rise of all-in heterotopias – of, for example, the themed condominiums in Singapore (Xavier Guillot). In a society in which the icons of leisure hide a neo-liberal work ethos, it seems inevitable that dwelling takes on heterotopian overtones – paradoxically at the moment when home becomes for an increasing number of people a workplace.

*Part 5: Terrains vagues: transgressions and urban activism.* Following the sociology of Lefebvre, the activist practices of the Situationists, the Bataillan notion of transgression and the social critique of Michel de Certeau, the contributions in this part look for heterotopia in the margins, in the *terrains vagues*, the zones, the wastelands, the urban voids. The authors focus on that dimension of heterotopia that resists representation: its subliminal side.

In the case study of the Tel Aviv shoreline, Yael Allweil and Rachel Kallus explore heterotopia's potential as a 'pocket of resistance'. Gil Doron's contribution on the *terrain vague* and the 'dead zone' and 'transgressive architecture' insists on the categorical distinction between heterotopian spaces in which otherness is positively affirmed and those spaces on the margin, where a dominant code has been relaxed or partly effaced. In the chapter on Stalker, Peter Lang, himself a member of the group, argues that the tradition of artistic urban activism has a new relevance in the context of global mass migration.

*Part 6: Heterotopia in the splintering metropolis.* Integral urbanism was an attempt to control the tools for welfare within the state under the aegis of the plan. In the network society, 'splintering urbanism' has to rely on the creation of heterotopias to sustain its integrating gesture. Heterotopia holds the promise of a city in which the other is accommodated – a city of plurality and heterogeneity. The chapters in this part investigate the possibilities of 'a heterotopian urbanism'. This is well represented in Maureen Heyns' case study of London's eastern fringe. According to Lee Stickells, network society has produced a new heterotopia: the heterotopia of flows. D. Grahame Shane shows how art institutions have proved to be almost magic levers to revitalize entire neighbourhoods, from Beaubourg to Bilbao, but they seem to become, as Baudrillard pointed out early on, simulations of the third kind.

*Part 7: Heterotopia after the polis.* The contributions in the last part try to tackle the place and function of heterotopia in the postcivil society – a society that embraces its own brutality. The cases show samples of heterotopias in the megacities of the 'Global South'. In Robert Cowherd's case of Jakarta we see the ways in which the heterotopian logic of the colonial order serves in refashioned form as an excellent support for the reproduction of the asymmetrical power relations and social dualism that structure the city. In Alessandro Petti's case of the grandiose, grotesque offshore urbanism in Dubai, heterotopia appears as part of an archipelago of well-connected and privileged islands – as opposed to the labour camps in which those who build this artificial paradise live. Here the theme of camp and bare life becomes visible as a counterpart to high-security heterotopia. The last case by Filip De Boeck is the grimmest: the graveyard taken over by youth gangs in the totally dysfunctional city of Kinshasa – a disintegrating society in an imploded state: 'heterotopia after the polis'.

To close, we make space for some *Afterthoughts* (Hilde Heynen). With this wide-ranging book, which brings together theoretical pieces and concrete case studies written by both established scholars and young researchers, we hope to have contributed not only to an assessment and repositioning

of heterotopia as a crucial concept for contemporary urban theory, but also to the current debate on the transformation of the city at the dawn of the new millenium.

## Note

- 1 We intend to make a book on camps as a second volume in this heterotopia project, to be followed eventually by a third volume in which heterotopia and camp merge in the global context of the new spatial order. Although the camp is not at all the focal point of this book, it provides a point of reference for some chapters.

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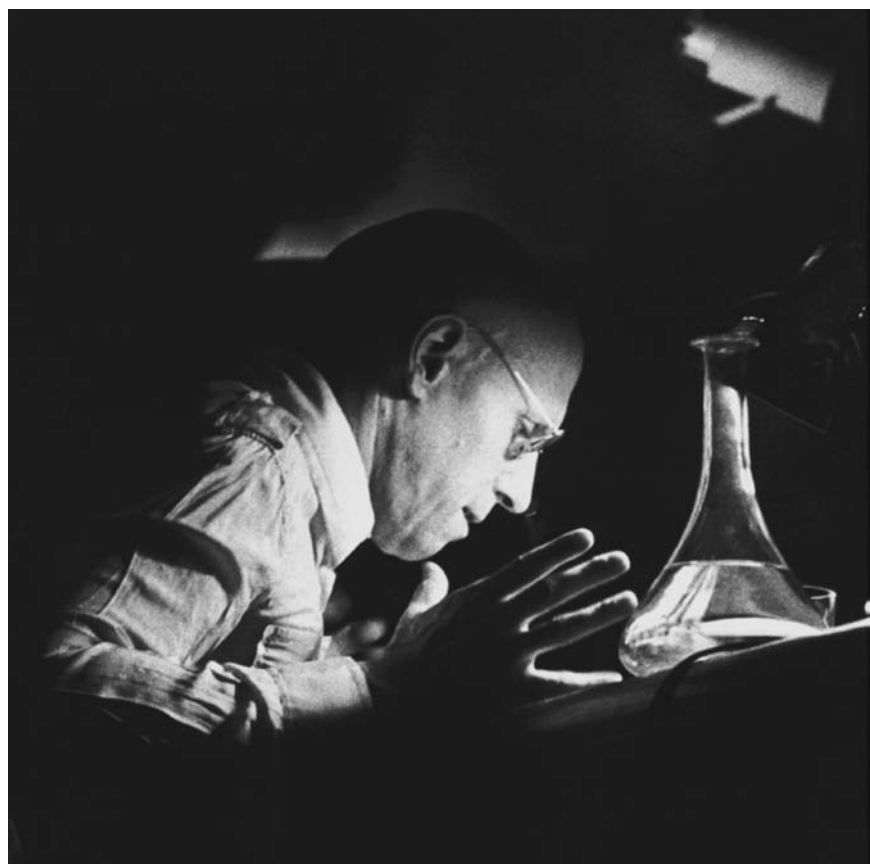
Part I

# Heterotopology

‘A science in the making’

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# Of other spaces\* (1967)

Michel Foucault

(translated by Lieven De Cauter and Michiel Dehaene)

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This text, entitled ‘Des espaces autres’ – the point of departure of this book – was a lecture given by Michel Foucault on 14 March 1967 to the Cercle d’études architecturales (Circle of Architectural Studies). From 1960 to 1970 the circle was directed by Jean Dubuisson and Ionel Schein, two important figures in French post-war architecture. It was Schein who invited Foucault to speak after hearing his address on ‘France Culture’ of 7 December 1966 on heterotopias: ‘Les Hétérotopies’ (Foucault 2004a and 2004b). In this radio talk, part of a series on literature and utopia, Foucault adopts the tone of an old traveller telling children amusing stories about the marvellous places he has visited. The lecture for the Cercle d’études architecturales was written during a stay in Sidi-Bou-Saïd, Tunisia, where he had fled to escape the commotion stirred by the publication of *Les Mots et les choses*. It was a setting that perfectly complemented the light, lyrical tone of the radio talk (Defert 2004). All lectures at the circle were noted down by a stenographer and the typed record distributed to the members of the circle. The rumour of heterotopia spread through these transcripts. The text however was not published for almost 20 years, although excerpts were printed in the Italian journal *l’Architettura* in 1968. The fact that it was based on a radio talk as well as the atmosphere of fantasy in it help to explain why both the concept and the text remained as if forgotten by Foucault till late in his life (Defert 2004). Although not reviewed for publication by the author, the manuscript was released into the public domain with the consent of Foucault shortly before his death for the Internationale Bau-Austellung Berlin (Foucault 1984a). As the theme was the renovation and even reunification of Berlin, heterotopia proved in retrospect to be the right concept. Heterotopias, like museums, cultural centres, libraries and media centres, have been the ultimate levers for urban renewal ever since. The text was finally published by the French journal *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* in October 1984 as ‘Des espaces autres. Une conférence inédite de Michel Foucault’ (Foucault 1984b). Two years later, in 1986, the text was published in English (in *Diacritics* and in *Lotus*: Foucault 1986a, 1986b). Now it is part of the posthumous edition *Dits et écrits* (Foucault 2001). The text is based on the transcript of the lecture that was made and circulated by the Cercle d’études architecturales. This explains the spoken character of the text and the loose punctuation (which was changed in the final

publication in *Dits et écrits*). Our translation steers a precarious course between the three existing (fine but imperfect) translations: (1) the translation by Jay Miskowiec, which appeared in *Diacritics* and is available online (Foucault 1986a); (2) the translation that appeared in *Lotus* and was reprinted in Neil Leach (ed.) *Rethinking Architecture* (Foucault 1986b, 1997); and (3) the translation by Robert Hurley, which appeared in James Faubion (ed.) *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: Essential Writing of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume II* (Foucault 1998). To enhance transparency and in order to make Foucault’s voice and style of thinking audible, we have tried to translate as literally as possible. We believe in Benjamin’s idea that ‘the task of the translator’ is not to make the French read as if it were English, but rather to give the English a French flavour – in order to reveal both of them as fragments of the complete language (Benjamin 1923). Above all, we have tried to be as precise as possible on technical terms. In endnotes we supply background information, signal problems and give theoretical context (the three existing translations will be referred to as Miskowiec, *Lotus* and Hurley).

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The great haunting obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: themes of development and stagnation, themes of crisis and cycle, themes of the accumulation of the past, the big surplus of the dead and the menacing cooling of the world.<sup>1</sup> It is in the second principle of thermodynamics that the nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources.<sup>2</sup> The present epoch would perhaps rather be the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a great life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.<sup>3</sup> One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present-day polemics take place between the pious descendants of time and the fierce inhabitants of space. Structuralism, or at least that which is grouped under this slightly too general name, is the effort to establish, between elements that could have been distributed over time, an ensemble of relations that makes them appear as juxtaposed, opposed, implicated by each other, in short, that makes them appear as a sort of configuration. Actually, this does not entail a denial of time; it is a certain manner of treating what is called time and what is called history.<sup>4</sup>

Yet it is necessary to point out that the space that appears today on the horizon of our concerns, of our theory, of our systems, is not an innovation. In the experience of the West, space itself has a history; and it is not possible to disregard this fatal intersection of time with space. One could say, by

way of retracing very roughly this history of space, that in the Middle Ages it was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places, protected places and open spaces without defence, urban places and rural places (so far for the real life of humans). For cosmological theory, there were the super-celestial places as opposed to the celestial, and the celestial place was in turn opposed to the terrestrial place. There were the places where things found themselves placed because they had been violently displaced, and then, on the contrary, the places where things found their emplacement and natural rest. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space: the space of localization.

This space of localization opened up with Galileo, for the real scandal of Galileo's work is not so much his discovery, or rediscovery, that the earth revolved around the sun, but his constitution of an infinite and infinitely open space. In such a space the place of the Middle Ages found itself dissolved as it were; the place of a thing was nothing but a point in its movement, just as the rest of a thing was only its movement indefinitely slowed down. In other words, starting with Galileo, starting with the seventeenth century, extension supplanted localization.<sup>5</sup>

Today the emplacement<sup>6</sup> substitutes extension, which itself had replaced localization. The emplacement is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees, or grids.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the importance in contemporary technology of problems of emplacement is well known: the storage of information or of the intermediate results of a calculation in the memory of a machine; the circulation of discrete elements with a random output (automobile traffic is a simple case, or indeed the sounds on a telephone line); the spotting of marked or coded elements inside a set that may be randomly distributed, or may be arranged according to single or to multiple classifications, etc.

In a still more concrete manner, the problem of place or the emplacement arises for mankind in terms of demography.<sup>8</sup> This problem of the human emplacement is not simply the question of knowing whether there will be enough space for man in the world – a problem that is certainly quite important – but it is also the problem of knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, spotting, and classification of human elements, should be adopted in this or that situation in order to achieve this or that end. We are in an epoch in which space is given to us in the form of relations between emplacements.

In any case I believe that the anxiety of today fundamentally concerns space, no doubt much more than time. Time probably appears only as one of the various possible operations of distribution between the elements that are spread out in space.<sup>9</sup>

Now, in spite of all the techniques invested in space, despite the whole network of knowledge that enables us to determine or to formalize it, contemporary space is perhaps still not entirely desacralized (apparently unlike time, it would seem, which was desacralized in the nineteenth century). To be sure a certain theoretical desacralization of space has occurred (the one signalled by Galileo's work), but we may still not have reached the point of a practical desacralization of space. And perhaps our life is still ruled by a certain number of oppositions that cannot be touched, that institution and practice have not yet dared to undermine; oppositions that we regard as simple givens: for example, between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and that of work. All these are animated by an unspoken sacralization.

Bachelard's monumental work, the descriptions of phenomenologists have taught us that we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space, but on the contrary in a space thoroughly loaded with qualities and perhaps also haunted by fantasy. The space of our primary perception, the space of our dreams and that of our passions hold within themselves qualities that seem intrinsic: it is a light, ethereal, transparent space, or again it is a dark, rough, encumbered space; it is a space from above, a space of summits, or on the contrary a space from below, a space of mud; it is a space that can be flowing like lively water, or it is a space that is fixed, solidified, like stone or like crystal.

Yet these analyses, while fundamental for reflection in our time, primarily concern inner space. It is of outer space<sup>10</sup> I would like to speak now. The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, of our time and our history occurs, the space that torments and consumes us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light; we live inside a set of relations that delineate emplacements that cannot be equated or in any way superimposed.

Of course one could no doubt take up the description of these different emplacements, by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined. For example, describing the set of relations that define the emplacements of passage, the streets, trains (a train is an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one passes, it is also something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that passes by). One could describe, via the cluster of relations that allows them to be defined, the emplacements of temporary halts – cafés, cinemas, beaches. Likewise one could define, via its network of relations, the closed or semi-closed emplacements of rest that make up the house, the bedroom, the bed, and so forth. But what interests me, among all these sites, are the ones that have the curious property

of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relations designated, mirrored, or reflected by them. These spaces, as it were, that are linked with all the others, that nevertheless contradict all the other emplacements, are of two main types.

First there are the utopias. Utopias are emplacements with no real place.<sup>11</sup> They are emplacements that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of society. It is society itself perfected, or else it is society turned upside down, but in any case, these utopias essentially are fundamentally unreal spaces.

There are also, and this probably in all culture, in all civilization, real places, effective places, places that are written into the institution of society itself, and that are a sort of counter-emplacements, a sort of effectively realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted; a kind of places that are outside all places, even though they are actually localizable. Since these places are absolutely other than all the emplacements that they reflect, and of which they speak, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.<sup>12</sup> And I believe that between utopias and these absolutely other emplacements,<sup>13</sup> these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, in-between experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a place without place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal space that virtually opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent. Utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does really exist, and as it exerts on the place I occupy a sort of return effect; it is starting from the mirror that I discover my absence in the place where I am, since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, cast upon me, from the depth of this virtual space that is on the other side of the looking glass, I come back towards myself and I begin again to direct my eyes towards myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am.<sup>14</sup> The mirror functions as a heterotopia in the respect that it renders this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the looking glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since, in order to be perceived, it has to pass through this virtual point, which is over there.<sup>15</sup>

As for heterotopias properly speaking, how can we describe them? What meaning do they have? We might imagine, I do not say a science because that is a word that is overused today, but a sort of systematic description that would have as its object, in a given society, the study, analysis, description, and 'reading', as some like to say nowadays, of these different spaces, of these other places, as a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live. This description could be called heterotopology.<sup>16</sup>

A first principle is that there is probably not a single culture in the world that does not constitute heterotopias. That is a constant in every human group. But heterotopias obviously take on forms that are very varied, and perhaps one would not find one single form of heterotopia that is absolutely universal. We can, however, classify them in two major types.

In so-called 'primitive' societies, there is a certain form of heterotopia that I would call heterotopias of crisis, that is to say that there are privileged, or sacred, or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc.

In our society, these heterotopias of crisis are steadily disappearing, though one can still find a few remnants. For example, the boarding school, in its nineteenth-century form, or the military service for boys have certainly played such a role, as the first manifestations of male sexuality were in fact supposed to take place 'somewhere other' than at home. For girls, there was, until the middle of the twentieth century, a tradition called the 'honeymoon trip'; it was an ancestral theme. The young girl's deflowering could take place 'nowhere' and, at the moment of its occurrence the train or honeymoon hotel was indeed the place of this nowhere, this heterotopia without geographical markers.

But these heterotopias of crisis are disappearing today and are being replaced, I believe, by what could be called heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals are placed whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the mean or required norm. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals; there are, of course, the prisons, and one should perhaps add retirement homes that are, as it were, on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation since, after all, old age is a crisis, but it is also a deviation since, in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation.<sup>17</sup>

The second principle of this description of heterotopias is that, in the course of its history, a society can make a heterotopia that exists, and has not ceased to exist, function in a very different way; for each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.

I will take as an example the strange heterotopia of the cemetery. The cemetery is certainly another place compared to ordinary cultural spaces; it is a space that is, however, connected with all the emplacements of the city or the society or the village, since each individual, each family happens to have relatives in the cemetery. In Western culture the cemetery has practically always existed. But it has undergone important changes. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the cemetery was placed in the very heart of the city, next to the church. A whole hierarchy of possible burial places existed there. There was the charnel house in which corpses lost the last

traces of individuality, there were a few individual tombs, and then there were tombs inside the church. These latter tombs were themselves of two types. Either simply tombstones with an inscription or mausoleums with statues. This cemetery, which was lodged in the sacred space of the church, has taken on a quite different look in modern civilizations, and, curiously, it is in a time when civilization has become, as we say crudely, 'atheist', that Western culture has inaugurated what is called the cult of the dead.<sup>18</sup>

Basically, it was quite natural that, at a time when people really believed in the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul, they did not lend cardinal importance to mortal remains. On the contrary, from the moment when people are no longer quite sure that they have a soul, and that the body will resurrect, it becomes perhaps necessary to give much more attention to these mortal remains, which are ultimately the only trace of our existence in the world and in words.

In any case, it is from the nineteenth century onwards that everyone has had a right to his own little box for his own little personal decomposition; but, on the other hand, it is only from the nineteenth century onwards that cemeteries began to be put at the outer edges of cities. In correlation with the individualization of death and the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery, there emerged an obsession with death as an 'illness'. The dead, it is supposed, bring illnesses to the living, and it is the presence and proximity of the dead right beside the houses, next to the church, almost in the middle of the street, it is this proximity that propagates death itself. This major theme of illness spread by the contagion of the cemeteries persisted until the end of the eighteenth century; and it is only during the nineteenth century that a beginning was made with the displacement of cemeteries towards the outskirts. The cemeteries then no longer constitute the sacred and immortal belly<sup>19</sup> of the city, but the 'other city', where each family possesses its dark dwelling.

Third principle. The heterotopia has the power to juxtapose in a single real place several spaces, several emplacements that are in themselves incompatible. Thus the theatre brings onto the rectangle of the stage a whole series of places that are alien to one another; thus the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space; but perhaps the oldest example of these heterotopias, in the form of contradictory emplacements, is the garden. One should not forget that the garden, an astonishing creation now thousands of years old, had in the Orient very deep and seemingly superimposed meanings. The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world, with at its centre a space still more sacred than the others, that was like an umbilicus, the navel of the world (it is there that the water basin and fountain were). And all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to be distributed in that space, within this sort



of microcosm. As for carpets, they were originally reproductions of gardens. The garden is a rug where the whole world comes to accomplish its symbolic perfection, and the rug is a sort of garden that is mobile across space.<sup>20</sup> The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world. The garden has been, since the dawn of antiquity, a sort of blissful and universalizing heterotopia (hence our modern zoological gardens).

Fourth principle. Heterotopias are most often linked to slices of time – which is to say that they open onto what might be called, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronisms.<sup>21</sup> The heterotopia begins to function fully when people find themselves in a sort of absolute break with their traditional time; one can see that the cemetery is indeed a highly heterotopian place since the cemetery begins with this strange heterochronism, that, for the individual, is the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which he incessantly dissolves and fades away.

Generally speaking, in a society like ours heterotopia and heterochronism are organized and arranged in a relatively complex fashion. First of all, there are heterotopias of time that accumulates indefinitely, for example the museums, the libraries; museums and libraries are heterotopias in which time never ceases to pile up, heaping up on top of its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, even until the end of the seventeenth century, museums and libraries were the expression of an individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, the idea of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time, and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move – well, all this belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are heterotopias that are characteristic of Western culture in the nineteenth century.

Opposite these heterotopias, which are linked to the accumulation of time, there are heterotopias that are linked, on the contrary, to time in its most futile, most transitory, most precarious aspect, and this in the festive mode.<sup>22</sup> These heterotopias are not eternitary<sup>23</sup> but absolutely chronic.<sup>24</sup> Such are the fairgrounds, these marvellous empty emplacements at the outskirts of cities, which fill up, once or twice a year, with stands, displays, heteroclitic objects, wrestlers, snake women, fortune tellers. Quite recently, a new kind of chronic heterotopia has been invented: the vacation villages; those Polynesian villages that offer three short weeks of primitive and eternal nudity to city dwellers. You see, moreover, that the two forms of heterotopia, the heterotopia of festivity<sup>25</sup> and that of the eternity of accumulating time, come together: the huts of Djerba are in a sense relatives of libraries and museums, for, by rediscovering Polynesian life, one abolishes time; yet it is also time regained, it is the whole history of humanity harking back to its source as if in a kind of grand immediate knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

Fifth principle. Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, one does not access a heterotopian<sup>27</sup> emplacement as if it were a pub.<sup>28</sup> Either one is constrained, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else one has to submit to rites and to purifications. One can only enter with a certain permission and after having performed a certain number of gestures. Moreover, there are even heterotopias that are entirely consecrated to these activities of purification – purification that is partly religious and partly hygienic, such as the hammam of the Muslims, or else purification that appears to be purely hygienic, as in Scandinavian saunas.

There are others, on the contrary, that look like pure and simple openings, but that, generally, conceal curious exclusions. Everybody can enter into those heterotopian emplacements, but in fact it is only an illusion: one believes to have entered and, by the very fact of entering, one is excluded. I am thinking for example of the famous rooms that existed on the large farms of Brazil and elsewhere in South America. The door for accessing did not lead into the central space where the family lived, and every individual who came by, every traveller, had the right to push open this door, enter into the room and sleep there for a night. Now these rooms were such that the individual who passed by never had access to the family's court, he was absolutely a passing visitor, he was not really an invited guest. This type of heterotopia, which has practically disappeared from our civilizations, could perhaps be found in the famous American motel rooms where one goes with one's car and one's mistress and where illicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden, kept isolated without, however, being left in the open.

Sixth principle. The last trait of heterotopias is that they have, in relation to the rest of space, a function. The latter unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes all real space, all the emplacements in the interior of which human life is enclosed and partitioned, as even more illusory. Perhaps that is the role played for a long time by those famous brothels<sup>29</sup> of which we are now deprived. Or else, on the contrary, creating another space, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is disorderly, ill construed and sketchy. This would be the heterotopia not of illusion, but of compensation, and I wonder if certain colonies have not somewhat functioned in this manner.<sup>30</sup>

In certain cases, they have played, on the level of the general organization of terrestrial space, the role of heterotopias. I am thinking, for example, of the first wave of colonization, in the seventeenth century, of the Puritan societies that the English had founded in America and that were absolutely perfect other places.

I am also thinking of those extraordinary Jesuit colonies that were founded in South America: marvellous, absolutely regulated colonies in which human

perfection was effectively accomplished. The Jesuits of Paraguay established colonies in which existence was regulated in all of its points. The village was laid out according to a rigorous plan around a rectangular place at the foot of which was the church; on one side, there was the school; on the other, the cemetery, and then, in front of the church, there opened up an avenue, crossed by a second at a right angle; each family had its little hut along these two axes and thus the sign of Christ was exactly reproduced. Christianity thus marked with its fundamental sign the space and geography of the American world.

The daily life of the individuals was regulated, not by the whistle, but by the bell.<sup>31</sup> Awakening was set for everybody at the same hour, work began for everybody at the same hour; meals were at noon and at five o'clock, then everybody went to bed, and at midnight came what was called the conjugal wake-up, that is to say, when the convent bell rang, everybody accomplished his duty.

Brothels and colonies are two extreme types of heterotopia, and if one considers, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is self-enclosed and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from bank to bank, from brothel to brothel, goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why, from the sixteenth century until the present, the boat has been for our civilization, not only the greatest instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but also the greatest reserve of imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage replaces adventure, and the police the pirates.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

- \* The translation of the title is a subject of disagreement among the different translations we consulted. Robert Hurley has ventured an alternative translation as 'different spaces'. James Faubion explained to us the reasons for this interpretative choice: (1) the word 'heterotopia' contains the root 'hetero-', derived from the Greek and meaning 'different' rather than 'other'; (2) the placement 'autre(s)' after rather than before the word it qualifies typically requires or favours translation into English as 'different', to distinguish between 'des autres espaces' and 'des espaces autres'; and (3) a clear interpretative choice that argues against a view of heterotopia as radically other than the spaces of ordinary life: 'The spaces and places that Foucault identifies as heterotopic are not spaces of the erasure of the normative. They are instead places and spaces in which the ordinary normative order is modified, or rather more precisely, where certain of the norms of ordinary life are under suspension' (Quoted from email exchange with James Faubion).

We choose to stick with the translation as ‘other spaces’. We believe that Foucault’s discussion takes place at the intersection of a reflection on alterity and difference. The qualification ‘other space’ sets it aside from the ‘remaining spaces’ (difference); however, it is also an attribute of the space per se, which has characteristics that make it deserve the label ‘other’ (alterity). On a more fundamental level, Foucault’s discussion reveals both the exclusive and distinct character of heterotopia, while insisting on the relationships of reflection and inversion these spaces have with respect to the remaining spaces. Difference suggests a relational definition, otherness privileges separation. The word other, after all the adjective Foucault chose to use and that we kept in translation, can assume these two nuances and does not preclude an understanding of heterotopia as based in difference. All this might sound highly pedantic but it points to the heart of much of the confusion surrounding the concept of heterotopia. Another minor but related dispute concerns the (non-)translation of the article ‘des’ in ‘des espaces autres’, which can be translated as both ‘other spaces’ or ‘of other spaces’. We follow the, by now, classical ‘Of other spaces’.

- 1 In the formulation ‘surplus of the dead’ we read a reference to the demographic and hygienic fears of the nineteenth century; more particularly, the fear of a demographic explosion (Malthus) bringing with it the accumulation of dead bodies. The question that followed was how and where to bury all these surplus dead bodies? Foucault comes back to this debate later in the text when he speaks about the relocation of cemeteries to the outskirts of the city. The menacing cooling of the planet is a similar theme. The nineteenth century was haunted by the fear that the earth was cooling, in a linear, physically determined way from fire ball to ice ball.
- 2 Foucault is referring to the concept of entropy. The second law of thermodynamics states that closed systems – while their energy remains constant – evolve to ever higher levels of disorder.
- 3 With the formula ‘a great life that develops through time’, Foucault evokes, in one word group, romanticism, Hegelianism, historicism and most of all Darwinism. More importantly, these sentences might constitute one of the very first formulations of what much later would be called the network society with its space of flows (Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). The introduction of this notion is rather early. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s ‘rhizome’ is of a much later date (notably in *Mille Plateaux*, Paris: Minuit, 1980). The rise of a new spatial order based on the network is a leading theme in the first part of the lecture.
- 4 Here Foucault refers, and in a certain way responds, to the then common criticism that structuralism was negating diachronicity, or history, in favour of synchronicity, space, the grid, the structure. He clearly sides with the structuralists. One could even see this remark as an honorary salute to Claude Lévi-Strauss, before the author embarks on one of his most anthropological texts.
- 5 Foucault’s term for medieval space – localization – is his own, but the term for the second phase refers to the Cartesian notion of ‘extension’: ‘res extensa’.
- 6 The term ‘emplacement’ in French refers to site and location (as in parking space) or the setting of a city, but also to a support (for instance, *emplacement publicitaire*: a billboard). In English, the meaning of the term is more specific. It is used in geology and more commonly as a military term to indicate the support/position of a semi-stationary weapon. In Foucault’s text, emplacement

should be considered a technical term, that is space or rather place in the era of the network as opposed to extension. The space of emplacement only exists as 'discrete space', an instance of one of the possible positions that exist within a set of positions. We believe that the term perhaps also foreshadows one of Foucault's later key concepts, 'dispositif'. On occasion, he uses the term in a non-technical sense to refer more generally to sites and places, but it is clear that he deliberately avoids the common words 'place', 'lieu', or 'endroit' and thereby produces an effect of both emphasis and estrangement. We have, hence, left the term 'emplacement' throughout the text to indicate its technical character and this sense of estrangement.

- 7 The three phases of Foucault's short history of space are impressive in their simplicity and clarity; they are classical. They conceptualize in a succinct way pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial space and supply a conceptual key to the spatial ordering of the old city, the modern metropolis and the post-industrial sprawling megalopolis. (See D. Grahame Shane in this volume.)
- 8 Presenting the problem of emplacement, of assigning places, as the problem of our age, is prophetic. It proves the lucidity and *sérieux* of Foucault's panoramic introduction that he sets emplacement against the backdrop of the demographic explosion, the consciousness of which began to dawn in the 1960s, resulting in the famous report of the Club of Rome in 1972: *Limits to Growth*. In fact, these introductory remarks on the history of space constitute a mini essay in their own right. This should not be obscured by the lighter tone of the remainder of the text.
- 9 In this passage we recognize the contours of David Harvey's famous time-space compression, elaborated in *The Postmodern Condition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).
- 10 'Espace du dehors' is not only outside space but has again a specific Foucauldian sense. Two texts are specifically relevant: *Le langage de l'espace*, 1963 (*Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, pp. 435–9); and even more so *La Pensée du dehors*, 1966 (*Dits et écrits I, 1954–1975*, pp. 546–67). Both texts try to show that modern literature is not about time, but about space: the space of language, language as space. In that respect, these and other texts could supply the missing link between heterotopia as it figures in the introduction to *The Order of Things* (*Les Mots et les choses*), which refers to utopia and heterotopia as literary genres, and the heterotopia of this lecture, which refers to places and institutional arrangements in society.
- 11 Here Foucault of course refers to the origin of the word, the neologism of Thomas More: *u-topos*, non-place or no-where. However, by insisting on utopia as fiction, as literary blueprint (from Plato to Morus and beyond), he expels all the realized utopias, from communes to communism, from his discussion. Under the flat, almost banal definition of utopia as a non-existent inversion, a reflection of society, we can detect Foucault's latent anti-utopianism. Like Deleuze he tries to think politics and society without 'transcendence', without utopia in its idealized form. Deleuze and Foucault are anti-messianic, anti-Hegelian. Like Nietzsche, they have tried to unmask utopian thinking as idealist rhetoric about a *Hinterwelt* – a world beyond – that devaluates the world as it is – the real, immanent world. Against any teleology (of progress, continuity, utopia) Foucault puts his archaeology, the science of layers, and discontinuities. See also note 31.
- 12 Foucault suggests it is his finding, his neologism. In fact the word has a medical origin and history (see the text of Heidi Sohn in this volume). But it is unclear

how much he was aware of this, and to what degree it informs his concept. As far as we know, there is, so far, no proof in any text that Foucault was aware of it or alluding to its medical meaning.

- 13 This passage is a clear example of the excessive use of the word emplacement, and this in a manner that seems not entirely consistent with the technical use of the word emplacement in the third phase of the history of space, 'the space of emplacement', as the name for the positional logic of the network space. The type of spaces that are introduced here as heterotopias are in 'the definition' referred to as places in the strong sense of the word: '[T]hese places (lieux) are absolutely other than all the emplacements that they reflect.' But this use of 'lieux' rather than emplacement might be intentional. This formulation contains the suggestion that, within the logic of emplacement, heterotopias are the only places that deserve that designation, because they interrupt the 'non-place' character of the network. (See also the general introduction and note 32). However, even these heterotopias exist as 'real spaces' in the positional logic of the network space. That might be the reason that he calls them emplacements here.
- 14 The radio lecture 'Les Hétérotopies' of 7 December 1966 was followed by a lecture two weeks later on 'Le Corps utopique'. In this lecture Foucault describes the body, both as an absolute *topos* and as its absolute opposite since the unity of a body is an imagined whole. It is this imaginary body that binds the two sides of the mirror, that allows one to travel from one side to the other and back: 'The body is a phantom that only appears through the optical illusion of the mirror, and even then, in a fragmentary way. Am I really in need of ghosts and fairies, death and soul, to be at the same time indissociably visible and invisible?' (Foucault 2004b: 59 [translation ours]).
- 15 Heterotopias are aporetic spaces that reveal or represent something about the society in which they reside through the way in which they incorporate and stage the very contradictions that this society produces but is unable to resolve. Foucault's essay provides a double introduction into this aporetic world. First, heterotopia is introduced as the antipode of utopia, the latter being imaginary, heterotopias being real arrangements, i.e. the way in which utopias crystallize in realized form. At the same time heterotopias are introduced as 'heterotopos' as the other of normal places, common places. Their placement at the intersection of these two axes real/imaginary (utopia-heterotopia) and normal/other (topos-heterotopos) makes these heterotopias into mirroring spaces: 'a sort of counter-emplacements, a sort of effectively realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted'. Its attachment to utopia charges heterotopia with the full ambiguity, even undecidability, of whether to attribute to it 'eutopic' or 'dystopic' qualities. Its place in reality as other (topos-heterotopos) opens up its own set of ambiguities, raising the question of whether heterotopia is a world of discipline or emancipation, resistance or sedation.
- 16 In the radio programme he called heterotology 'a science in the making'. In a more serious vein, he might refer to the mathematical discipline called topology. It is concerned with referencing places in abstract mathematical space. Topology seems a particularly adequate term to describe space in the era of the network. It is open to interpretation to what extent the whole essay on heterotopia should be read as a reflection on space in the age of the network.
- 17 Here the radio version seems much more straightforward in its argument: 'Idleness, in a society as busy as ours, is a deviation' (Foucault 2004b: 43

[translation ours]). In 1966 Foucault opposes the idleness of retirement to the society of production. In 1967, he chooses to oppose it to the society of consumption and leisure. It is not impossible that in the meantime he took notice of the ideas of the situationists in general and of Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (*La Société du spectacle*, Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1967) in particular.

- 18 (Catholic) Europe from the Middle Ages to the present, that is by and large the time-spatial perspective Foucault adopts throughout the entire text. This explains why he makes no mention of the antique cultus of the dead. Since the Renaissance, the modern cultus – which he does mention – considered itself a revival of the classical one. Hence the ‘classicist’ (heathen) iconography that dominated Christian nineteenth-century cemeteries.
- 19 The French text reads: ‘Le vent sacré et immortel de la cité’, and obviously *vent* should be translated as ‘wind’ (as *Lotus* and Hurley do). But ‘wind of the city’ doesn’t really make sense. Unless Foucault is making a poetical reference to the breath or the spirit of the city. Miskowiec translates this as ‘heart of the city’. We believe ‘vent’ is a flaw in the transcript and in fact should be *ventre*: ‘the sacred and eternal belly of the city’, producing a somewhat crude metaphor alluding to the fact that the cemetery with its underground world, as the underbelly of the city, indeed, digests the bodies of all its inhabitants. This interpretation strikes a chord with the beginning of the same paragraph: ‘everyone . . . his own little box for his own little personal decomposition’. Belly does make more sense than ‘heart’. Rather than being the most vital organ of the city, the cemetery is ‘the other city’. Hence, we take the risk to ‘wrongly’ translate *vent[re]* as belly.
- 20 In the radio talk he even makes mention of flying carpets: ‘Then if one thinks that Oriental carpets were originally reproductions of gardens – in the strict sense of the term ‘Winter gardens’ – one can understand the legendary value of flying carpets, carpets that travelled the world’ (Foucault 2004b: 45 [translation ours]).
- 21 All translators make a different choice: Miskowiec: heterochrony, heterochronies; Hurley: heterochronia(s); *Lotus*: heterochronism(s). ‘Heterochrony’ would be the most logical option, per analogy with synchrony. But for the sake of fluency we decided for heterochronism.
- 22 The French text says ‘mode de la fête’: ‘the mode of the feast’. Miskowiec and Hurley translate this as ‘festival’, *Lotus* as ‘celebration’. We choose a literal rendering for it keeps the anthropological touch (see note 30).
- 23 The word *éternitaire* is Foucault’s fabrication. We likewise go for the English fabrication ‘eternitary’. In this we follow Hurley.
- 24 Most translators go for ‘time-bound’ or ‘temporal’, but we believe that Foucault stresses the cyclical aspect of the heterotopia of festivity. Hence, we adopt the somewhat strange word ‘chronic’, as in ‘chronic disease’.
- 25 ‘Hétérotopie de la fête’: literally ‘heterotopia of the feast’. Again, Hurley and Miskowiec translate this as ‘heterotopia of the festival’, while *Lotus* has ‘heterotopia of celebration’. ‘Heterotopia of the feast’, we believe, would bring out most clearly the anthropological weight Foucault seems to give it. However, ‘Heterotopia of the feast’ is not really viable in English, hence ‘heterotopia of festivity’.

More importantly, Foucault is pointing here to two additional types of heterotopia, which so far went more or less unnoticed (maybe partly due to translation): the heterotopia of permanence and the heterotopia of festivity. With the huts of Djerba, Foucault points to the holiday camp or resort as a

permanent heterotopia of festivity. The holiday resort and even more so the theme park might be a historical synthesis of the modern heterotopia of permanence (the museum) and the ancient one of the feast (the fair); in fact, a permanent form of the heterotopia of festivity, which in many ways produces the paradigm of the festival city, hence 'variations on a theme park'. It is exactly this point Foucault might be making by pointing to the huts of Djerba – a permanent site of festivity.

- 26 By ironically stressing this 'grand immediate knowledge' (of regressing to the beginnings of mankind), Foucault points not only to tourism but also to discovery as immediate, individual experience: the basis for what is now called the experience economy.
- 27 'Emplacements hétérotopiques': some authors translate as heterotopic (Miskowiec), some (Hurley and *Lotus*) adopt, by analogy with utopian, heterotopian. We think that the latter is the best solution. Even if it might prove difficult or premature to impose uniformity, one could envisage the use of the word heterotopic when the emphasis is on the place, and heterotopian when the emphasis is on the function. But that might prove too scholastic. So we stick with heterotopian.
- 28 'Comme dans un moulin'. This is a French expression, used for example in 'On n'entre pas dans l'éternel retour comme dans un moulin' (Laruelle in *Nietzsche et Heidegger*), meaning Nietzsche's hypothesis of eternal return is not easy to understand, not a commonplace. The expression could come from the fact that the windmill was a semi-public place, a place you could freely enter, a place of transaction, a 'common place'. Miskowiec translates as 'like a public place'; Hurley risks 'like a windmill'; the *Lotus* version translates as 'Usually one does not get into a heterotopian location by one's own will.' This is a long shot, except for the fact that it rhymes with windmill. We venture to translate using 'pub', going back to its original meaning pub(lic) (drinking)place.
- 29 'Maisons closes': closed houses; this famous French euphemism points very explicitly to the closed, enclosed nature of this heterotopia. The assonance with 'cloisonnée (les emplacements à l'intérieur desquels la vie humaine est *cloisonnée* – the enclosing and partitioning of human life) of the phrase before, is lost in translation.
- 30 The qualifications 'illusion' and 'compensation' recall the distinction between heterotopias of crisis and deviance introduced in the first principle. Most readings distil four types of heterotopias out of the text: crisis, deviance, illusion, compensation. We believe there are at least six. Heterotopias of festivity and permanence should be added (see notes 22 and 25 on 'the festive mode'). Rather than considering these distinctions as a full-fledged taxonomy, we are inclined to conceive of them as qualifications of the different axes that run through heterotopia. This, albeit sketchy, system of coordinates makes it possible to place heterotopias at the cross-section of several qualifications. We distinguish three axes in the text: an anthropological, a temporal and an imaginary axis. It is clear, however, that there are potentially more, pointing to other dialectical tensions at work in the world of heterotopia. The anthropological axis (1) situates heterotopia on the division normal/abnormal, topos/heterotopos, common place/other place, resulting in the historical qualifications of crisis and deviance. The temporal axis (2) opposes permanence to the event-like character of the feast. The imaginary axis (3) conceives of heterotopias as realized utopias, as real spaces with a specific relation to the non-real spaces of utopia, resulting in the specific function heterotopia has with respect to 'the rest of space', namely

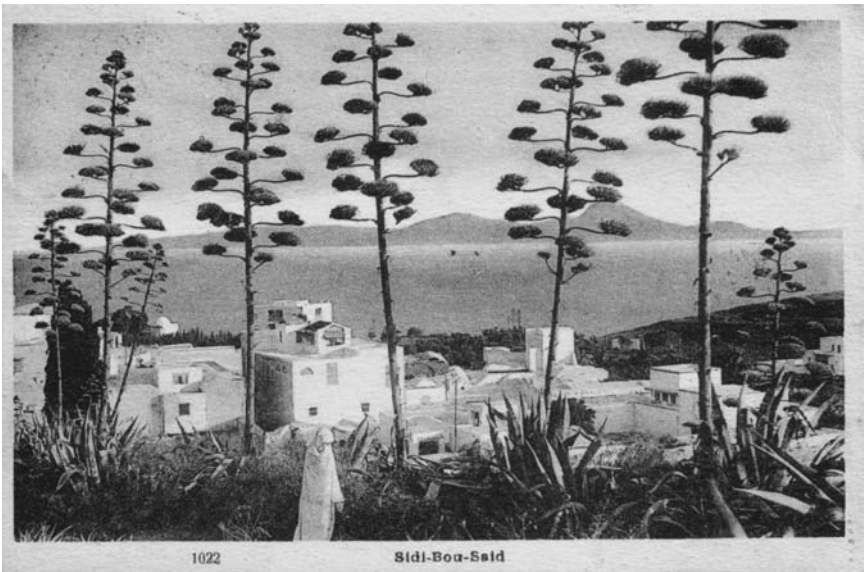


- that of illusion or compensation. Two of these three axes, we believe, are in fact addressed in the passage on the mirror (see notes 14 and 15 on the mirror).
- 31 The shift from the bell to the whistle, from praise of god to discipline, resonates with Foucault's insistence on describing these classical utopian experiments as heterotopia, and betrays his latent anti-utopianism.
- 32 This poetical artifice of the ship obscures the fact that the text ends in limbo, that the text required a final part. After the historical outline, the 'short history of space' from the introduction and after the main part, the transhistorical/ahistorical outline of heterotopology, the third part should have treated the role of heterotopia in the third phase of space, the spatial order of emplacement. In any case, Foucault has not responded to the question that the construction of the text calls for. The task of this book then consists, in a sense, in making up for this missing part, exploring the function of heterotopia in the network society (and beyond).

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1022

Sidi-Bou-Said

Postcard of Sidi-Bou-Said, 1930s.

# Heterotopia: an ecology

James D. Faubion

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*Sidi-Bou-Saïd, 1967.* He would introduce it to an audience of Parisian architects in March, but Foucault had already conceived of heterotopia when the year began. He had at least already had the experience of it in his sojourn in Tunisia, where he swam in a warm sea, partook of hashish and dark, young bodies, wrote in the mornings in one or another of the whitewashed, blue-trimmed houses that he rented in a picturesque village clinging to the cliffs of the Bay of Tunis, and lectured in the afternoons and evenings in the city proper, some 20 km to the south of the village itself. His thoughts on heterotopia are in any event expansive. They set aside the historian's usual empirical reserve to consider phenomena common to 'every culture, every civilization' (Foucault 1984: 178). They have something of the sightseer's enchanted breathlessness. They highlight an 'unspoken' dynamic of 'sacralization' still operative in even the most secularized and godless of modern societies (1984: 177). They race from 'crisis utopias' – the menstrual hut, the delivery room, the boarding school, the honeymoon hotel – to a great swirl of 'heterotopias of deviation' that includes rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, prisons, Christian cemeteries ancient and modern, theatres, cinemas, gardens, Persian carpets, museums, libraries, festivals, Muslim baths, Swedish saunas, motel rooms, brothels, Puritan colonies and Jesuit settlements in the New World. The tour is extraordinary, dazzling, befuddling. What territories can these be?

They are not utopian – at least, not utopian *stricto sensu*, not 'emplacements' that 'maintain a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society', 'society perfected or the reverse of society', but without any real place of their own (1984: 178). Heterotopias are 'realized utopias' (the term recalls Karl Mannheim (1929), if only coincidentally). They are 'real emplacements' that simultaneously represent, contest and reverse – and so are 'utterly different from' – all the other real emplacements in their environment (1984: 178). They are liable to recoding and heterogeneity. They engage temporalities distinct from those engaged in the places that surround them (1984: 180–3). Last, but it would seem not at all least, they are spaces apart – open but isolated, of controlled access and egress (1984: 183). They are places of extremes, either each creating a space of illusion that denounces all that is in place around it as even more illusory

or creating a space 'as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged' as its counterparts are 'disorganized, badly arranged and muddled' (1984: 184). Heterotopias thus have no single logical or affective register or effect, but appear instead to oscillate between, or to combine, countervailing imagistic and rhetorical currents. Always contesting and reversing the mundane monotony of the unmarked emplacements of everyday life, they are darker or brighter, more complex or perhaps more striking in their literal and figurative play of darkness and light. Some heterotopias – such as that of the Persian carpet or of the garden of paradise it maps – are heterotopian precisely in their sublimity, their transcendence of the quotidian; others – such as the brothel – heterotopian precisely in their vulgarization of the quotidian, the bawdy suspension of all its bland proprieties. The sublime heterotopia thus has its specifically grotesque counterpart, and between the two a whole continuum of sublimely grotesque heterotopias and grotesquely sublime heterotopias, from marriage bed to circus – would seem to fall. Heterotopias displace the metrics of everyday life with metrics more vast, more macrocosmic, or more minute, more microcosmic, or in the case of that synthesis of cosmos and the most precise disciplinary regulation that was the Puritan or Jesuit colony, more macrocosmic and more microcosmic at one and the same time. Heterotopias are extreme – in their exaggerations of scale, but also in their reductions, their miniaturizations and diminutions, their fussily disciplinary attention to every last detail. The heterotopia is an *asulon*, a sanctuary, an asylum. If its entry and exit must always be policed, this is because dwelling within, even passing through any sanctuary, any asylum, puts the self at risk.

*New Haven, 1967.* Though it will not appear until 1973, Harold Bloom begins work on what will become the theoretical centrepiece of his critical apparatus, *The Anxiety of Influence*. The essay's focus is Romantic and modern poetry, but subsequent elaborations will considerably extend its backward historical reach and its textual scope (Bloom 1975, 1982). Its central theme is revisionism and its attendant argument that, from at least John Milton forward, the strength of the strongest and most enduring poems lies in their successful contestation and ultimate reversal of the priority of the poetic visions to which they are heirs (Bloom 1973: 9–11). Such poems typically begin with sheer negation – an ironic denial that all is what it has seemed to be. They do not, however, begin to establish their specific poetic difference – and so the individuality of the poet who composes them, qua poet – until passing through the dialectical dynamic that he names 'daemonization'. An 'individuating movement purchased by withdrawal from the self, at the high price of dehumanization' (1973: 109), daemonization proceeds imagistically through the play of height and depth. It proceeds tropologically through the deployment of hyperbole and litotes (understatement). It proceeds figuratively towards the synthetic resolution of the sublime and the grotesque into a 'counter-sublime', a diminished or understated or grotesque sublime or alternatively a heightened or exaggerated or transcendental grotesque. It inevitably invites the 'intrusion of the

numinous' and any account of it must thus include both 'the idea of the Holy' and the return 'to all the sorrows of divination' (1984: 101).

Foucault's approach to the heterotopian makes a bow to the phenomenologists of space, but only to leave them behind. Against their analyses, 'concerned primarily with internal space', he seeks to explore 'the space of the outside', the space 'by which we are drawn outside ourselves' (1984: 177). Heterotopias are not heterotopian simply because one experiences them as utterly different, as arenas of the transfiguration or transcendence of that from which they differ. Foreshadowing the interview on space, knowledge and power that he will grant some 13 years later (Foucault 1980), his analysis is instead structural, functional, causal. Heterotopias are not figments of our imagination. Nor is their constitution, unlike that of a triangle or a cube, purely formal or ideal. Heterotopias are concrete technologies. They are rhetorical machines. If the sailing ship is the quintessential heterotopia, the heterotopia 'par excellence', if it has long been the 'greatest reservoir of imagination' (1984: 185), this is because of the cargo that, 'delivered over to the boundless expanse of the ocean', it has collected during its stops at one heterotopia or another, from the brothel to the colony, lading from each the fruits of its labour. At its helm one might place Bloom's daemonic Oedipus – 'not Oedipus the diviner, *who could see*, but blinded Oedipus, darkened by revelation' (1973: 109). Foucault surely knew nothing of Bloom when he spoke of heterotopias and, if Bloom was acquainted with any of Foucault's work when he first wrote of the anxiety of influence, his acquaintance with it was minimal. The two could hardly ever have been said to have a meeting of minds. The heterotopian and the daemonic are nevertheless intimately connected – intimate enough to identify the work of the heterotopian machine as the work of daemonization, which is the work of imaginative innovation, but also the work of discipline, for what is discipline if not the imposition of an individuating movement, purchased by withdrawal from the self, at the high price of dehumanization?

*Ithaca, 1966.* At the invitation of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Rochester, Victor Turner, resident at Cornell since 1964, is writing the fourth in the still ongoing series of the Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures. He will have moved to a position in Anthropology and Social Thought at the University of Chicago by the time the lectures are published as *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969), but one cannot help but suspect that the studiously scruffy informality, the bohemianism, the rigorous Jacobinism that reportedly so charmed him at Cornell still deeply informs his most famous essay's thesis. His springboard is Arnold Van Gennep's thesis (1909) that rites of passage – initiations, marriages, graduations and so on – are universally divided into three stages or phases, the first effecting the 'separation' of the ritual subject from society at large, the second effecting a 'marginalization', a 'liminal' process of decoding and recoding, and the third effecting an 'aggregation' of the subject thus recoded and the society from which he or she had been isolated or the society to which he or she has thus become qualified to belong. Inspired by or under

the spell of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Turner undertakes to reduce Van Gennepe's triad to an even more deeply structural binary opposition between 'structure' and 'anti-structure', the former the ritual subject's point of departure and point of return and the latter his or her condition 'betwixt and between' (1969: 107). The socio-existential homologue of 'structure' is for Turner *societas* – a model of society 'as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politic-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" and "less"' (1969: 96). The socio-existential homologue of 'anti-structure' is what Turner terms *communitas* – a model of 'society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the authority of the ritual elders' (1969: 96).

The contrast between *societas* and *communitas* is not, Turner notes, the same as that between the secular and the sacred, and not least because 'every social position has *some* sacred characteristics', at least in the 'stateless societies beloved of political anthropologists' (1969: 96–7). Yet, the sacred endowment of any such position typically has its source and ground in the liminal, the anti-structural (1969: 97). That 'something of the sacredness of that transient humility and modelessness [*sic*] goes over, and tempers the pride of the incumbent of a higher position or office' is not, moreover, merely a matter of provisioning both incumbent and office with the stamp of structural legitimacy. 'It is', Turner asserts, 'rather a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society' (1969: 97). Hence, Turner is prepared to infer that 'for individuals and groups, social life is a type of dialectical process':

[It] involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness. In such a process, the opposites, as it were, constitute one another and are mutually indispensable.

(Turner 1969: 97)

The passage from higher to lower status, as in rites of punishment or ostracism, typically involves the same limbo. In other cases, in rituals of status inversion or reversal, the dynamic between *societas* and *communitas* may be modulated into a process of restitution or readjustment, 'of bringing social structure and *communitas* into right mutual relation again' (1969: 178). The dialectic can give way to a periodistic oscillation – but an oscillation no less essential for the maintenance of *societas*, for 'structural action swiftly becomes arid and mechanical if those involved in it are not periodically immersed in the regenerative abyss of *communitas*' (1969: 139).

Turner's essay is itself expansive, roving beyond the customary terrain of the anthropologist of stateless societies to embrace the 'homology' between the 'phases of history' typical of millenarian movements and the liminal

phase of rites of passage (1969: 112); the 'spontaneous communitas' of the hippies and their happenings (1969: 132); the permanent liminality of St Francis (1969: 145) and the 'normative' communitas of his monastic followers (1969: 140–1); the 'ideological' communitas of 'a variety of utopian models of societies based on existential communitas' (1969: 132). If both normative and ideological communitas are 'already within the domain of structure', and if 'it is the fate of all spontaneous communitas in history to undergo what most people see as a "decline and fall" into structure and law' (1969: 132), such structural conditions as liminality, marginality and 'structural inferiority' frequently give rise as long as they endure to 'myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art':

These cultural forms provide men with a set of templates or models which are, at one level, periodical reclassifications of reality and man's relationship to society, nature, and culture. But they are more than classifications, since they incite men to action as well as to thought. Each of these productions has a multivocal character, and each is capable of moving people at many psychological and biological levels.

(Turner 1969: 128–9)

Such conditions have their familiar anthropological hypostases: the shaman or oracle in drug-induced *ekstasis*; the medium possessed; the persecuted prophet. History offers others: the ugly Socrates, haunted by his daemon, forced to suicide; and to Turner, above all, St Francis, dishevelled, militantly penniless and naked in the bishop's palace in Assisi (Lambert 1961: 61, cited in Turner 1969: 145).

There is no reason to suppose that Turner had been in even the most indirect contact with Foucault or with Bloom in composing his *Ritual Process*. Hence, it must be the intellectual ecology of the turbulent drift from the 1960s into the 1970s that yields a third variation of the thematic of what might best be thought of as the 'unroutine'. Communitas is first a model rather than a concrete emplacement, but the emplacement of which it might be a model bears many similarities to Foucault's heterotopia just as the process of its emplacement bears many similarities to Bloom's process of daemonization. Communitas, too, has its stubborn bond with the idea of the Holy. It is the locus of daemonization within a broader dialectic of structural dissolution and re-entrenchment. If Foucault resists a dialectical diagnosis either of heterotopian process or of the relation between the heterotopian and the spaces from which it so absolutely differs, his heterotopia is still the site of the flights and filling of the imagination that also transpire in Bloom's dialectic of daemonization and in the liminality or marginality or debasement or abjection of Turner's thetical–antithetical communitas. The prison – that holy penitentiary, that sometime inspiration for Genet's lyrical counter-sublime, always simmering with unrest – perhaps belongs together with the brothel and the colony after all.



Yet, however many such parallels there may be, *communitas* is not a model of heterotopia alone and the heterotopia not always the emplacement of *communitas*. Whether ideological or as the anti-structural inversion of an emplacement of *societas* in need of revitalization, *communitas* encompasses models of a utopian cast that Foucault's analytics of heterotopia excludes. Indeed, *communitas* tends to gravitate more and more towards the utopian the more inclusive it becomes and the more it takes on – with Turner's acknowledgement – the dimensions of Weber's typification of the charismatic (1922; Turner 1969: 132–3). Concomitantly, it tends to become more and more detached from the dialectical framework through which Turner initially approaches its relation to *societas*. In fact, it can hardly do otherwise; the rites of reversal and inversion that Turner seeks to include within the ambit of the dynamics of *communitas* do not involve the synthesis of paradoxical or binary opposites but rather the restitution and the reinforcement of those oppositions themselves. To be sure, Turner was aware from his delivery of the Morgan lectures forward that many in his audience found the elasticity of his conceptions of both liminality and *communitas* stretched to breaking point. He continued in spite of this to reassert the heuristic utility of both – and many others of the audience he garnered, during and after the Morgan lectures, seem to have agreed with him. So perhaps there is less use in distinguishing between the *communitas* that negates all structure and the normative or ideological *communitas* that itself always already contains more structure than at first sight there seemed to be. Perhaps the same must be said of the distinction between the utopia and the heterotopia as well.

*Castro Street, 1983*. No ghetto is a utopia, not even so 'inverted' a ghetto as the Castro Street ghetto, certainly not now, and not even in the far more carnivalesque atmosphere of 1983, only shortly after the first visible symptoms of what was not yet known as AIDS would enter local and – very rapidly – national discourse under the sign of 'gay cancer'. Though he had visited the USA several times previously, Foucault was spending his days at Berkeley but living in the Castro District in 1983 and perhaps it was in or near that district then that he contracted the virus that would subsequently kill him. From the vantage of the unmarked flow of everyday life, infused with its bland proprieties, the place could only appear to be worse than a brothel, a fusion of brothel and theatre and cheap motel, whose initiates and whose ritual and social elders, clad alike in costumes evoking the sweat and swagger of proletarian or frontier or disciplinary hypermasculinity, met and mingled in smoky bars or, stripping bare, cruised and coupled (and tripled . . .) in the dark corridors and cubicles of one or another discreet establishment euphemistically known as a 'bathhouse'. Such were the rumours, in any case. Many, perhaps most, were true. Like other ghettos, Castro Street was a place of sanctuary but also of stigmatization, of stigmata worn, bared, even flaunted. Whether one belonged there or was an outsider, one entered the place at one's own risk and, once inside, once adorned and inscribed with the insignia of belonging, one ventured out at one's own risk as well. It was a place apart, yet it was not an isolated

enclave, a commune far from the madding crowd, an Erewhon. It was not the world literally upside down. It had its typical or stereotypical services to offer to outsiders – flower shops and clothing shops, wine and liquor and interior design, food and gifts and trinkets – and outsiders took quotidian advantage of them. In its rigorously conformist conventions of dress and interaction, in its indiscriminate if strictly androcentric socio-sexual camaraderie, one might identify a strong current of *communitas*. In certain of his later interviews, Foucault would recall it in reflecting on other spaces of androcentric solidarity and friendship of a certain erotic charge – the Muslim bath, indeed, but also the army barracks and the interior of the prison. Yet the Castro ghetto in 1983 was also a hotbed of status competition in which epicene or masculine beauty, social connections within but also beyond the fold, and material resources were the gold standards of eminence. What went on behind its largely invisible walls partook of transgression, of transcendence, of transmogrification, but it remained deeply dependent on what went on outside them. It was a place of contestations and reversals. It nevertheless remained deeply embedded in a broader urban fabric within which it wove alternatives, but out of which it did not and could not ever tunnel a true escape. Unlike the utopia and together with every other heterotopia, the heterotopia that was the Castro Street ghetto – or rather, nested heterotopia of heterotopias, for its bars and baths were themselves sub-emplacements of the counter-sublime – provided a space in which some men at least were able to ‘get outside of themselves’, but it did not realize or even offer the utopian promise of their getting outside of the broader society that had brought or driven them there. Already in 1967 and certainly by 1983, Foucault seems to have been well aware that sojourn though one might, there was no such outside to be had or found.

For the Foucault of the greyest of his years as genealogist, studying in the Bibliothèque Nationale through the grey winters of Paris, for the Foucault who has discovered in the penitentiary not Genet’s hothouse but the cold, instrumentalistic and paralytic principle of a carceral society, the heterotopia seems to have given way to the cell, contest and reversal to feckless, mechanical resistance, and the imagination to its exhaustion in the repetition of the same. The advent of the Iranian revolution perhaps reminds him of the sacrificial absolutism of the student protesters whom he had aided when teaching in Tunis (Eribon 1991: 195). It reminds him again of the potentially transformative power of the human embrace of the sacred, but his optimism, his excitement soon ebbs with the oppressive march of revolutionary events. Yet, during the same period, his understanding of power and of powerlessness is growing more complex and less bleak. Together with the ossified structures of domination within which human beings everywhere live, there are also more open spaces, spaces of possibility, spaces in which power is relational and fluid and in which domination accordingly gives way to the more artful and less irrevocably coercive ways of ‘governmentality’ (Foucault 1978). Among the latter arts are those that the self might exercise upon itself, in its freedom and in the name of becoming the subject that it seeks

or is encouraged to be. Foucault discovers the terrain of the ethical – which is no longer the Erewhon that it was in a society fully carceral, even if it remains an at least semi-precious preserve, actually accessible only to those privileged enough to have been born at liberty or to have been liberated from their slavery. Of the grey genealogist, it might not go too far to say that the preserves of the ethical were so much wishful thinking, imaginative inversions of the real, that these could only be utopian in the strictest sense of the term. As the 1970s gave way to the 1980s, as Foucault's inquiries into the nineteenth century gave way to those into ancient Greece and something of his old wanderlust returned, the same preserves begin in his writings and interviews to take on the dimensions of the heterotopian. Not the utopian, nor by any means the quotidian, but the heterotopian.

Concomitantly, he returns to an interest, a preoccupation that was a constant companion to his preoccupation with the human sciences until about 1972: the aesthetic. As before, its focus is 'the subject', but no longer the subject as it is represented, manipulated, sustained or subverted in the texts of Friedrich Hölderlin and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Raymond Roussel and Pierre Klossowski, Stéphane Mallarmé and Maurice Blanchot. The subject is instead concrete – the adult citizen male of the ancient *polis*, Baudelaire's dandy, but also the unnamed men exploring new 'modes of relationship' in their bedrooms and in the cafés of Castro Street (Foucault 1981). All of these figures are the specific referents of the questions that Foucault poses rhetorically to Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus in 1983: 'But couldn't everyone's life be a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object but not our life?' (1983: 261).

We need not review the litany of the critics who claim to discern in such questions Foucault's reduction of the ethical to the aesthetic. Of course, they do no such thing. They direct us instead to the self and its relations to others as raw materials in need of shaping and polishing. They direct us to both as the materials of a classicizing refinement of the self into a teleological imago, a presumptively universal and eternal Idea or ideal. They direct us to both as the materials in another context of the heroization of the present, of the capturing of the eternal in its always fleeting moment. They direct us, yet further, away from the sterile fantasy of utopian inversion and the inconsequential negations of utopian resistance towards the terrains of the heterotopian, in which a purely negative and reactive imagination might recede in the face of a daemonizing imagination antithetical to, and yet constructive within and constructive of, its quotidian environment. It is just such terrains that might more particularly be home to an imagination of the self and its relation to others antithetical to and yet constructive of and within that very environment. The existentialist – Turnerian, but also Sartrean or Heideggerian – ultimately rests, epistemologically and ontologically, with the binary opposition of the utopian to the quotidian, the true to the false consciousness, the authentic to the inauthentic, no matter how sophisticated his social and cultural and historical nuances may be. This is why the existentialist is always in fact a contributor to the very mythology of the self

that it pretends to supersede. It promotes an abstraction of the self from its concrete determinations and overdeterminations that Foucault could already recognize to be sterile in 1967, in Sidi-Bou-Said. His acidic denunciation of Sartre is his most vibrant – and impolite – expression of such a recognition (Macey 1993: 193). His conception of the heterotopia is not merely a product of the same entangled remove from the Parisian metropolis. It is also the dark divination of a conceptual cartography of the cardinal categorical site of a concrete anthropology and sociology of the embedded possibilities of an always already socially and culturally conditioned imagination – this daemon – that threaten the quotidian as much as they bore the utopian. It is precisely in that real space between threat and boredom that the analytical vigour of Foucault's conception of the heterotopian – which finally went to press in 1984 – continues to lie.

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'Christoma' (collage, Heidi Shon, 2006).

# Heterotopia: anamnesis of a medical term

Heidi Sohn

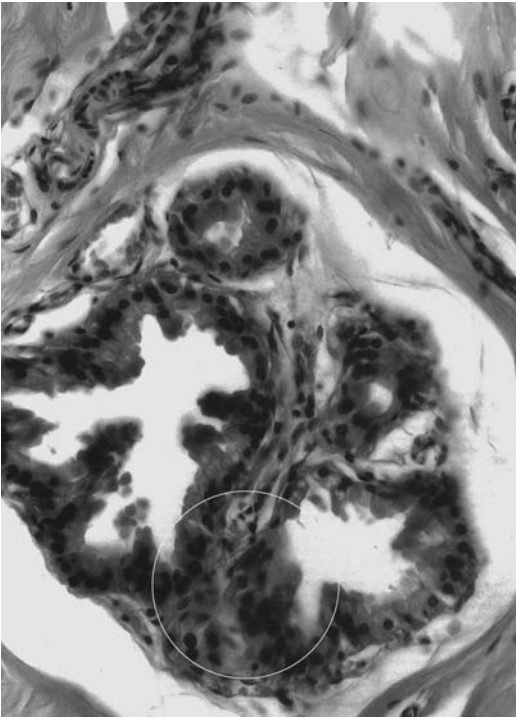
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Utopias afford consolation: in spite of not having a real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names. [. . .] This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of fundamental dimension of the fabula; heterotopias [. . .] desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.

(Foucault 1994: xviii)

Although he never explicitly referred to this, Michel Foucault borrowed the term heterotopia from the medical and biological contexts, and inserted it into his own discourse. This move, which occurred through the translation of a medical terminology into a discursive environment that allows the usage of this kind of figurative and syntactic recourses, triggered a tidal wave of reactions from the spatial disciplines – in particular architectural theory and urbanism – that has lasted until the present day.

Etymologically, heterotopia denotes the contraction of ‘hetero’ (another, different) and ‘topos’ (place). Although it is not known with exactitude when this term was applied for the first time in a medical context, the concept of displaced or dystopic tissue can be traced to studies on Meckel’s diverticulum in the early twentieth century (Lax 1997: 116). From the 1920s onwards, heterotopia increasingly appears in medical literature to describe a phenomenon occurring in an unusual place, or to indicate ‘a spatial displacement of normal tissue’, but which does not influence the overall functioning and development of the organism (1997: 115). There is no clear consensus on exactly what causes the condition of medical heterotopia, but a common understanding is based on the assumption that



Medical heterotopia: a mass formed by the faulty development of tissue of a type not normally found at that site. Here: 'Intestinal metaplasia of the gastric mucosa (transformation of the gastric mucosa to an intestinal-type mucosa) magnified 800×' (Lax 1997: 122).

heterotopia 'usually occurs in organs adjacent to each other or having a close spatial relationship in their evolution' (1997: 116). Hence, medical heterotopias are related to those non-pathological heterogeneous organic conditions that present either heterologous or heterogenic composition of

tissue not normal to the part; [. . .] abnormality in structure, arrangement, or manner of formation; [. . .] malposition denoting abnormal or anomalous position of an organ or part; [. . .] allotopia, displacement, dystopia and heterotopia; or choristoma: a mass of tissue histologically normal for an organ or part of the body other than the site at which it is located.

*(Dorlands Medical Dictionary 2004)*

And it is precisely in the diverse meanings of heterogeneity and difference implicit in this terminology that the relevance of heterotopia is best exposed

as a condition that generically suggests a simultaneous state of spatial and morphological anomaly.

Sigurd Lax states that biology, medicine and architecture are comparable disciplines, which in addition to sharing common understandings of morphology, also deal with highly complex structures and the effect that these have on their surroundings (1997: 114). This accounts for a longstanding analogy between organisms and the structure and inner functioning of a city or an edifice; but while architects and urban planners conventionally project their designs, often taking the analogy of the organism as a point of departure, physicians and pathologists investigate and interpret phenomena occurring within the organism, delineating the thin line between what is healthy and what is not. In spite of this, the significance in the analogy between organisms, architecture and the city in this context is related to the specificities of particular systems of classification, and to the orthotopographic orders that render organisms – and by analogy also certain architectural constructs and cities – as either healthy, sick or anomalous. It is this latter aspect, the anomalous – that which deviates from the normal and *correct* order of things – which seems a pertinent point of departure to engage in an exploration of the meaning of the term heterotopia.

The term appeared for the first time in Michel Foucault's work in the preface to *The Order of Things*, published in 1966. In that particular context, Foucault implied that heterotopia is in reality more related to language and representation than to actual physical, concrete and localizable spaces; in this, heterotopia is taken to illustrate the boundaries of the imaginable, an area in which our thought encounters objects or patterns that it can neither locate nor order (Ritter and Knaller-Vlay 1997: 14). In this sense, Foucault posited the term heterotopia as an opposition to utopia, as a sort of acronym, and as a different plateau or table of thought and classification. In spite of this, both terms – utopia and heterotopia – remain conceptual and abstract constructs with little direct connection to the material, physical world of objects. He rather pointed to literary genres: heterotopian writing (Roussel, Borges), to be understood in opposition to the utopian literary tradition of Plato, Thomas More and beyond.

A year later Foucault presented a lecture titled 'Des espaces autres' to an audience of architects at the Cercle d'études architecturales. This lecture, and its notes, which were only distributed within a closed circle, nevertheless attracted much interest in regard to their alleged potential to be the groundwork for a new conception of urban planning, based on the precepts of radical, different spaces that contest the spaces we inhabit. Furthermore, the essay and its animated reception pointed towards the willingness – possibly also a necessity – on the part of the spatial disciplines to establish a new science, a 'science of heterotopia: of absolutely other spaces' (Ritter and Knaller-Vlay 1997: 15).



It is, however, not until 1984 with the posthumous publication of 'Des espaces autres' and its translation into English in 1986 that the concept of heterotopia begins to really stir up the spatial disciplines on a global scale. This generates a proliferation of comments from all corners of the spatial and projective disciplines, in particular architectural theory and analysis, producing all kinds of contradictory and even incompatible interpretations of the nature, the meaning, the potentials and the qualities of heterotopias. The complications and inner conflicts of Foucault's essay, as Benjamin Genocchio suggests, is heightened by the contradicting and diverging usages of the term heterotopia in *The Order of Things* and in the essay 'Of other spaces', a significant paradox that generally is misunderstood, ignored or left out, and that should not go unnoticed. One of Genocchio's primary criticisms of the consistency of heterotopia is based on Foucault's argument that heterotopia is reliant upon a means of establishing some invisible, but visibly operational difference, which simultaneously provides a clear conception of spatially discontinuous ground. According to Genocchio it is precisely this that is crucially lacking in Foucault's argument (Genocchio 1995: 38–9).

But, leaving this aside, the fact remains: the term as utilized in 'Of other spaces' has become the object of an animated debate, and a recurrent subject of contemporary architectural theory and urbanism. The interest in heterotopia may be attributed to the time and the context in which this term was recovered, namely during the climax of postmodernism: an academic and discursive environment that celebrates above all the concepts of heterogeneity, difference, otherness and alterity. And it is precisely on those concepts that Foucault's treatment of heterotopia takes on the significance it has for contemporary spatial disciplines, since it permits the reading of essentially different spaces to which no other explanation seems appropriate, thus opening the field to a broad array of radical alternatives of spatial, urban, architectural, social and cultural interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

These interpretations of heterotopia as the space of difference, however, carry a deeper connotation than that of mere spatial displacement. While medical heterotopias have no known causes, no secondary effects, and do not affect the normal functioning of the overall organism in which they appear, Foucault's heterotopias have an essentially disturbing function: they are meant to overturn established orders, to subvert language and signification, to contrast sameness, and to reflect the inverse or reverse side of society. They are the spaces reserved for the abnormal, the other, the deviant. Without this angle, the true meaning of spatial or architectural heterotopia would be lost, since it is precisely in the subversion and the challenging of the established *order of things* that heterotopia acquires its full potential. But there is a curious 'twist' in this: heterotopia comes to existence only when set against parameters of normalcy and correct orders; but it is through the detection or disclosure of the heterogeneous, of the different,

of the anomalous, that the homogeneous, the normal and the correct claim their rightful place. This reveals two interesting aspects of heterotopia: on the one hand the determination of orthotopological orders against heterotopological ones, and on the other, the delineation of homotopia over and against heterotopia.

The first aspect is the path that Foucault takes to formulate what he refers to as a 'heterotopology': a 'systematic description' consisting of six precepts through which heterotopias might be detected and described (1998: 179). In this, Foucault clearly states that, while there is no universal type of heterotopia, it is nevertheless a constant of civilization (1998: 180). This statement carries the tenor that the properties of heterotopias are not only physical or formal per se, but rather the result of cultural mediation and interpretation (Jormaka 1997: 125). In other words, it is through the different culturally and socially determined *meanings* of heterogeneity, and the strategies of a given society, culture or civilization to cope with it, that heterotopias are generated in the first place. And it is through this that Foucault seems to establish the parameters for an entirely different system of classification reserved exclusively for 'another topos': not a fixed, rigid structure, but instead a flexible, inconclusive and rather unstable, volatile system or arrangement that adapts to the propensity of the meaning and criteria of normalcy and order to shift and change over time and according to the logic of the society, culture or civilization in question.

For brevity's sake, and so as not to duplicate Foucault's six precepts and the examples he offers for each one of them at this point, we may take the *transformation of meaning* as the common denominator to access his description of heterotopia, an operation that might open up more contemporary interpretations of 'spaces of difference' and throw light onto the reasons that this term has become such a fertile topic for architectural and urban theories. These shifts in the meaning of normalcy – and hence of abnormality or anomaly – convey *levels* (which should not be misunderstood as Foucault's six principles or precepts) that account for the different types of heterotopia and the effects and impacts that these have in a particular context.

On a first level we find the transformation of meaning across different societies, cultures or civilizations over a given time-span. So, for instance, the criteria for spaces that initially were linked to rituals of mystical and spiritual purification and rebirth, take on the functions of bodily hygiene, relaxation and well-being in contemporary society, as the examples of the Muslim hammam, the Turkish bath and the Swedish sauna show. The shift from criteria for spaces for individuals or groups in a state of crisis, and hence undergoing certain rites of passage, to the criteria for spaces for individuals, who in some way are considered deviant or transgressive, shows the transformation of the cultural meanings of taboo, for example, exposing the different spatial implications conveyed in it, and which result in either

non-specific, elusive 'spaces without geographical location', or conversely in the radical isolation and exclusion of the deviant within an enclosed and highly restricted space, as in the case of prisons, asylums and mental institutions.

Second, there are those changes that are not cross-cultural, but that occur instead within the *same* society or culture evolving over an extended period. In this regard, Foucault's example of the cemetery in European cities is quite telling, since it not only involves the cultural and social perspective on disease, contagion and death, but also shows how the shifts in cultural perspectives have a direct *spatial* impact. While the cemetery was an essential part of the composition of churches and of everyday life during the Middle Ages, it was slowly displaced from the centres into the margins of cities, forming, as it were, 'the other city' of death in more recent times.

Third, the transformation of meaning also implies the emergence of new ones and the parallel generation of absolutely different spaces to adapt to these changes. So, while the establishment of museums in the nineteenth century to exhibit objects from the past reflects the preoccupation with history and its accumulation, the rise of movie houses during the twentieth century responds to the emergence of a new form of representing space and reality; something that entails the superimposition of two different 'spaces': the actual space of the movie theatre and the flatness of the screen upon which new realities are projected.

Finally, we find the heterotopia that responds to conceptual meanings, abstract thoughts, or ideals of a given society, which either compensate for the lack of order and clarity implicit in the complexities of the real, or conversely represent space and time in its most illusory qualities. This may be explained in the confrontation of the reality principle with the pleasure principle, and is exemplified for Foucault in gardens, Oriental carpets and the projection of colonies, and can be extended to the creation of artificial, illusory environments such as theme parks, vacation villages and, more recently, shopping malls.

Foucault's heterotopology reunites a broad spectrum of heterotopias: spaces, socially determined spatio-temporalities, and even objects whose common denominator is their heterogeneity in contrast to what lies beyond: to the spaces and temporalities that surround them, standing out as exceptions to the rule. They do respond, however, to highly specific principles, depending on particularities of their own in order to become operative. Hence, the multiplicity of meanings of heterogeneity render heterotopia as an essentially ambivalent and radically open concept associated generically to exception and abnormality. But, in this, it is the understanding of heterogeneity as something exceptional, outstanding, not only given by its incorrect location, but also because of its inherent 'otherness', that reverts us to the second aspect mentioned earlier. In simplified terms, in addition to questions of what constitutes the orthotopological orders – of what is

correct or ideal – this perspective addresses and confronts notions of *homogeneity*, *sameness* and *uniformity*, in short, of homotopia. And it is precisely here where the term heterotopia takes its fully postmodern meaning: as an exception to uniformity and homogeneity, heterotopia opens up pathways for the deconstruction of sameness and its subversion, becoming the antidote against the erasure of difference implicit in the progression of the cultural logic of late capitalism (Jameson 1991) and the advancement of the sordid non-places that conform to the postmodern landscape, thus unlocking ‘another topos’, where the ‘other’ and the ‘exceptional’ (Shane 2005: 232) may encounter alternatives to emerge and strive.<sup>2</sup>

On closer inspection, the postmodern readings of heterotopia render Foucault’s initial sketch for a theoretical concept as an operative, instrumental formulation that can be applied to fulfil determinate roles or functions. An early and telling precedent to this can be found in Tafuri’s interpretation of heterotopia in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (1987). Tafuri used the concept to explain how Piranesi, following on Burke, made recourse to the sublime ‘to represent the horrid and the demonic’, something that ‘means to give language to that which in reality eludes a rationalization of a classic type; it means to change the linear concepts of time and space’ (1987: 30). Further, Tafuri associates Foucault’s original use of the term heterotopia with Piranesi, saying that ‘Piranesi’s heterotopia lies precisely in giving voice, in an absolute and evident manner, to this contradiction: the principle of Reason is shown to be an instrument capable of anticipating – outside of any *sueño* – the monsters of the irrational’ (1987: 46). Tafuri’s reading of the term as a ‘syntax of contamination’, as an example of ‘linguistic pluralism’ (1987: 52–3) is attuned to Foucault’s original elaborations on heterotopia as a ‘detonator of order, logic, and language’. The significance of concepts emanating from fragmentation and contradiction, among them ‘difference’ and ‘alterity’, explains the success of heterotopia in subsequent postmodern architectural and urban investigations. These tend to look at the meaning of difference and alterity as urban determinants in a socio-spatial context. The right to a voice, to be *represented*, is a quintessentially postmodern ideal: ‘by making them speak, by *representing* them, it is possible to make a case for their potential utilization’ (1987: 30; my emphasis).

Here we detect a paradox: while Foucault’s initial formulations of heterotopia as quasi ‘unrepresentable’ match his later elaborations of heterotopology as an inconclusive arrangement, and heterotopias as a restricted system liable to permissions, exclusions and concealment, the postmodern perspectives tend to regard these spaces of otherness as alternative urban formations characterized by their inclusiveness, ‘radical openness’ and unlimited connectivity, something that renders them as sites of political and social relevance for the empowerment of minority groups and marginal subgroups through the use of space (Soja 1996).

As a quintessential expression of postmodern theory, ‘difference’ is translated as ‘otherness’, and, as such, is countered against ‘sameness’, usually in a socio-political context that revolves around questions of identity. This accounts for the postmodern reading in which heterotopias are enmeshed in a complex interpretation that attempts not only to describe and explain ‘absolutely different spaces’ and the social groups that sustain them, but that also tends to regard these as *exotic* formations endowed with almost mythical, ideal capacities. The tendency of considering the ‘other’ as an agent capable of radical transformation, as an alternative to our own logic and thought, represents the eagerness of discovering the cure against the advance of homogeneity, and exposes the propensity of inventing environments, which as conceptualizations of spatiality may challenge the conventional modes of spatial homotopia. As Soja suggests, heterotopias ‘are meant to detonate, to deconstruct, not to be poured back comfortably in the old containers’ (1996: 76).

Arguably, many of these quintessentially postmodern approaches, disenchanted with modern utopias, have searched for viable solutions and alternatives to ward against a contradictory and problematic process of spatial and social homogenization, social, cultural and economic polarization, unequal distribution of opportunities and development, the dissolution of a revolutionary, transformative potential of the spatial disciplines, and the demise of the possibility of social mobilization. In other words, utopia has become devoid of its once critical attributes, and has since been transformed into form-searching smoothness, the roughening out of fragments, and the depletion of those pockets of difference – the eyesores of otherness – that plague the postmodern landscapes. The criticism, it appears, lies in the depolitization of space and matter, and in the weakening of the transformative qualities of the built, as signifiers and as triggers for action. Within a world of fragmentation, and of the advancement of deaf homogeneity and the proliferation of non-places, the only possibility that seems to remain – at least in spatial discourse – lies within the unexplored, the exceptional and the exotic. When seen through this lens, heterotopia appears as the only realizable space of material and social possibility: the virtual possibility of a space of openness, and of radical social transformation.

But treating all spaces and human groups that deviate from the established order as potentially subversive, challenging and resistant formations, and hence reading into them all sorts of positive, utopian transformative powers endowed by their liminality, is to miss an essential point of Foucault’s heterotopia: as an ambivalent formulation meant to destabilize discourse and language, as a rather obscure conception endowed with negativity, defying clarity, logic and order. What remains from a vast majority of postmodern interpretations of heterotopia, unfortunately, are partial and incomplete classifications of what in reality are vulnerable and marginalized spaces; trapped between areas of development, devoid of any real powers

they are regarded as the alternatives to counterbalance a widespread homogeneity. These spaces in between should not be hastily classified as heterotopias; they may indicate the line between one thing or space and ‘another’, but, as both literal and metaphorical margins, they are also the material results of uneven development.

Neither materialized utopias, nor spaces of urban entropy, dystopia or socio-spatial vulnerability, heterotopias are not the margin. Spatial heterotopias are *exceptions* that differ so greatly from all categories that they cannot be fitted and fixed into any rigid taxonomy.

## Notes

- 1 In addition to the insightful account that Ritter and Knaller-Vlay provide in the editorial of *Other Spaces: The Affair of Heterotopia* of the inception of Foucault’s controversial term into the spatial disciplines since the 1970s (Ritter and Knaller-Vlay 1997: 14–19), we find an exhaustive overview of postmodern interpretations in D. Grahame Shane’s *Recombinant Urbanism*. He mentions Françoise Choay’s ‘Urbanism and semiology’ of 1969, Georg Teyssot’s ‘Heterotopias and the history of spaces’ of 1980, Robin Evans’ *The Fabrication of Virtue* of 1982, Susan Buck-Morss’s interpretation of Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* as a description of ‘heterotopias of illusion’ in her *The Dialectics of Seeing* of 1991, Kevin Hetherington’s *The Badlands of Modernity* of 1997, Margaret Crawford’s essay on Jerde’s mall design, Michael Sorkin’s *Variations on a Theme Park* of 1992, Ed Soja’s *Postmetropolis* of 2000, Benjamin Genocchio’s elaborations, and the work of the Belgians De Meulder and Heynen (Shane 2005: 236–9).
- 2 In this, Shane’s interpretation of heterotopias as ‘sites of exception’ is highly relevant. He argues that heterotopias ‘house all exceptions to the dominant city model’, helping to maintain ‘the city’s stability as a self-organizing system’. He further argues that heterotopias fulfil an important social and cultural role in that they regulate what he calls ‘specialized exclusion’: sites, where taboos, and individuals and groups that may be related to taboo, are segregated into closed areas. This mechanism of bordering is necessary for the maintenance of order and ‘purity’. Another interesting aspect in Shane’s interpretation is the link he traces to heterotopias as sites that arise as an ‘inverse logic’ to industrial societies: the construction of ‘parallel, separate worlds for specific and segregated inhabitants’ lends the interpretation of heterotopia a more contemporary meaning as ‘ambiguous structures’, which facilitate or arrest change (2005: 232).

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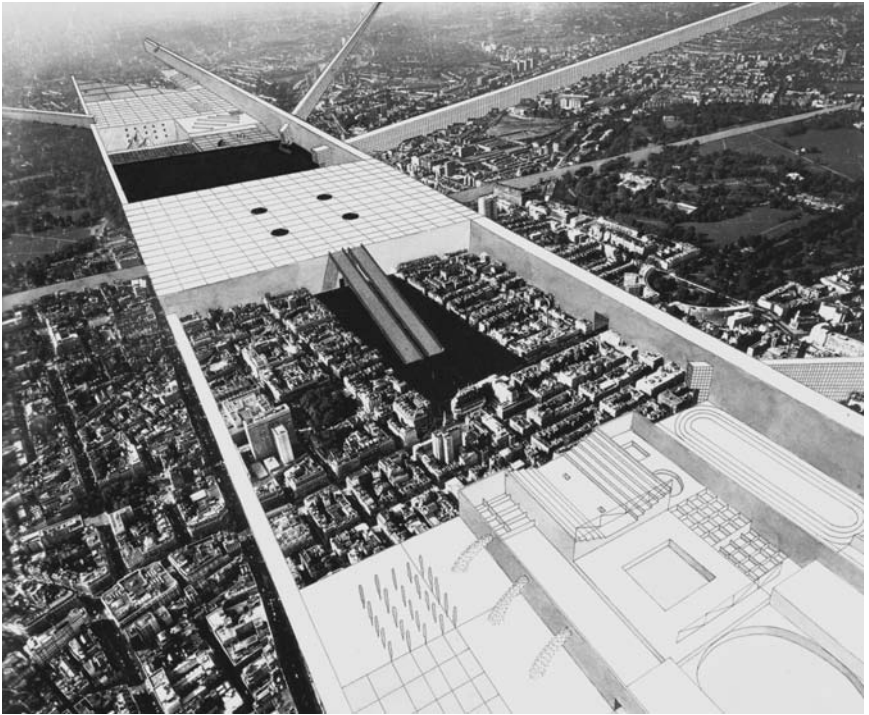
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Part 2

# Heterotopia revisited

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'The Strip, Aerial Perspective', from *Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), 1972.

# The many mirrors of Foucault and their architectural reflections

*M. Christine Boyer*

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Michel Foucault delivered the lecture 'Des espaces autres' ('Of other spaces') in the spring of 1967 to the Cercle d'études architecturales in Paris (Defert 1997). Calling for a spatial analytics he labelled 'hétérotopologie', Foucault's voice was accepted eagerly for it paralleled architects' new interest in the spatial composition of contemporary cities and their desire to leave behind the abstract spaces of modernism with their distribution of autonomous land uses and tower in the park schemes. These architects wanted to inject social science into architectural studies, to be involved with the practical reality of the city and to be engaged with urban struggles over housing. They required theoretical tools for their reforms and hoped Foucault's analyses would help (Violeau 2005).

Foucault's talk had a life of its own, circulating in notes, being read and misread innumerable times. It was open to countless interpretations because its meaning remained opaque and contradictory (Defert 1997). This chapter examines Foucault's confusing lecture by tacking back and forth between different writings, lectures and interviews just before and after he spoke with the Cercle d'études architecturales. In particular, it draws attention to his interest at that time in painting and the central role of the mirror and the spectator in works of art as these relate to his overall project of the 'history of the subject'.

A year before, in 1966, Foucault delivered a radio broadcast entitled 'Les Hétérotopias' on 7 December and another 'Le Corps utopique' on 21 December (Foucault 2004). In the first lecture he spoke clearly and simply about 'localized utopias', which children know very well. They lie at the bottom of the garden, up in the attic, or in the parents' great bed. In this bed a child can discover the ocean by swimming between the covers or the sky by bouncing on the springs and leaping into the air; the great bed becomes a forest where one can hide or a zone of titillating pleasure because the child knows that punishment will follow when the parents return. Having opened on 'localized utopias', Foucault turns to talk about 'counter-spaces' that only adults invent – real places situated outside all other spaces destined to efface, to neutralize, to compensate or purify the spaces they oppose.

He calls these heterotopias, and they cause him to dream of a science that would take for its object these absolutely 'other' spaces (2004: 41).

Outlining very carefully with many examples the principles that define such heterotopias, Foucault concludes that the most essential aspect is the fact that they are contestations of all other spaces. They can contest as in a brothel by creating an illusory space that dissipates and denounces bourgeois reality by showing it to be the real illusion, or inversely they can create a real space such as in a colony that is as ordered and meticulous as the remainder is disordered, messy and mixed up. Thus heterotopian spaces operate via a double logic: they are real spaces that show reality to be the illusion, or they are perfected spaces, more rational and ordered than normal spaces. The ship becomes Foucault's heterotopia par excellence – this morsel of floating space is the greatest instrument of economics and the greatest reserve of imagination, both real and illusory. Civilizations without boats he surmises are like infants whose parents do not have a large bed on which to play; their dreams will run dry, spying will replace adventure and the hideousness of the police will eradicate the beauty that shines forth from dashing corsairs.

It is obvious that Foucault is drawing many of his examples from literature to shore up his discussion of heterotopias, but he is also speaking about the necessity for every society to create thrilling spaces that instil imagination, that accumulate unto infinity all ideas and images in an archive, that establish vacation retreats where one returns to a state of primitive nudity. But on the other hand, these duplicitous heterotopias are the negation of what they try to achieve – the vacation retreat is linked to the museum and library as prompts to rethink the most ancient traditions and primitive ways of mankind, but instead of accumulating time as these institutions do, it effaces time by returning the vacationer to the garden of Eden and the time of original sin. Foucault's theorization of space again operates a double logic: by their very imaginations and illusions heterotopias sustain the normality of everyday space and yet they negate these illusions, replacing them with other imaginary, but more static places.

In his next radio talk, Foucault moves away from the discussion of heterotopian spaces towards an analysis of how subjects are formed. He opens 'Le Corps utopique' by referencing Proust, who every morning woke up to face the reality that he could not escape his body; it would always be there where he stood. Every morning he was condemned to contemplate the image his mirror imposed. The reason why adults create utopias, or so Foucault surmises, is in order to efface the body, to escape to a non-place outside all places, where they can dream of a bodiless body more beautiful, powerful and swift than in reality. In this utopia they erect a completely fictitious land filled with all kinds of fairies and magicians that aid their own transfigurations. In addition, there is another kind of utopia that effaces the body in the land of the dead. All those who seek an eternal body,

Foucault claims, deploy such effacements. He cites as examples Egyptian mummies or the frozen statues on tombs of a youth that will no longer pass by. But most important of all these utopias of effacement is the myth of the soul, lodged in the body but able to escape in order to see out of the windows of the eyes, to dream when the body sleeps, to survive when the body dies – a beautiful, pure and virtuous soul.<sup>1</sup>

Things get complicated in Foucault's account, for the body actually resists such effacements and erects its own utopias. It has no need of fairies to become both visible and invisible at once. Looking into the mirror, Foucault explains, he can see his head; it has two windows open onto the world through which he sees things that lie outside his body, but that enter into his head and settle there. From such illusions in his head all the body's dreams of utopia spring. A body is absolutely visible: looked at by another from head to toe, spied on from behind and glanced at over the shoulder. Simultaneously, a body is invisible – there is something from which it cannot be detached yet cannot be seen. Foucault can touch the back of his head or shoulder; he can see his body but only in fragments via the ruse of a mirror. The body, moreover, is a great actor in the land of its imagined utopias – it puts on masks, make-up and tattoos that uproot it from where it is and project it onto other spaces. Fantasies imprinted on the body are utopian images formed only in the mirage of a mirror, internalized inside the head. Here again there is a double logic at work in Foucault's theorization: the body erects fictitious utopias to escape the awful presence it sees in the mirror, to achieve a place outside itself, and yet the body rejects this effacement and erects utopias of its own, making them spring solely from its internalized mind, from images that have lodged there yet come from elsewhere as mirrored reflections.

Foucault's original discussion of utopias and heterotopias in *Les Mots et les choses* (1966) connected these two spatial tropes with language, for he claimed utopias tell stories about imaginary non-places, while heterotopias destroy syntax that holds words and things together, making it impossible to construct sentences. That is why Borges' description of a Chinese encyclopedia that opens the pages of *Les Mots et les choses* appears so improbable, so amusing, for it directly contests rational thought and how things are ordered, giving a lie to distinctions between the similar and the different, the like and unlike. In these radio talks, however, Foucault applies his notion of 'heterotopia' to space, not language, describing a range of disparate space-times like the mirror, the brothel, the vacation resort, or the library and the museum. All of these share the fact that 'I am there and yet I am not', as in the reflection of a mirror, or in a brothel where 'I am another'. They are illusory spaces and counter-sites related to all the other spaces they contest: thus a mirror reflects the context in which I stand yet contests it; the brothel is arranged as a private hotel but is not; the cemetery is an ordered perfected city of the dead. Such are the duplicitous doublings of

the mirror image in Foucault's theorization: they are compensatory 'other' spaces and contesting counter-sites; real and illusory, they efface the body with illusions of purity and mark it with imaginary images. They pose a conundrum that Foucault can never answer: what is known from the visible, from the sayable, what from the visible, from the invisible?

### **The ear of the architect**

Such obtuse discussion of spaces of illusion, contestation and rupture – Daniel Defert has explained – is what reached the ears of architects in 1966 and what prompted them to invite Foucault to speak. But Defert quickly asks 'Is the architect's ear a sufficiently respected site in our societies?' (1997: 276). Both Foucault and Defert raise many questions about the political commitment and disciplinary obligations of architects. In an interview with Paul Rabinow in 1982 Foucault recalled

having been invited, in 1966, by a group of architects to do a study of space, of something that I called at that time 'heterotopias', those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others. The architects worked on this, and at the end of the study someone spoke up – a Sartrean psychologist – who firebombed me, saying that *space* is reactionary and capitalist, but *history* and *becoming* are revolutionary. This absurd discourse was not at all unusual at the time. Today everyone would be convulsed with laughter at such a pronouncement, but not then.

(Foucault and Rabinow 1982: 361)

Defert blames architects for being interested, after 1968, in nineteenth-century utopian spaces, yet failing to understand how these were linked to the expansion of capitalism. Architects went on field trips to inspect the premises of still existing *Familistères* and housing estates but never examined the manner in which these projects articulated both the rationalization of consumption and the rational occupation of space (Defert 1997: 277–8). In spite of these misunderstandings of counter-spaces, Foucault worked in 1972 on the history of collective equipment and its relationship to the city with a group directed by Felix Guattari, a group containing several architects, and on the politics of nineteenth-century housing with another group of architects under the leadership of François Bégin (Deleuze *et al.* 1989: 105–12). Both times the research methodology began with the discourse surrounding the creation of an architectural entity as an object of political and administrative intervention. Neither of these studies referred to 'heterotopias', but were intent on developing a mode of analysis deploying spatial metaphors and concepts in order to bring questions of power to the surface (Foucault and Rabinow 1982: 178–9).

In the same interview mentioned above, Rabinow asked Foucault to explain how his focus on space was different from architects' interest in erecting buildings or walls. Foucault replied that architects ensure that people are distributed in space; they canalize circulation and regulate or code reciprocal relations. Thus, for Foucault, an architect was concerned with form – walls, corridors, floors that act as frames or containers for social relations. He takes as example an architectural historian who wonders at what point in time it became possible to locate a chimney inside a house and how this affected social relationships. To the contrary, Foucault was interested in the history of thought and how space and ideas were indivisibly linked. He would ask, for instance, 'Why did people struggle to find the way to put a chimney inside the house? Or why did they put their techniques to this use?' (Foucault and Rabinow 1982: 362). The history of thought asked what they were thinking of within the discipline of architecture that pushed them to make such a shift. No doubt, the failure of architects to subject their own discourse to critical reflection, to move away from their obsession with the object itself, also made Foucault uncomfortable.

### **The diagnosis of the present**

While Foucault was developing his thoughts on 'heterotopias', he was teaching at the University of Tunis and living in the village of Sidi-Bou-Said, having moved there in September 1966 just after the publication of *Les Mots et les choses*. He would remain there until the summer of 1968, happy to escape from the celebrity this book created, requiring him to talk about any and every topic of interest. He also was turning towards political engagement. In an interview and a talk given in Tunis during the spring of 1967, Foucault proclaimed that a philosopher must be a diagnostician of the present conditions of human existence – an analyser of the practical and theoretical relationships that define a given cultural conjuncture. He meant 'culture' in the broadest sense of the word, including works of art, political institutions, social regulations, assumptions of rationality, and by conjuncture he implied a network of elements, strata or signs in a series that together define how society is organized, how individuals form their subjectivity.<sup>2</sup> These networks, moreover, are stored in an archive consisting of marginal traces of language, works of art, architecture and the city. In describing these traces, the diagnostician looks for regularities, some discursive elements without words, some invisibilities heretofore unnoticed, but that form the manner in which subjects of knowledge are created. One begins with discourse, before moving to the object; it is a question of the history of thought, not of architectural objects.

During the time Foucault was in Tunisia, he was busy writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, reflecting on his methodology and trying to clarify problems created by using concepts in *Les Mots et les choses*, such

as ‘discontinuity’, ‘rupture’, ‘threshold’ ‘limit’, ‘series’ and ‘transformation’.<sup>3</sup> He was describing the space from which he was speaking, the space that made possible his investigations. He would explain at the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that his discourse on discourses was not looking for hidden laws, concealed origins, nor a general model, but ‘trying to operate a decentring that leaves no privilege to any centre . . . its task is to *make* differences: to constitute them as objects, to analyse them, and to define their concept . . . it is continually making *differentiations*, it is a *diagnosis*’ (Foucault 1972: 205–6).

Diagnosis and differences return us to ‘heterotopia’, a term Foucault borrowed from medical discourse and meaning tissue that is not normal where it is located, or an organ that has been dislocated. Abnormal location, not the internal composition, is the important consideration in a diagnosis. Thus heterotopias, as spatial constructs or figures of thought, are differentiations inserted into the city or discourse that appear out of place, abnormal or illusory. They contest the normal order of things.

Foucault claimed it was in Tunis that he understood economic and political exploitation for the first time. Student agitation had begun at the University of Tunis in 1966; violence flared again following the Six Day War in June 1967, although such nationalistic and racist protests at first appalled Foucault. Unrest continued, and during the spring of 1968 he saw his own students not only brutally beaten but condemned afterwards to harsh prison sentences of 10, 12 or 14 years. He helped students escape the police, hiding their duplicating machine in his own house, enduring harassment by the police and pressuring the Tunisian authorities to intervene, although they refused. What amazed Foucault was the dedication of these students to change without any desire for power, with no vanity of theoretical discussions, nor any personal reward. He would henceforth be dedicated to specific struggles keeping a distance from verbal argumentation and sectarian strife (Eribon 1991: 192–5; Triki 2004). To mark his political awareness, Foucault concludes *The Archaeology of Knowledge* by asking readers the following question: ‘What is that fear which makes you seek, beyond all boundaries, ruptures, shifts, and divisions, the great historico-transcendental destiny of the Occident? . . . It seems to me that the only reply to this question is a political one’ (1972: 210).

Foucault returned to France in November of 1968 to direct the Department of Philosophy at the newly formed University of Vincennes. There would be more student unrest and he would continue to protest against police provocation and calculated repression (Eribon 1991: 210–11). In 1970 he was elected to the College de France and his career took yet another shift as he turned his attention to prison reform and to the study of how mechanisms of power were deployed. In 1971 Foucault, with several others, established the Groupe d’information sur les prisons (GIP) in order to shed light on what he described as ‘one of the hidden regions of our social

system, one of the dark compartments of our existence. It is our right to know. We want to know'.<sup>4</sup> In France at the time, no one but prisoners, guards or lawyers had the right to enter a prison. GIP created an 'other' space from which prisoners, those who had been deprived of freedom, exposed to intolerable situations, were given the right to speak for themselves about what they had experienced. It was not about intellectuals exposing the truth, calling for liberal reforms, but about those who had seen the situation producing the discourse, confronting with their own statements the spaces of silence, changing and resisting the logic of legal discourse and the architectural structure of society. The role of GIP was to see that prisoners' revelations were disseminated as quickly as possible, to aid in their 'investigations for intolerance' and to help prevent the further exercise of oppression (Deleuze 1886: 272–81; Eribon 1991: 224–37). One of the concrete proposals GIP called for was a campaign to 'abolish police records'.

In a televised debate between Noam Chomsky and Foucault in November 1971, Foucault was asked why he was 'so interested in politics'. He replied:

[W]hat blindness, what deafness, what density of ideology would have to weigh me down to prevent me from being interested in what is probably the most crucial subject to our existence, that is to say the society in which we live, the economic relations within which it functions, and the system of power which defines the regular forms and the regular permissions and prohibitions of our conduct.

(Chomsky and Foucault 2006: 36–7)

Reflecting back on Foucault's involvement with GIP, Gilles Deleuze remarked that:

Foucault considered a statement to be something very particular. Not just any discourse makes a statement. Two dimensions are necessary: seeing and speaking. It is more or less words and things. Words are the production of statements, things are the seeing, the visible formation. The idea is to see something imperceptible in the visible.

(Deleuze 1986: 278–9)

Giving primacy to the statement, Foucault nevertheless claimed that visibility is never reducible to statements, because a visibility is governed by its own set of rules, it contests the articulable with its own forms and logic (Deleuze 1988: 51). Thus, prisoners who had seen and experienced the system of exclusion stood in an 'other' space and with their own statements contested the power of the state that sought to defend itself against such incursions. Yet there always remained something beyond what could be put into words, a void that opened towards a new understanding. As Defert explained, 'archaeology' for Foucault was a middle region, a space of order that allowed



one to think and to be critical. It was the space below perception, discourses or sciences, 'where the visible and the verbal are articulated' in language, through the gaze, and across space (Defert 1997: 275).

### **The act of representation**

Working on the obtuse relationship between the articulable and the visible, Foucault returned to Tunis in May 1971. During this last visit, on 20 May, he delivered a talk entitled 'La Peinture de Manet' – an essay linked to a book with the title *Le Noire et la couleur*, under contract to Editions de Minuit since June of 1966 (Eribon 1991: 190; Triki 2004: 57). This work on Manet proved to be difficult, resulting in several attempts in which Foucault tried to clarify his argument in lectures given in Milan in 1967, Tokyo and Florence in 1970, and finally in Tunis (Imbert 2003; Nale 2005). The essay and book were never written, and what remains are notes taken by those who attended his lectures, now assembled and published as a facsimile (Foucault 2003).

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault discusses two different ways to analyse a painting. One could try to reconstitute what the painter was intending to show, what philosophy or science shaped the painter's world view and is evident in the work of art. Or one can consider the painter involved with a larger process and undertake an archaeological analysis with a different aim:

[I]t would try to discover whether space, distance, depth, colour, light, proportions, volumes, and contours were not, at the period in question, considered, named, enunciated, and conceptualized in a discursive practice; and whether the knowledge that this discursive practice gives rise to was not embodied perhaps in theories and speculations, in forms of teaching and codes of practice, but also in processes, techniques and even in the very gesture of the painter . . . It would try to show that, at least in one of its dimensions, it is discursive practice that is embodied in techniques and effects. In this sense, the painting is not a pure vision that must then be transcribed into the materiality of space; nor is it a naked gesture whose silent and eternally empty meanings must be freed from subsequent interpretations. It is shot through – and independently of scientific knowledge (*connaissance*) and philosophical themes – with the positivity of a knowledge (*savoir*).

(Foucault 1972: 193–4)

Such is the conjunction of ideas surrounding Foucault at the point he delivered his talk to architects: he was interested in works of art and spatial representation – both exemplary places of visibility – in order to diagnose possible visible configurations and how they were linked to a network of

relationships and statements that defined the subject – its subjectivity as well as subjugation.<sup>5</sup> But he is also beginning to ask what it is that forces a subject to resist, to form a counter-site. Recurring in Foucault's discourse on 'other' spaces and on painting is the place of the spectator-subject, along with metaphors of the gaze and the mirror. In obscure and confused operations, Foucault is posing the problem of how the visible confronts the articulable, and how a counter-site is opened up.

Consider Foucault's description in *Les Mots et les choses* of two operators – a mirror and a painting – at work in Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. What is represented in the mirror is not represented in the painting and vice versa. The painter in the painting is looking at a space outside the work, the space not only of the subjects that he is painting, but also the space that we the spectators hold. We cannot see the subject of his painting; we see only the back of the canvas. It is the mirror on the farther wall that captures the subject and gives visibility to that which resides outside the view: King Philip IV and his wife, Mariana (Foucault 1973: 3–16). Foucault notes that there is a void in this representation, the disappearance of the very persons the painter is trying to represent, for whom the painting would only be a mere resemblance, never an accurate reflection. Thanks to the complicity of the mirror, this work of art becomes the emblem of representational space, because we the spectators consider it to be a realistic spatial representation. The spectator turns the mirror of resemblance into a mirror of representation. Suddenly Foucault breaks into his own discussion on the visible or invisible, resemblance or representation:

But the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say. And it is in vain that we attempt to show, by the use of images, metaphors, or similes, what we are saying; the space where they achieve their splendour is not that deployed by our eyes but that defined by the sequential elements of syntax.

(Foucault 1973: 9)

In 'La Peinture de Manet', the talk Foucault delivered in Tunis in 1971, he confesses not to be a specialist on Manet, nor for that matter on painting. He is tentative about his approach for he is not going to speak about Manet in general, but will talk about an event Manet created, in whose wake all modern art of the twentieth century became possible. Foucault had written in 1967:

Flaubert is to the library what Manet is to the museum. They both produced works in a self-conscious relationship to earlier paintings or

texts – or rather to the aspect in painting or writing that remains indefinitely open. They erect their art within the archive.

(Foucault 1977: 92)

In this 1971 talk, Manet's work represents for Foucault another rupture: he was the first to draw attention to a painting as a material object, not a space of illusory representation, not an object viewed by spectators from an ideal point in front of the work. These characteristics have governed painting since the Renaissance and enabled spectators to forget that a work of art is merely a representation and thus to enter into its illusion. Foucault maintains that all painting since the Renaissance had been governed by this 'game of dodging, of hiding, of illusion, or elision' until Manet broke the rules of the game (as quoted by Nale 2005: 145). Manet posed a different question: he showed a painting to be none other than a simple rectangular surface, covered with coloured paints, governed by the vertical and horizontal axes of its frame, filled with the real light of day and viewed by a mobile spectator. Turning a work of art into a material object was the fundamental act that allowed representation itself to be eliminated (Imbert 2003).

Discussing the place of the spectator, Foucault selected only one work, *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, for demonstration. Here again there is a mirror at play, occupying almost the entire background of the painting. Since it is a mirror reflection, moreover, it ought to reproduce the same elements here and there, but it does not. There is a distortion between that which is represented in the mirror and that which ought to be reflected. Manet has represented incompatible spaces, incompatible reflections, and incompatible lighting arrangements. The woman behind the bar and the spectator simultaneously occupy different spaces and make it impossible to discern where exactly to place the painter. This is not the illusory space of representation as seen in *Las Meninas*, but a scene surveyed by a mobile spectator following a path of imaginary displacement (Foucault 2003). Such displacement dislodges the spectator from a fixed normative position, and from accepting without question the illusory representation (Kriegel 2003). It is in this manner that Manet offers the spectator a new freedom, a new mobility and a new visibility from a series of different positions (Marie 2003). Foucault turns Manet's painting into the inverse of *Las Meninas*. It is not about a mirror of resemblance, one that abets the entanglement of vision with representation, but a mirror that authorizes and manipulates representation and opens up questions of how the mind conjures up imaginary worlds. The mirror redoubles the incompatibility of vision and representation, allowing the spectator to comprehend the imaginary experience of the gaze via its imaginary displacement (Perret 2003).

Turning finally to Foucault's lecture 'Of other spaces', we note that, between the non-place of utopias where society forms perfected images of itself and heterotopias that are counter-spaces, or scenes where otherwise

disconnected elements coexist, Foucault erects a third space – the mirror. This mirror is a virtual space, or non-place, where I see my image reflected there where I am not, yet my gaze in this mirror is directed back at myself. Thus I turn from this reflected image of myself to reconstitute myself where I am in the likeness I perceive in the mirror.

Foucault's account of the mirror is a place of devilish doubling, as we have seen. It is necessarily a space of comparison between the virtual image in the mirror and the image of the self, comparison between an image of utopia and dystopia, the past and the present, the outline over there and the details up close. Hence the 'in between' becomes a place of haunting, of a shadowy silhouette in which something is missing or repressed, the ghost of an 'other' reality, lurking in the visible that differs (Harootunian 1999). This something else, this 'other' space reflected in the mirror, is a relationship of power that determines, shapes or moulds the subject as it folds back on itself to form itself in a perceived likeness. But it could also be a prompt towards liberation as the analysis of Manet attempts to suggest.

In modern societies, Foucault argued, individuals are subjugated by disguised networks of power; they become guardians of their own imprisonment (Seigel 1990). Thus Foucault considered all questions of identity, of who we are, to be a matter of power deployed on subjects from the moment of their birth. They are police questions about identity papers open to interpretation in an endless game of power and truth. But the mirror in Foucault's analysis of Manet is also an attempt to clarify the active role of the spectator, the story the subject tells of itself, a play of reverberating illusions and 'othering'.

The formation of subjects was always Foucault's main interest in all of his writings and was linked as well to his politics of active engagement in liberation movements for prisoners, asylum inmates, student resistances – all targets of administrative power and all inspired by the dream of a radical subjective freedom (Foucault 1982; Seigel 1990: 275–6). Foucault's work studies three different sets of relations that determine what a subject must be, in reality or in the imaginary, if it is to become the object of this or that knowledge. This is what he meant by 'subjectification', and why he studied the 'human sciences' as fields of knowledge in which 'man' was problematized as an object to be known (for instance *Les Mots et les choses*). But Foucault was also interested in the process of 'subjection' or 'subjugation' – how a subject is treated as 'other', submitting to or controlled by the process of normalization; how madmen, patients or delinquents are divided from others as abnormal objects of knowledge (for instance *Histoire de la folie*). Then in 1975–6 his writings take a third shift in his 'history of the subject', looking at the other side of power relations – those that resist, push back and are free (Harrer 2005). He turns to study how the subject constitutes the self as object for itself submitting to an aesthetics or ethics of the self (for instance *Histoire de la sexualité*).

In a 1977 interview concerning 'Powers and strategies', Foucault wondered about those who resisted the domination of power relations. 'What is it that sustains them, what gives them their energy, what is the force at work in their resistance, what makes them stand and fight?' (1980: 136). These questions were inspired by his hope for subjective freedom: what is it that would enable an individual to resist the domination of power relations? Liberation and subjugation work as counter-forces against each other in Foucault's thought:

Do not think that one has to be sad [he wrote] in order to be militant, even though the thing one is fighting is abominable. It is the connection of desire to reality (and not its retreat into the forms of representation) that possesses revolutionary force.

(Foucault 1985: xiii–xiv)

An 'other' space is offered to prisoners to speak of what they saw, to the self as a space from which to resist the powers of normalization, to the spectator of a work of art to see from a different perspective. This space of the 'other' is a space of contestation and reverberation, never closed nor completed but open to constant reinterpretation and invention. Hence, the double logic deployed by Foucault: spaces of normalization coexist alongside different modes of existence, different temporalities and spatialities that constitute counter-discourses and 'other' spaces. The danger is to take the image or representation as a norm, as a convention such as Renaissance perspectival space, and destroy, cover over or eliminate all other images or points of view that Manet opened up. Foucault's concern was how to keep these other images and counter-discourses open to reinterpretation, inclusion and uncertainty. How do we create in the empty space where we the spectators are positioned, in the bodily mirror image of reflection, new relational possibilities?

## **Architectural reflections**

The strategic place of the mirror in the work of Foucault never reached the ears or eyes of architects as they sought to reduce heterotopian space to any autonomous fragment set in opposition to the compositional totalization of the city. They thought that fragmentation alone could offset the terrifying power of architectural dreams to make all cities rational and beautiful. The network of relationships surrounding the visible and the articulable, the variety of subject positions, the indivisible intertwining of space and ideas, and all the necessary confusions of utopic, dystopic and heterotopian spaces, fell outside what most architects heard or saw. Only one architectural project from those years appears to breathe in the same spirit if not the literal message of an 'other' space and of 'thinking otherwise':

Rem Koolhaas's and Elia Zenghelis's 1972 competition entry *Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, with collages, illustrations and paintings by Zoe Zenghelis and Madelon Vriesendorp.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of this competition project, Koolhaas was a student at the Architectural Association (AA) in London and Elia Zenghelis a professor of his section. All students at the AA were asked to study and analyse a building and during their summer vacations they tended to examine Mediterranean villas or Greek fishing villages, optimistic that architecture could participate in the liberation of mankind. Koolhaas went instead to Berlin in the summer of 1971 to look at and document the Berlin Wall.<sup>7</sup> He was amazed, even shocked, at what he saw, for it inverted all of his expectations and perceptions of reality (Zenghelis 1985; Neumeier and Roger 1990; Koolhaas 1995a). It was West Berlin, not the East, that was imprisoned by its encircling wall, yet paradoxically this enclosure in the middle of another country still was called free, interrupting normal logic, while the wall itself, far from being a single object, assumed different conditions, sometimes ephemeral, other times incorporating ruins left standing; it was marked with the scars of history, made of barbed wire, bricks, even trash. It not only encompassed a huge swathe of open terrain – a no man's land – in the heart of the city, but presented different appearances on each of its sides. A city of split realities separated into two ideology camps compelled those on each side to gaze over the wall at each other yet remain a captive of their own imaginary beliefs and ideals. Across an intensely guarded no man's land some people would escape, some would be killed, each driven forward by imaginary illusions. This was a brilliant allegory with which to critique the visionary architecture and naive optimism of the 1960s, yet ambiguous enough to allow multiple readings and interpretations. It involved examining the multidisciplinary configuration surrounding an architectural object in the manner that Foucault might advise, and it dealt with spaces of inversion that impacted subjectivity while creating a void from which one could speak.

Koolhaas proclaimed that his encounter with the Berlin Wall was his first psychological confrontation with the powerful side of architecture. It was the first step towards a critical understanding that absence in architecture was often stronger than presence.<sup>8</sup> The void, emptiness, the *terrain vague* would henceforth represent for Koolhaas a space waiting to be cultivated with 'programmatic potential'. This fascination eventually turned into his oft repeated maxim: 'Where there is nothing, everything is possible; where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible' (1995b: 199). '*Imagining Nothingness is: Pompeii . . . the Manhattan grid . . . the Berlin Wall . . .* They all reveal that emptiness of the metropolis is not empty, that each void can be used for programs whose insertion in the existing texture is a procrustean effort leading to the mutilation of both activity and texture' (Koolhaas 1995b: 202; italics in original).

Having presented his shocking thesis of ‘The Berlin Wall as architecture’ to his AA professors, a negative manifesto about the devastating force of the wall that separated the good from the bad, the beautiful from the ugly, freedom from captivity, Koolhaas inverted this theme and applied it to London in the 1972 competition entry for a ‘City with a significant environment’. Koolhaas’s and Zenghelis’s manifesto *Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture* proclaimed that ‘It is possible to imagine a mirror image of this terrifying Architecture; a force as intense and devastating but in the service of positive intentions’ (Koolhaas *et al.* 1972: 5). They placed a gigantic strip of ‘metropolitan desirability’, cutting across the heart of London, a zone protected by its walls from the rest of the city. This void contained between two walls was divided into 11 autonomous squares and filled with the flotsam and jetsam of collective monuments.<sup>9</sup> Since London was losing population and distressingly devastated by commercial development, so the narrative ran, such a strip of highly charged primordial intensity would quickly attract inhabitants to this good city and bring about a veritable exodus from its ruinous side. Every architectural wall functions as a machine of elimination: to separate and to exclude, to circumscribe and to avoid those things that bear offence. Thus each liberating square contained fictive scenarios that not only induced withdrawal from the old city but as mirror images of architectural mythology voided them as well, by exposing what architects did not wish to see within their own productions. The scenarios deployed a double logic of utopian dreams and divergent critique of the many shortcomings of contemporary architecture.

The tip of the Strip is where the corrective urge of architecture was most obvious – a battle waged between the outmoded and the new parts of the city, between preservationists and modernists, between the ideal and the real. Deploying a Corbusian sweeping gesture, only a few monuments, divested of original intent, were allowed to reside within the good city; all the rest would be destroyed. Next is the square of Allotments, offering each prisoner a plot for private cultivation, critiquing the manias for collective action and communal life that were embedded in the trend of megastructures and housing complexes of the 1960s. Continuing its parody of architecture, Allotments offer prisoners small houses built of luxurious materials that subliminally instil contentment and gratitude. Unfortunately, such beneficence requires constant supervision to monitor dissension, to dampen disturbances and to inhibit exchange of ideas. This square in addition replicates the stagnation of architectural theory by bringing time to a standstill – nothing actually happens albeit in expectant exhilaration.

Associations are kept open across each scenario, allowing the reader to make comparisons and differentiations: this is not the ritual acceptance of modernists’ dull minimal housing units, nor raucous promises of liberation from ideological dogmatists, nor naive utopias of a mobile city of instant communication that can drop in and tune up the suburbs. This is a negative

manifesto out to destroy the city and all reformist theories intent on improving it. It is a machine for eliminating what had already been eliminated by the exodus to the suburbs. Thus the Reception Area, or indoctrination square of voluntary prisoners, begins the process of renourishing the senses of recruits impoverished by having resided too long in the disappearing city. Yet, simultaneously, it is an obvious critique of the ambiguous practice of citizen/client participation in project design, for this area is overwhelmed by amateur prisoners who continually refine architectural inventions so that the Strip will be increasingly hedonistic and luxurious.

Counter-spaces continue their inversions. The Park of Four Elements of air, fire, water and earth confronts the hedonistic pleasures of aromatic air and mood-enhancing drugs, spectacles of sound and light, artificial desert retreats, and the return to monumental megastructures so prevalent in the 1960s. While the Square of the Baths, a social condenser producing new behaviours, questions the belief instilled in modern architecture that newly liberated social beings would be engendered by the purity of its forms, the minimalism of its materials, or the rationalization of its spaces. In opposition to this tiresome purity, the Baths bring illicit motivations and hidden desires to the surface in a spectacular display of hedonistic indulgences and collective encounters.



'The Reception Area', from *Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), 1972.



The Square of the Captive Globe is the University of the Strip, an incubator of competing ideologies, theoretical arguments and moral conflicts.<sup>10</sup> This square parodies architectural academics whose quest for stable truths, impossible rationalizations and moral certitudes are aggressive moves in a play of intellectual prowess involving group allegiance to false doctrines and questionable strategies, but whose psychological motives are now made visible to all.

A series of colourful collages heightened by their associative allusions fill out what the verbal descriptions cannot. These representations are intended to invert the mute language of modernist abstractions and allow it to speak via a list of signifying references, a flow of associations and clues (Porphyrios 1997). On top of a postcard illustrating the ruinous landscape of no man's land is placed the expressionist symbol of warning that Maria sounded in Fritz Lang's 1927 film *Metropolis* to warn of the city's collapse and the children's potential demise. The image is peopled with *Metropolis*'s somnambulant workers walking along and across the ruins; workers who unwittingly destroyed the city their own hands had built.

Another collage shows an observation stand with spectators looking over the enclosing wall, across no man's land, to a series of duplicated images of the Empire State Building and beyond to the background that records the infrared image of the heat and energy Manhattan emits. Every visitor



'Training the New Arrivals', from *Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), 1972.

to Berlin had climbed such a tower to gaze ‘over there’ and to wonder what everyday life might be like. This collage immortalizes the skyline of desire and the wishful dream of escape to a new brighter world, but it is a dangerous dream of potential self-destruction, because the silhouetted figures of Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis, clad as inmates, are viewed running towards this dream. They do so by crossing the voided death strip of no man’s land.<sup>11</sup>

Architecture after 1968 was a turning point for both Elia Zenghelis and Rem Koolhaas. They were acutely aware that architects bathed in an illusion of imagery and a tyrannical mystification that appeared to be more real than lived-in reality. It was necessary to redeem architecture from this torture of realism. Koolhaas felt:

[I]t is ironic that in architecture, May ’68 – ‘under the pavement, beach’ – has been translated only into *more* pavement, *less* beach. Maybe architects’ fanaticism – a myopia that has led them to believe that architecture is not only the vehicle for all that is good, but also the explanation for all that is bad – is not merely a professional deformation but a response to the horror of architecture’s opposite, an instinctive recoil from the void, a fear of *nothingness*.

(Koolhaas 1995b: 200)

What is missing is the ability to imagine, to idealize and reinterpret present-day reality, without objectifying it and subjecting it to the truth. Zenghelis believes the gift of imagination is

to represent that which is in the mind’s eye: what one has heard of but never seen. It is the ability of coming to terms with the conflict that arises in our order of existence, when the latency of a ‘future form’ is perceived out of our world of references and requires a *technique* to materialize it: the discourse that will give form to the conjectures of our psychology.

(Zenghelis 2005: 255)

## Conclusion

There are many implicit parallels to draw between the diagnostic work of Foucault and that of *Exodus*, for they are both contentious logics breaking normal assumptions and decentring discourses that question the posture of disciplinary thought and the norms that regulate subjectivity and subjugation. In making these open-ended associations, it may help to remember that the Attic Prison Riots took place on 9–12 September 1971: an infamous incident where inmates took guards as prisoners, holding them hostage until their demands were met for better living conditions, showers, education and

vocational training. During the recapture of the prison 39 prisoners were killed, but for four days power relations had been inverted. Michel Foucault was a visiting professor at the University of Buffalo in the Department of Modern Language and Literature during the autumn and spring of 1971–2. He visited Attica in April 1972 and was struck by how this well-organized machine of exclusion and supervision inevitably evoked resistance. The prison, he later remarked in an interview, ‘is a machine for elimination, a form of prodigious stomach, a kidney that consumes, destroys, breaks up, and then rejects, and that consumes in order to eliminate what it has already eliminated’ (Foucault and Simon 1972: 27).

Up to this point in time, Foucault had been asking the following question: ‘Through what system of exclusion, by eliminating whom, by creating what division, through what game of negation and rejection can society begin to function?’ (Foucault and Simon 1972: 28). Now he asked the inverse question. The prison was too complex a machine to be reduced to a purely negative function of exclusion; it possessed positive functions as well. It is the same positive production of subject positions and consciousness that *Exodus* satirically tries to capture: the manner in which society and disciplinary practices deliberately exclude desires, dreams and imaginary narrations from their emaciated city and produce in the purity and functionality of their reformations voluntary prisoners, who in turn unwittingly become complicit in their own exploitation. How is it that representation, an illusory image formed in the mirror, kills imagination and critical perspective? Foucault understood that

[c]ritique doesn’t have to be the premise of a deduction that concludes, ‘this then is what needs to be done’. It should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in processes of conflict and confrontation, essays in refusal.

(Foucault 2000: 236)

## Notes

- 1 At the time of this radio broadcast, Foucault was teaching a course on Descartes in conjunction with Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations*. He was also teaching a course on painting from the Renaissance to Manet. Both of these courses require further investigation in their materials for they parallel Foucault’s work on ‘other’ spaces (Eribon 1991: 188–9).
- 2 Interview with Gérard Fellous, 12 April 1967, and a talk ‘Folie et civilisation’, April 1967 (Triki 2004: 51–63).
- 3 In the summer of 1968, the *Cahiers pour l’analyse* published Foucault’s response to the Paris Epistemological Circle, some of which would form the ‘Introduction’ to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. His text is full of spatial metaphors worthy of further exploration (Sheridan 1980: 93).
- 4 The text of the appeal of GIP, written mostly by Foucault, was proclaimed on 8 February 1971 and reprinted in Eribon (1991: 224–5).

- 5 Foucault was also rewriting an essay on René Magritte, originally written in 1968 and published as the small booklet *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* in 1973 (English translation, *This Is Not a Pipe*, 1983).
- 6 Rem Koolhaas studied at the AA from 1966 to 1972. The two architects submitted *Exodus* to a competition sponsored by the Italian magazine *Casabella* on the theme of 'City with a significant environment', receiving first prize in 1972. It was published by the magazine in June 1973.
- 7 Rem Koolhaas as quoted in De Cauter and Heynen (2005). De Cauter and Heynen have reassembled the history of the *Exodus* project reviewing its various transformations and additions.
- 8 Interview with Rem Koolhaas by Hans Ulrich Obrist. Available online: [http://artnode.se/artorbit/issue4/i\\_koolhaas/i\\_koolhaas.html](http://artnode.se/artorbit/issue4/i_koolhaas/i_koolhaas.html) (accessed 10 January 2007).
- 9 The Strip of *Exodus* was influenced by Superstudio's *Continuous Monument*. Koolhaas had invited Natalini to lecture at the AA in 1971. It is also influenced by the linear cities of Leonidov, which Koolhaas began to research in 1968, accompanying his colleague Gerrit Oorthuys to Moscow (Zenghelis 1985).
- 10 This information on the Square of the Captive Globe appears only in the re-edition of *Exodus* in Martin van Schaik and Otakar Mácel (eds) *Exit Utopia* (Munich/Berlin/London/New York: Prestel, 2005: 248). It was painted by Zoe Zenghelis and sent to Koolhaas in 1973 as a surprise. It is obvious that the further elaboration of *Exodus* overlaps with the development of *Delirious New York* (De Cauter and Heynen 2005: 275, footnote 15).
- 11 Rem Koolhaas was at Cornell School of Architecture in 1972, and Elia Zenghelis was teaching at Columbia University. They had already escaped the confines of European academic architecture (Neumeier and Roger 1990).

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The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Plaza in Hongkong Central (Norman Foster and Partners). On Sundays (above), the plaza is a popular hangout for Filipino maids. During the week (below), the place returns to its role as passage (photograph: Marco Cenzatti).

# Heterotopias of difference

Marco Cenzatti

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‘Frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent.’ This is how Edward Soja (1996) characterizes Michel Foucault’s article on heterotopia. And yet he devotes a full chapter to it in his book *Thirdspace*. Indeed, the short essay with which Foucault introduced the concept of heterotopia in social sciences is as famous as it is confusing. Perhaps in part the confusion – and frustration – is due to the character of the article, which is not a real essay, but notes for a lecture. In part, however, the confusion is unavoidable, as the term from its very beginning addressed puzzling situations. In medicine, where the word was coined, it stands to indicate a condition of growth of normal tissue in unexpected ways and places. Already there the term’s penchant for ambiguity is present, questioning binary divisions between healthy/normal and sick/abnormal. In the introduction to *The Order of Things* Foucault pushes the term further, to indicate situations where ‘fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately’ in one location and where the impossibility to give coherence and even to fully identify these possible orders makes it impossible even to give an adequate expression in language. In his 1967 lecture notes the same theme continues, but with a different focus: space, instead of ‘words and things’. The ‘possible orders’ now refer to fragments of different possible spatial orders.

As heterotopias ‘desiccate speech’ and ‘stop words in their tracks’, the attempt to clarify their spaces is probably futile. Yet, as Soja’s chapter shows, Foucault’s concept keeps being called upon, used and discussed. In fact, it seems that interest in heterotopias is still on the rise. In this chapter I’d like to propose that this renewed interest is due both to social changes that have occurred since Foucault’s article and to changes in the character of heterotopias themselves. In particular, three areas of discussion help to identify the reasons for both changes. First of all, there are the studies that propose a shift from the mass society of Fordism to the flexible socio-economic organization of post-Fordism. This change has helped to introduce ‘difference’ as a new term in the equation normality/deviance on which Foucault based his heterotopias. As a consequence, heterotopias of deviation are no longer alone. Difference, too, has its other spaces. Second, there is



the argument (that Foucault helped to establish) concerning the increasing importance of social space and its production. Following Henri Lefebvre's characterization of space, I suggest that heterotopias are 'spaces of representation' and vanish when the social relations that produced them end. Finally, social differentiation has also enlarged the debate on the public sphere. The 1960s' view of a universal and a-spatial public sphere is increasingly challenged by the notion of a multiplicity of public spheres that are public only for the social groups that produced them. Heterotopias are part of this group-specific publicness and make evident that public spheres always imply public spaces.

### **Naturally, a periodization**

A periodization of heterotopias is already present in the first and second of the principles with which Foucault characterizes his 'other spaces'. Heterotopias, Foucault tells us, are common to all civilizations, but they change, taking different forms and purposes in different social contexts. New types of heterotopia appear while existing ones, 'as [their] history unfolds, can . . . function in a very different fashion' (Foucault 1984).

Admittedly, Foucault's periodization is rather limited: it is composed of only two phases. In 'so-called primitive' societies heterotopias take the form of 'heterotopias of crisis'. They are places where individuals in between recognized social roles retire from society and from which they emerge to re-enter society when they are ready for a new stable social position. The 'crisis', in other words, consists of the temporary absence of a recognized social identity, a sort of 'anomic state' or, to use Van Gennep's term, a 'liminal' stage, such as the various moments of identity change and the associated *rites de passage* when, for example, the adolescent is no longer a boy and not yet a man; the menstruating woman is no longer a child and not yet able to bear children; the pregnant woman is no longer fertile and not yet a mother (Van Gennep 1960). In Van Gennep's vein, we can perhaps call these heterotopias of crisis, *espaces de passage* – fixed places with changing populations.

In the modern world, Foucault identified 'heterotopias of deviation' as the new class of 'other spaces'. In most of his examples the main characteristic is that these spaces are assigned to (or marked by the presence of) individuals and social groups who do not fit into the modern social order in a much more permanent way than in pre-modern heterotopias. The spaces of the prison, of the mental hospital, of the retirement home, or of the cemetery are occupied by people who are not expected to return to productive and accepted roles within dominant society. In short, modern heterotopias are no longer spaces of passage between social roles. They are for deviants, people who do not fit into the dominant social norm and, even if individually they may return to productive, normal, social roles, as a group they remain excluded from

the working of society. These are spaces ‘in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the average or norm, are placed’ (Foucault 1978: 139). For Foucault the presence of a social norm, and the adherence to it, is a key characteristic of modernity and, therefore, of modern heterotopias. With the development of capitalism ‘the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes’ is in part regulated by disciplinary power expressed through the imposition of the law and, eventually, by force. Increasingly, however, in capitalism power and discipline are expressed also by ‘*regulatory controls*’ constructed via the establishment of ‘*institutions of power . . . created in the eighteenth century as techniques of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies)*’ (1978: 140–1; italics in original).

This process of normalization does not translate into the elimination of difference, but in its exaltation as deviance: ‘when one wishes to individualize the healthy, normal and law-abiding adult, it is always by asking him how much of a child he has in him, what secret madness lies within him, what fundamental crime he has dreamt of committing’ (Foucault 1977: 193). A parallel can be drawn in the built environment between the normal, everyday city and the spaces of deviance. Mental hospitals, retirement homes, prisons belong to the city – they relate to it and underline its normality; yet they stick out, claiming their extraneity to normal social life. This extraneity is present in their different social and temporal organization (‘heterochronies’) as well as visually, in the formal and monumental character of their physical spaces. But power, in Foucault’s words, also ‘percolates upward’ and thus the imposition of deviance (subjugation), with its rules, spaces and times, is countered by the making of self-identity (subjectification) by the ‘deviant’ groups who re-code these other spaces with their own informal and often invisible meanings, rules and times. Modern heterotopias, then, are ‘other spaces’ on the one hand because they are made other by the top-down making of places of exclusion; on the other hand, they are made other by the deviant groups that live in and appropriate those places. With their deviant populations and single-purpose sites, heterotopias of deviance are fixed spaces with fixed populations.

Things change, though, and time may have come to extend Foucault’s periodization. Arguably, in relation to the production of ‘heterotopias of deviance’, a key change is that the social norms from which deviance emerges (that deviance mirrors) have become more flexible, and deviance a more transient concept. After all, power flows in all directions, and regulatory controls are not just produced by top-down interests. They also respond to movements from below. Thus, in academia new arenas of discussion over multiculturalism, social identities, difference, lifestyles, reflect the calls for self-definition by groups emerging from deviance or invisibility. Similarly,

in practice, struggles over the 'right to difference' and its legal regulation abound (think for example of the conflict over gay marriage).

In the economy, too, it's possible to identify recent changes that make capitalism more flexible and change its requirements for regulatory controls. At the time of Foucault's article, what the Regulation School called the Fordist regime of accumulation was in full swing (cf. Aglietta 1979; Boyer 1990; Amin 1994). The economy was dominated (certainly in the USA and increasingly in Western Europe) by a system of mass production that required a mass market able to absorb the long and expanding runs of the homogeneous goods produced. Beginning with the New Deal in the USA, various sets of regulatory mechanisms developed with the double effect of expanding the social market and giving it a direction coherent with the goods being mass produced. Most famously this occurred via a socialization of finance, starting with the establishment of the social security system, proceeding to bank loan reform and other interventions that created a credit system, and culminating in a string of programmes that made home ownership available to a large part of the population.

These changes stabilized access to the mass market for a large part of the population and brought within reach goods that otherwise would have remained inaccessible. At the same time, they are also part of a process of definition and reinforcement of a *social norm of mass consumption* leading consumption in directions coherent with the sectors in which mass production was expanding. Banking practices of redlining and the preferential financing of single-family housing reinforce the homogeneity in the mass market via both social expansion and exclusion. Other factors that worked in the construction of the regulatory controls of Fordism, such as the 'dream of home ownership' or the social standardization of the family in its nuclear form, are less palpable than their economic counterparts. They are, nevertheless, part of the dynamics leading to the development and reproduction of mass society and to the homogenization of consumption in the public realm. However, as Foucault signalled, a strong social norm also implies deviance and the development of the Fordist norm was no exception. From African-American and other minorities redlined out of home ownership, to singles and same-sex couples not fitting in the family model, mass society was not for everybody.

Following still the Regulation School, the mid-1970s marks the beginning of the new period. Post-Fordism is characterized by the progressive loss of dominance of mass production and by the (re-)emergence of alternative organizations of production able, by virtue of their flexibility, to tap into markets that are either too fragmented or changing too rapidly for mass producers. In fact, these flexible production systems, since they do not enjoy the economies of scale of mass production, *require* small and changing markets to be economically viable. The multiplication of social identities and the fragmentation of consumer markets could be seen, in a relatively

standard Marxist framework, as a consequence of the change from Fordist to flexible production. Alternatively, the decline of mass production and success of the new industrial organizations could be explained as a consequence of increasing social fragmentation and self-identification. Globalization can be added to the mixture as a cause or as a catalyst of the process. Regardless of the cause-and-effect chain (if there is one), it is clear that a differentiated and changing population of consumers is an ideal match for an organization of production that needs both constant change and inspiration. Thus the regulatory mechanisms that have supported Fordism are no longer necessary. In fact they would contradict the need for flexibility and change. This does not mean that norm and deviance disappear. It means, however, that they, too, change; that the boundaries for 'the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes' have shifted (and keep shifting). Different lifestyles and social, cultural or sexual identities in most cases emerge out of struggle for recognition, but, at the same time, they are also inserted (or can be inserted) in the machinery of production and consumption as niche markets, as pools of labour, as sources for new commodifications.

In spatial terms this also means that heterotopias of deviation, with their prisons, hospitals and rest homes, are still present and still house deviants – people who, even in post-Fordism, do not fit 'into the machinery of production'. But another layer of other spaces can be added. Heterotopias of difference are still places in which irreconcilable spaces coexist, but what constitutes irreconcilability is constantly contested and changing. As these heterotopias fluctuate between contradiction and acceptance, their physical expression equally fluctuates between invisibility and recognition. No longer the monumental constructions of heterotopias of deviance, the 'other spaces' of difference are part of everyday life, in part invisible (such as a coffee shop or a bar where a particular social group meets), in part in full sight (for example, when a park in Milan or a bridge between skyscrapers in Hong Kong is occupied by Filipino maids on their free day), and often in the in-between penumbra (such as the parking lots in Los Angeles where day labourers wait to be hired).

### **Different spaces**

Periodizations are dangerous, however. There is always the risk of using them to create meta-narratives, where time is the ordering device that allows one phase and its subject to erase and replace the precedent. Yet, used carefully, they are constructive means both to identify change, difference, and to focus more clearly on the topic of interest and on the project at hand. In this spirit, Foucault's brief periodization of heterotopias – as well as the Regulation School's sequence Fordism–Post-Fordism – should be

seen as identifying a subject matter that has become particularly relevant and deserves attention.

The same consideration is valid for the brief history of space with which Foucault opens his article. This periodization begins with the 'space of localization' of the Middle Ages – hierarchical, fixed and immutable; it moves to the space of movement and extension (*espace étendue*) of the Renaissance; and it ends with modern space, which is 'not a delineated entity, but one which constantly fragments and dissolves, reforming as other spaces . . . A disembodied notion of space whose fixed nature and location is constantly disrupted by transience and ever-shifting relations between places' (Jacobs 2004: 74). Arguably, the 'sacred spaces' of the Middle Ages and the 'infinite and open space' of the Renaissance are still present, but the ability of space to change, vanish and re-form has assumed a new relevance, particularly in the attempt to understand heterotopias.

The connection with Henri Lefebvre's work on the production of space is obvious and unavoidable. Lefebvre does not propose a periodization of space. Rather, he sees spaces as composed of three 'moments' that coexist, interact and are produced in relation to one another: *spatial practice*, which, in short, can be defined as the process of production of physical spaces (the built environment); *representation of space*, that is, a sort of 'epistemological space' – the organization of our knowledge of space, as can be found in mental images and maps; and *spaces of representation*, the spaces that are directly lived, occupied and transformed by inhabiting them. It is this third aspect of Lefebvre's conceptualization of space that has attracted most attention and created most debate. It is also the aspect that most overlaps with Foucault's 'space of relations' and is particularly relevant for the production of heterotopias.

David Harvey exemplifies the spaces of representation as spaces of 'popular spectacles, street demonstrations, riots' (1987: 266). This brief statement already addresses two characteristics of the space of representation. First, it points out that what Lefebvre called the three 'moments' of social space are not three kinds of space but three interdependent facets of the same unit and they cannot exist independently of one another. Thus, remaining close to Harvey's examples, the physical space of, say, a square does not change when it is occupied by a market, a political rally, or a carnival. Yet the social relations taking place in the different instances produce different 'lived moments' – different spaces of representation. Thus, the same square becomes a space of economic exchange, or of political activism, etc.

At the same time, the characteristics of the physical space give shape and even impose limits on what kind of spaces of representation can be produced *there*. A market or a political rally have very different characteristics if taking place in a square or in an alley. In fact, the physical constraints of a narrow space, such as an alley or a cul-de-sac, are likely to stop some events (markets

or political rallies) from taking place there, while it may be conducive to the production of other spaces of representation (for example, the appropriation of the alley by drug dealers). Conversely, spaces of representation may leave traces in the built environment and change the physical space. The traces can then be as light as a few pieces of paper or some placards on the ground, or increasingly permanent, such as a traffic diversion at certain times, fixed stalls, or tags on walls, if the spatial appropriation becomes repetitive or permanent. Traces may become even stronger if the social relationship is institutionalized, as in 'organized spectacles' or in the 'monumentality and constructed spaces of ritual' (Harvey 1987: 266).

Yet – and this is the second characteristic of spaces of representation I want to emphasize – traces are just leftovers, even if powerful and loaded with symbolic value. They are a modification of the physical space and, therefore, a spatial practice. They can also change our perception of space (a space as an exciting or dangerous place), thus fitting also into Lefebvre's second 'moment'. But the space of representation, meanwhile, has vanished just as the social relations that produced it (the rally, the carnival, the drug dealing, etc.) have ended. Heterotopias, as spaces of representation, are produced by the presence of a set of specific social relations and their space. As soon as the social relation and the appropriation of physical space end, both space of representation and heterotopia disappear. This ephemerality of heterotopias is difficult to see in situations like the prison, where an apposite physical space has been built to contain a social group and its social relations. The building by itself, however, is just a trace of the lived space that it contained, continues to contain, or will contain (an a priori trace). By contrast, spatial ephemerality becomes more evident in post-Fordism, where social identities multiply and shift from invisibility and exclusion to recognition and, at times, inclusion. Foucault's fifth principle of heterotopias enters the discussion here: the 'mechanisms of opening and closing', of access and exclusion, entrance and exit, are also temporal systems, responding to the presence-absence of lived space.

Heterotopia, however, is not just another name for the 'space of representation'. The critical opening that Lefebvre offered by introducing the latter concept lies in the recognition that space is not an inert support of social action, but participates in the social action itself. Heterotopia goes further, by making explicit how fragmented, mobile and changing the production of space is. This is particularly visible and significant at a time when social subjects keep multiplying and, with them, different spaces keep being produced. The ability of heterotopia to 'juxtapose in a single real place several spaces' at first sight can be understood as a restatement of Lefebvre's three facets of space. Foucault, however, adds that heterotopias are also characterized by the coexistence of 'several sites that are in themselves incompatible'. What makes heterotopias 'other' spaces is not just the

simple fact that they are ‘other’ with respect to the fixity of physical space. Nor is it simply that they are, in different degrees and to an ever-changing extent, ‘counterspaces’ to the dominant ones. Rather, they are ‘other’ also in that they stem from an endless series of differences within the space of representation.

Paraphrasing Soja and Lefebvre, heterotopias are particular spaces of representation ‘linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life’ which retain ‘a partial unknowability . . . mystery and secretiveness’ (Soja 1996: 67). Perhaps, as Genocchio claims (1995), these other spaces can never be fully understood, since we cannot know the ‘other’ and the group-specific cultures, codes, interactions and the ‘unknowable and secretive’ spaces the ‘other’ produces. Yet, to what extent heterotopias are visible and can be known depends on their position shifting between invisibility, marginalization, assertion of difference, or co-optation into ‘the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes’.

### **Heterotopias as public spaces**

Perhaps it would be excessive to talk (again) of periodization, but certainly the emergence of multiple social subjects and their related claims for the right to difference have provoked big changes in the conception of the public sphere. Particularly relevant to this chapter is the observation that the proliferation of subjects has progressively brought space onto the stage as an important component of publicness. To be more precise, the increasingly visible presence of multiple social subjects has made heterotopias of difference more visible, too.

Space was not a concern in 1962, when Jürgen Habermas’s *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was published (English translation, 1989). Habermas’s proposal was to continue – in fact, to put back on track – the development of the liberal public sphere that emerged in the eighteenth century, by eliminating the limits, social exclusions and communicative distortions that are still present in it and by moving it towards an all-inclusive, democratic public arena. In light of this search for a universal publicness, space was not very important, since it remained, if not undifferentiated, limited to its physical aspect and to the identification of appropriate structures (from newspapers to city halls) where the public discourse could be carried out.

Even without an explicit reference, cracks in the a-spatiality of the public sphere began to show up in the critiques to Habermas’s conception put forward by feminist studies in the early 1990s (Landes 1988; Meehan 1995). These studies argued that an all-inclusive public sphere was not only unrealistic, but it was actually ideological and anti-democratic, since it

continues to render invisible those underprivileged groups who lacked access to it and forces these groups to produce their own semi-public spheres. Women-only voluntary associations, philanthropic societies and even women's political activities in working-class protests are cases of an alternative publicness, invisible to the all-inclusive dominant one. Nancy Fraser went a step further by pointing out that the exclusion from the official public sphere was not limited to women. Workers, people of colour, gays and lesbians, and illegal immigrants are some of the different groups that constitute *subaltern counter-publics* who form 'parallel discursive arenas where subordinate social groups invent and circulate . . . oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs' (Fraser 1992: 122–3).

In time, these identities, interests and needs (or some of them) may find official venues – fixed spaces such as city halls and community centres, or known spaces of representation, such as those produced in political rallies. Initially, however, as in the feminist case, new identities, interests and needs are not formed and articulated in pre-established venues. Rather, they begin in the perhaps 'weaker' but more pervasive practices of everyday life, in the context of what, in Lefebvre's definition, 'remains when all specialized activities have been eliminated'. They start by appropriating the opportunities and spaces where a group-specific public discourse can be developed. 'The space that difference makes', to use Soja and Hooper's (1996) felicitous phrase, becomes evident here. It is the very difference of a social group (its marginality) that makes the appropriation of a physical space relevant and gives specificity to the space produced.

The recognition that, rather than a universal public, publicness is articulated around an ever-changing multiplicity of publics provokes a threefold shift. First, it suggests that publicness and identity formation are tightly related and are not limited to specialized practices, times or places. Second, while, in the conception of the liberal public sphere, space could remain in the background, as a secondary support to universal and largely a-spatial processes, the recognition of multiple instances of publicness shows that public spheres coincide with the production of public spaces. Finally, the spaces that the new identities, interests and needs produce, testify to the ephemerality of the space of representation. The same physical location can take on different spatial meanings according to the social groups that occupy it, whether at different times or simultaneously.

The layering of public spaces in the same physical location brings counter-publics in contact and confrontation with each other. Confrontation between different publics is an essential element of plurality, since it is through disagreement and conflict that different social groups avoid isolating themselves or being pushed into isolation and it is there that 'an additional *space* on which members of different, more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity' (Fraser 1992: 126) develops. This space of confrontation



is a confrontation of heterotopias, a place where Lefebvre's three moments of space come visibly together and where Foucault's 'juxtaposition of incompatible spaces' occurs. Compared to the fixed spaces and changing population of heterotopias of crisis and to the fixed spaces and fixed population of heterotopias of deviance, heterotopias of difference are characterized by a multiplicity of changing spaces with changing populations.

All this does not mean that the unknowability and mysteriousness of heterotopias have disappeared. Indeed, the realization that more 'fragments' of spatial orders coexist in the same physical space can make their 'glitter' more blinding. Yet, being aware of the existence of fragments can help to prepare the ground – metaphorically and materially – to facilitate (or limit) the social production of heterotopias as opportunities for the confrontation, contestation and negotiation between publics that form the basis for cosmopolitanism.

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Teatro del mondo, Venice (Aldo Rossi, 1979), photographed at the mouth of the Canal Grande in front of the Punta della Dogana and the impressive Santa Maria della Salute. This floating theatre combines two of Foucault's quintessential heterotopias: the theatre and the ship (photograph: Maria Ida Biggi).

# The space of play

## Towards a general theory of heterotopia

Lieven De Cauter and Michiel Dehaene

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Perhaps our life is still ruled by a certain number of oppositions that cannot be touched, that institution and practice have not yet dared to undermine; oppositions that we regard as simple givens: for example between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and that of work. All these are animated by an unspoken sacralization.

(Foucault 1984: 46–7)

In *The Human Condition* Hannah Arendt portrays an ancient society divided between *oikos*, the private, hidden world of the household, and *agora*, the political ‘space of appearance’. The distinction between private and public life qualifies the three forms of the *vita activa*: labour, work and action. Labour, wound up in the necessities of life (*zoë*) and its reproduction, was for the ancient Greeks a strictly private matter that, like birth and death, was to be protected and hidden. Action, in contrast, resides at the public end of the spectrum and constitutes the defining ‘form of life’ of the *polis* and thus the highest manifestation of the *vita activa*. Action is based on the essential plurality of people in a political space and oriented towards the cultivation of the good life and the construction of freedom. Finally, work is an inherently ambiguous category as far as its public–private quality is concerned. It designates the fabrication of the human world in its lasting forms, yet is confined by the necessities of technique and material circumstances. Work is an extension of the strictly private realm of labour; however, it has a public that originates in the transactional space of market exchange. In Arendt’s analysis it does not, given its essentially economic nature (*oikonomia*), constitute the public sphere in the full political sense of the word (Arendt 1989: 159–67).

Arendt’s project seeks to re-emancipate action as the highest form of the *vita activa* from its dominant treatment in Western philosophy as only second to contemplation, and merely the instrument of the latter’s ideological

projections. Her efforts, however, immediately reduce – albeit consistent with the Aristotelian vein of the book – the *vita contemplativa* or *bios theoretikos* to a narrow understanding of the art of thinking, leaving out everything that could be described as the ‘thinking of art’. Perhaps not surprisingly the very notion of art and artistic practices is shelved under the essentially economical category of work, thereby largely disregarding art’s ritualistic origins, its reflective bearing, and its proto-political dimension. It is generally not clear how to theorize within Arendt’s binary opposition between the economical and political spheres those dimensions of ‘the human condition’ that in contemporary terms are commonly categorized as part of the cultural sphere.

### **Hippodamus’ third sphere**

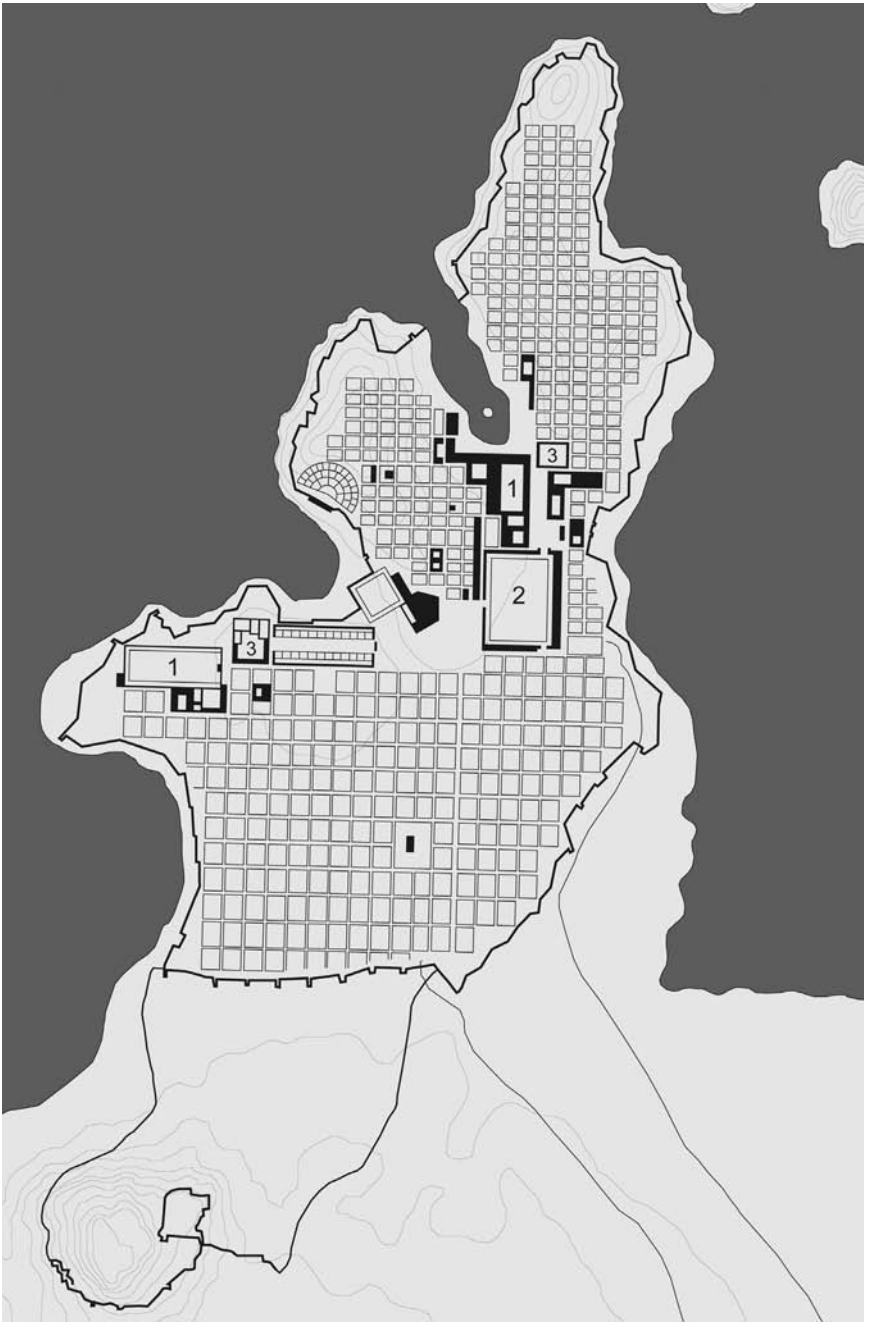
In his *Politeia* Aristotle, right after discussing Plato’s *Republic*, briefly comments on the theories of Hippodamus, the godfather of urbanism who is introduced as the one ‘who invented the division of cities into squares’ (Aristotle 2005: 1267 b 1–2):

His system was for a city with a population of ten thousand, divided into three classes; for he made one class of artisans, one of farmers, and the third class fought for the state in war and was the armed class. He divided the land into three parts, one sacred, one public and one private: sacred land [*hiéran*] to supply the customary offerings to the gods, common land [*koinèn*] to provide the warrior class with food, and private land [*idian*] to be owned by the farmers.

(Aristotle 2005: 1267 b 30–b 40)

Aristotle criticizes Hippodamus’ utopia or ‘proposed constitution’ quite sharply, indicating, for instance, that the defenders who have no land and the farmers who have no arms will have a difficult relationship, while the artisans having neither will end up as slaves. The division into three, however, is presented without further qualification or criticism and is not theorized throughout the *Politeia*. However, beyond Aristotle’s discussion, we can easily retrace this threefold division of the *polis* in Hippodamus’ ground plan for Milete, in which the collective spaces betray a similar triadic specialization: apart from the gridded residential compounds, there are markets for commerce, an *agora* for politics and precincts for sanctuaries (Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet 1964: 126).

In Hippodamus’ division of space into sacred, public and private space, we recognize Robert Jan Van Pelt’s description of the *polis* as ‘the fivesquare city’. According to Van Pelt, the constitution of the Greek *polis* can be represented by five fields or squares (Van Pelt and Westfall 1991: 169ff.). First is the *emporium* – the wall or interface between inside and outside –



Hippodamus' plan for Miletus (reconstruction). 1. Markets, 2. Agora, 3. Sanctuaries. This triad of precincts structures the *polis*; the grid structures the *oikia* (neighbourhoods).

represented as a big square that circumscribes the other four squares contained within it. Within the *emporium* one finds the *oikos*, or private house, the *agora* with the *stoa*, the *acropolis* with the temple or shrine, and the *necropolis* (cemetery) with the *stèla*. On closer inspection, however, this division into five squares boils down to a tripartite division similar to that of Hippodamus. When we link the *acropolis* and the *necropolis*, we see an oblique zone in between the *oikos* and the *agora* – a diagonal bar in the scheme of ‘the fivesquare city’ between the economical and the political. This diagonal, intermediate space stretching from temple to cemetery represents the inclusive realm of all ‘other spaces’: theatre, stadium, *palaestra*, hippodrome, gymnasium, etc. This intermediate terrain corresponds to Hippodamus’ ‘third sphere’ or ‘third space’.

Hippodamus’ simple and recognizable triad of space is indeed illuminating. We are convinced it contains the key to a general theory of heterotopia: heterotopia is, namely, the third space of Hippodamus’ triad. That ‘third space’ is neither political (or public) nor economical (or private) space, but rather sacred space, or *hieratic* space – to use Hippodamus’ term *hiéran*. This qualification renders the otherness of other spaces – *les espaces autres* of Foucault – explicit. The other space is different from the *oikonomia* of the *oikos* and different from the *politeia* of the *polis* debated on the *agora*: heterotopia is the other of the political and the other of the economical.



Van Pelt’s ‘fivesquare city’ visualized.

In our terminology today this third category of (mostly secularized) sacred space probably comes closest to what we commonly describe as the ‘cultural sphere’: the space of religion, arts, sports and leisure. It covers that realm which is conspicuously under-theorized in Arendt’s analysis: it introduces a third realm between the private space of the hidden and the public space of appearance, a third sphere that we could venture to call the space of hidden appearance. It gives space to everything that has no place either in the public or the private sphere. It is the sacred space where the remainder rests. By remembering this third sphere, whose autonomy is largely forgotten in the relentless economization of everything, we can understand and articulate the relevance of heterotopia today.

The spaces of the *polis* that belong to this third category do not abide by the binary oppositions that stabilize the distinction between *oikos* and *agora*: exclusive versus inclusive, kinship versus citizenship, hidden versus open, private property versus public domain. Within the world of heterotopia these divisions are reshuffled and readjusted. During the *City Dyonisia*, for example, the rules of in- and exclusion adopted within the political realm were explicitly suspended. The whole community was free to participate in these theatre festivals, not only the citizens of the *polis* but also ambassadors of other (colonized) cities, women, the foreigners living in Athens and even slaves. The issue of ownership – private or public – is often simply irrelevant for the heterotopian character of these places. Many, perhaps most, heterotopias are based on ‘societies’ in the original meaning of alliance or club, an association of common interest (Arendt 1989: 23) and establish alternative and collective forms of sharing property or its enjoyment. The private or public status of these places is often weakly or only partially determined. Hence, special rules apply. For instance, the *palaestra* – the training schools for young gymnasts – were privately owned by the *pedotribes*. As training occurred in the nude, whoever wasn’t involved was not supposed to go there. However, Plato reports that this prohibition was hardly enforced, and mentions in the dialogue *Lysis* that Socrates and his friends entered the *palaestra* to admire some beautiful young athletes (Vanoyeke 2004: 29).

Defined as ‘neither public nor private’ and ‘neither political nor economical’, the realm of heterotopia is very broad. It is a sphere of its own made up of a multitude of at times radically different heterotopias. In this heterotopian universe, there is more between the extremes of honeymoon and graveyard, between Jesuit colony and brothel than Foucault’s imaginative sketch could capture. Academia, for example, absent from Foucault’s list, definitely qualifies as a heterotopia. It is the safe haven of the *bios theoretikos* (the *vita contemplativa*), as both Arendt and Aristotle emphasize (Arendt 1989: 7–21; Aristotle 2003: 1095 b), which qualifies neither as economic nor as political. The time of the school – *skholè*, originally meaning free time – is a time without labour, work or action.



## Architecture of the holiday

The heterotopia begins to function fully when people find themselves in a sort of absolute break with their traditional time.

(Foucault 1984: 48)

Heterotopia is perhaps more easily identified by its time than by its space. It is not simply a space but rather a time-space. The triadic division of Hippodamus is not only a distinction between different territories; rather, it is a relative separation of specialized 'spheres', of time-spatial entities. The festive periods – of which Athens had many (one day in three, more or less) – were called *Hieromènia*, clearly referring to the holy (*hièros*) character of these festive days, even if a large part was spent on profane activities: notably horse races (*agon hippikos*), gymnastics (*agon gymnikos*) and music-theatre contests (*agon mousikos*) (Moretti 2001: 29, 69–71). The English word *holiday* has kept this reference to the 'holy' origin of free time, rest and repose. Similarly to the way in which heterotopia interrupts the continuity of space, the holiday interrupts the continuity of time. Holidays, being extraordinary as opposed to the mundane, ordinary character of the everyday, are the permanent markers of the discontinuous moments on the calendar, pacing the continuous flow of everyday experience.

Heterotopia is the counterpart of what an event is in time, an eruption, an apparition, an absolute discontinuity, taking on its heterotopian character at those times when the event in question is made permanent and translated into a specific architecture. The hieratic nature of the ritual time is permanently represented in the specific 'consecration' of a particular building type: a church, a theatre building, a stadium. We could venture the hypothesis that many heterotopias were translated from event into building, from time to space, from a transient moment to the permanence of a place, and that this translation occurred in some cases as a structural reaction to a crisis. For example, the first theatre performances during the *City Dionysia* in Athens were held on the Agora, with wooden grandstands for the public. When these collapsed, it was decided to build the Theatre of Dionysus on the south-eastern slope of the Acropolis (Van Pelt and Westfall 1991: 231). Similarly, Plato decided, after the trial and death of Socrates, that a gymnasium outside the city walls would provide safer ground for the philosopher than the *agora* and so his *Akadèmia* came into existence.

In opposition to the 'architecture of the everyday' (McLeod 1996; Chase *et al.* 1999), heterotopian architecture can be defined as the 'architecture of the holiday'. Heterotopia, we can therefore say, is '*holyday space*'. Most of Foucault's examples have this quality: the honeymoon, old people's homes, the graveyard, the theatre and the cinema, libraries and museums, fairs and carnivals, holiday camps, hamams, saunas, motels, brothels, and maybe even some ships. And, although the graveyard is no holiday

destination, it is a most sacred space, visited on holy days. The space of rest is also a space for the rest, for what remains.

### ‘Hidden appearance’: heterotopia as space of mediation

... counter-emplacements, ... in which ... all the other real emplacements ... are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.

(Foucault 1984: 47)

Hippodamus’ triadic conception – public, private and other spaces – points to a way out of the dualism between private and public that has dominated Western thought from Aristotle via Arendt to the recent debates on the city and ‘the privatization of public space’. That reductive dichotomy has obscured the dialectical understanding of space to which Foucault’s concept of heterotopia proves such a wonderful point of entry (even if Foucault himself was allergic to dialectics). Other-spaces are *alternative* spaces, *altered* spaces, and often also *alternating* spaces, in the sense that two different time-spaces come together and switch from one into the other. As Foucault explains, the theatre consists of the combination of two different spaces: the real space of the audience and the virtual space of the scene. When the play begins, the virtual becomes real (and the real disappears); when the play is over, the reverse happens and we return to so-called reality.

Greek theatre, tragedy in particular, supplies extraordinary moments of mediation between public and private. Why is it that Greek drama (both in tragedy and comedy) so often features women as protagonists, if women are, in the words of Pericles, best responding to their nature and duty when not seen or spoken about at all? Probably because in the female protagonist the antagonism between *oikos* and *agora* is mediated. Many of the tragic female characters embody a sharp conflict between *oikos* and *agora*. Antigone is a classic example: according to the law of the *oikos* she should bury her brother; according to the political decree of Creon she should leave him for the scavengers, as he attacked Thebes and has therefore become an outlaw. This conflict is her tragic dilemma. That tragic conflict could be shown all the more sharply by staging a female character rather than a man. There is a comic counterpart to this: in Aristophanes’ *Women’s Parliament*, under the leadership of Praxagora (literally: she who acts on the *agora*) the whole society is transformed into a strange utopia when women, disguised as men, seize power in the *ecclesia* and install radical communism by suspending private property and declaring free love. Putting women on stage (even if the female parts were played by men) was a way of compensating within the third sphere for their actual absence from public life, giving them speech and even a tragicomic form of emancipation in the space of heterotopia. Their presence on stage was, in that respect, ‘cathartic’.

There are, however, more mediations at work in this third sphere. The cemetery has a dialectical function of mediation between the world of the living and the world of the dead, between the past and the future. The cemetery presents the care for the *polis*'s past, for the sacrifices of the great citizens to whom the city owes its prosperity and freedom. The temple mediates between the world of the gods and the world of the mortals. Together with the cemetery, the temple is situated on the historical axis that connects past, present and future. If the *necropolis* is the spatialization of the past, of what remains, the cult of the temple has to secure the good omens for the future. Both open up the space for the care for the good life in the present, the political space of the *agora* – which was situated between *necropolis* and *acropolis* – and brings it under the guardianship of both the memorable ancestors and the immortal gods (Van Pelt and Westfall 1991: 180–205).

The stadium, the hippodrome, and the *palaestra* for athletic training, in short all spaces for sports and games, are also spaces of mediation. Sports and bodily exercises mark the threshold between nature and culture, between the body as a manifestation of animal-like nature (*zoë*) and the trained body as the expression of cultured life (*bios*) (on this distinction see Arendt 1989: 97; Agamben 1998). In this respect, many sports and games also function as *rites de passage* between infantile, uncontrolled existence and mature composure, between unruly behaviour and civic life under the aegis of the *nomos*. Sports and games provide for a parallel world, a protected world in which military exercise becomes a goal in itself, disconnected from its purpose in 'real life' and hence pertaining to the realm of the aesthetic.

We can understand heterotopia's mediating character as a direct function of its position as a dialectical third in the constitution of the *polis*, between the public and the private realm, animated by an albeit restless dialectics, which always leaves a remainder, a rest. Heterotopia entails an always faltering, incomplete process, without synthesis, a dialectics at a standstill, an unstable interruption or suspension. And precisely because it is unstable, the heterotopian process of mediation requires special, different, other places, where entrance is restricted, initiation or membership required; where appearance is hidden but where the hidden appears. The theatrical event, in our argument *the* heterotopia par excellence, releases all the force of the oxymoron 'hidden appearance'. Between the public realm as 'the space of appearance' and the private realm as 'space of the hidden', heterotopia indeed embodies a world of hidden appearance: from the mask of the Greek theatre to the modern *bal masqué*, from the hammam to the naturist camp (Foucault's Huts of Djerba). The 'holy day space', the space of rest, is always also the space for the rest, for what has to remain hidden, from private parts to Oedipus's secret.

## Homo ludens vs. homo faber

These counter-spaces, these localized utopias, children know them perfectly well. Of course, it is the end of the garden, of course it is the attic, or even better the Indian tent set up in the middle of the attic, or else, it is – on a Thursday afternoon – the large bed of the parents.

(Foucault 2004: 40)

If the space of appearance is shaped by the medium of action, and the private space of hiding takes form in work and labour, what would be the activity proper to the third sphere of heterotopia? Our guess is *play*. If we include in it all ritualized and theatrical behaviour, play is equally important and encompassing as work and action: an irreducible, creative element of the human condition. Arendt's *homo faber* and *homo politicus* meet Huizinga's *homo ludens*.

Huizinga places great emphasis on the foundational character of play in the organization of society in general and the production of culture in particular. His definition in *Homo Ludens* contains seven elements: game or play is a free act (1) outside the everyday; (2) without direct purpose or material end; (3) that unfolds within a dedicated space and time; (4) that is rule-bound; (5) often associated with a club or specialized society and (6) often partly hidden or disguised (1938: 14). The analogy to the concept of heterotopia is striking.

Play is not simply an instance of culture but in fact precedes culture. Huizinga focuses in his analysis on various spheres of life that have partially shed their play-like, ritualistic character in the process of their development, but in which one can nevertheless still recognize the game-like, playful, 'ludic' component in their structural constitution: theatre, law, warfare, philosophy, the arts, etc. In the process of their development and institutionalization, the distinction between the free and self-referential character of play is traded for gravity and consequence outside the temporal and spatial constraints of the play-space. Nevertheless, in many of these instances it is still possible to discern the way in which the original distinction – the specialization of that sphere – was first established as a space of play.

Throughout his discussion of the foundational dimension of play, Huizinga emphatically and repeatedly insists on the spatial definition of play. The act of playing not only creates space, but also requires a space and a time entirely of its own. The magic circle is the basic spatial gesture that defines the space of play (Huizinga 1938: 10, 20–1). That magic circle – the spatial enclosure – is a *temenos* (1938: 79), which means temple and is derived from the verb *temeo*, to cut. The *temenos* is literally a cut-out, a space set aside from the 'common' fabric of the world. It establishes an elementary distinction between inside and outside, between the spell-bound character of the game or ritual and the conventions that govern everyday

life (1938: 8). The Pythian racecourse is called a *temenos* and so is the Acropolis: it is the *hiéron temenos*, literally: the holy cut-out.

This *temenos* or magic circle creates a fundamental distinction between those in the enclosure and those outside it. Entering the game, entering the circle, requires some sort of initiation into the rules of the game. Play, therefore, has the capacity to establish a sense of community. Play, Huizinga explains, creates special societies or clubs associated with the inclusive/exclusive character of the game. The particular condition created within the space of play is fragile and unstable and can at any time be dispelled, when someone decides to break the rules of the game and thereby betrays the bond that holds the club together. The space of play, the space inside the magic circle, can be described, using Victor Turner's term, as a liminal space: a space that, in its formal separation from the rest of the world, presents a realm of instability and possibility. That space which is the seedbed of culture, its condition and possibility – from ritual to theatre – provides a clearing within the conventional order of society, sheltered from the normalizing forces of the everyday (Turner 1982: 20–60).

A stay in liminal space or a liminoid state is, by consequence, mostly temporary. Some people, however, dwell in heterotopia: priests, gurus and wandering philosophers, actors, artists, bohemians, musicians, athletes, entertainers and even architects or urban designers taking after Hippodamus, if we believe Aristotle's description of the man as 'somewhat eccentric in his general mode of life', with long hair, expensive ornaments and strange clothes, at home in all sciences, not a citizen yet inventing an ideal utopian constitution (2005: 1267 b 22–b 30). We could call these (often nomadic) outsiders *heterotopians*. They are hated and adored, expelled and embraced by the *polis*; always ambiguously hosted as representatives of otherness, of 'the rest'. That is: the sacred, the taboo, the eccentric, the abnormal, the monstrous, the secret, the extraordinary, the grandiose, the genius, the irrational, the transgressive, the frivolous or simply the aimless.

As the space-time in which normality is suspended in order to give a place to 'the rest', heterotopia starts from nature's darker grounds, the anomy of *phusis*, of what is before or outside the *nomos* of the *polis*. The survival of the fittest is no game; nor are the law of the jungle, competition or the primordial jealousy towards the other. The game civilizes these real and imaginary battles, moves away from, but often also 'cultivates' the nature state (in the form of nudity, for instance, or survival trips). The nature state, *phusis* comes before the cultivation of play, and *nomos*, the legal space, comes after the game. The game, as the medium of heterotopia, constitutes a third instance between *phusis* and *nomos*, nature-state and norm, opening a profoundly ambiguous terrain marking both the moment of man's imprisonment within the norms of culture and the threshold of liberation or, more likely, temporary transgression.

## The sanctuary and the camp

The structure of the hieratic space of heterotopia is that of the 'sanctuary'. It is a refuge, a safe haven, a protected space. This structure becomes clear when we realize that 'during the festive periods, that the texts of antiquity call *hiéromènia*, people and property were sheltered from seizure and the tribunals suspended their activities' (Moretti 2001: 71). Just like the holiday is a suspension – in time – of political and economical activities, heterotopia is a refuge – in space – from the political and the economical.

The opposite of heterotopia as sanctuary is the camp. The concentration camp is the territorialization or embodiment of the state of exception, the place of the ban, where the law is suspended. Its inmates, literally the bandits (those who have a ban spoken on them), the outlaws, have neither civil rights nor human rights. The camp is therefore the place where life (*bios*) becomes 'bare life' (*zoë*). The concentration camp is the place 'off limits' in which anything can happen (Agamben 1998). The refugee camp, on the other hand, is (or should be) the exact opposite of the concentration camp. It is a refuge from the state of exception (mostly war or civil war), a sheltered space in which normality is reinstated or maintained. The concept of the *camp* (in the Agambenian sense of concentration camp) has its exact opposite in the concept of *sanctuary* (refuge). Both refer to ambiguous mythical territory: the camp is the 'ban' of the *homo sacer*, while the sanctuary is the *temenos*, the holy ground and where those who flee from the law, power and violence can find asylum (for no human violence is supposed to violate holy ground).

A safe haven is, therefore, not a fortress, a dungeon or a gated community, for it is open exactly to those for which the fortress and the city walls are closed. The camp and the sanctuary house the same people: those who lost their citizenship, their nation, their rights (the refugees, the migrants, the outsiders, the nomads, the persecuted). Today, the illegal immigrant is a version of the one who is banned, the bandit; he or she is banned from our national territory. It is telling that in Belgium and in France several groups of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants recently went on hunger strikes, taking refuge in churches, and by doing so 'instinctively' revived this ancient opposition between camp (closed detention centre) and sanctuary.

The sanctuary, then, is the ultimate heterotopia, the absolute discontinuity of normality, of the *nomos*, for those who flee the *nomos*: the *homines sacri*, the bandits. It is a safe haven against the violence of society, legal or illegal. The sanctuary-like character of heterotopian space is, in other words, a direct consequence of the very definition of heterotopia as 'neither political nor economical'. Heterotopian spaces provide a shelter from the strongholds of *oikos* and *agora*, and interrupt the conventional order of public and private space.

Like heterotopia, the camp is a space that is ‘neither economical nor political’, however in a very different manner. It is the space in which the very distinction between the economical and political, between the public and the private, has been suspended. Heterotopian space as space of mediation entertains very precise relations to the other spheres. The camp, in contrast, is the abject space of total rejection, a space devoid of mediation, unrelated in the sense of residing outside all relations. If the heterotopia is the place for otherness, for ‘alterity’, then the camp is the space where the other, all otherness, is abolished, annihilated (sometimes very literally).

### **From potlatch space to club space (and back)**

... economic development (I have not been speaking of that today) ...

(Foucault 1984: 49)

Heterotopia belongs to the time of the holy day within which people neither *work* nor *act* (in Arendt’s language). Heterotopia *suspends* the everyday and makes room for bathing, rituals, games and cultural contests. Heterotopia caters to an anti-economical time: the time of sacrifice, gift, play and squandering. That makes heterotopia ‘potlatch space’ (Mauss 1923; Huizinga 1938; Bataille 1949; Debord 1985): the space that ‘consumes’, squanders or even destroys the economic logic. This observation should not lead to the naive conclusion that heterotopia has no economic basis. Rather, we believe that its economy lies outside the economical ‘interest’ or profit typically associated with the economical sphere.

In antiquity, the economy of the gift had its own place and unity (Veyne 1976). Indeed, the festive events that lie at the basis of many of the ancient Greek heterotopias were entirely financed by the conspicuous gifts of notorious citizens. The buildings that house these heterotopian events were often literally gifts to the city. These gifts break the public–private opposition as they are publically performed private gifts (Veyne 1976: 23). The antique economy of the gift is, no doubt, too specific and too exotic to present a clear picture of heterotopia’s economical status within a more contemporary context. Nevertheless, parallels are obvious: many heterotopias and most cultural institutions, precisely because they are not there for profit but for the public good, receive public subsidies, private donations or corporate sponsoring. Of course, given the all-encompassing economization of everything, they are increasingly swallowed up by the service economy, the cultural industry, the leisure economy or even the themed ‘experience economy’, amounting to an economization of heterotopia or a heterotopianization of the economy (De Cauter and Dehaene 2006).

A sound contemporary point of entry to understanding the status of heterotopia between public and private might be Chris Webster’s notion

of club space (Webster 2002). Webster's analysis seeks to take the debate on public space beyond a fetishist understanding of ownership. By shifting the focus to 'user rights', he opens up a variegated world in between the polar tensions of the public and the private sphere. Public spaces are typically 'goods' with regard to which user rights are not allocated. The degree of enjoyment one can have is decided time and again as people enter these spaces and make use of them. If public spaces are too popular, if different claims on these spaces are conflicting, their public character is constructed through the way in which this conflict is settled. Public spaces are, in other words, contested spaces. For private spaces, in contrast, user rights are uniquely allocated. Their use belongs to a single owner who has the full enjoyment of his or her property. Between the two extremes of contested public spaces and strictly private ones we see a broad spectrum of conditions that can be grouped into two main categories. First, there are 'local public spaces', which are not fully public because of the uneven spatial distribution of user rights. It is rather common that certain groups enjoy easier access than others to a particular space: a local playground or a parking lot. Those living nearby, for example, have a stronger claim on such spaces.

Second, there are 'club spaces', the enjoyment of which is shared within a group or club. These can be the exclusive worlds of golf clubs, gated communities, fraternities and so forth, but they can also be the spaces that accommodate all voluntary organizations and common interest groups: from the boy scouts, the local NGO, the chess club, to the carnival association. The spaces on which these groups rely can be publicly owned and assigned to them as a form of public service, they can be formally owned by the club, but they can also be the living room of one of the members, which takes on heterotopian 'club qualities' when the group meets.

Club spaces and local public spaces, the one having private overtones, the other posing as public spaces, might resemble each other. If we think of all the administrative measures that regulate access to public goods (parking permits, for example) we realize that there are more clubs being constructed within the public realm than is first apparent. These club-like spaces stand at the threshold of the binding/unbinding dialectics of inclusion/exclusion at work in the permanent (re)construction of the public sphere. They house the worlds of the overly praised public-private development constructions. We are, however, not concerned here with the blurring of the public and the private sphere, of economical and political leverage, but rather with those club spaces that are 'neither private nor public, neither economical nor political'.

Perhaps not all heterotopias can be adequately described as clubs: calling the church, the art world, or academia a club smacks of disrespect. What is at stake is not so much describing heterotopias in Webster's economical terms or pointing to the cultural, social and symbolic capital accumulated within them, but rather clearly opposing their progressive economization.



Heterotopias not only organize this alternative ‘economy of the gift’ (often in the form of public subsidies or private sponsorship), but above all represent a dimension of the human condition that cannot be adequately described in economical terms.

## Heterotopia united

There is probably not a single culture in the world that does not constitute heterotopias. That is a constant in every human group.

(Foucault 1984: 47)

If the true heterotopia is anti-economical space, how does it relate to politics? It follows from our definition that heterotopia is outside the political process and proceedings properly speaking. As spaces of mediation of ‘the rest’, heterotopias are central to the *polis*, but in an *eccentric* way. Precisely because of that they can easily take on a para-political, proto-political or infra-political role. Heterotopias, these worlds of ‘hidden appearance’, are the experimental terrains where ‘special societies’ gather their forces to maybe one day break ground in the full daylight of the ‘space of appearance’. Jafar Panahi’s film *Offside* (2006) gives an idea: it portrays a group of Iranian women, who, dressed as men like Praxagora and her club, desperately try to attend the crucial qualifying match of the football World Cup, despite a ban on women in stadiums. This bittersweet tale encapsulates the infra-political role of heterotopia. The para- or proto-political power of heterotopia appears clearly in the slippery terrain of ‘academic activism’. The scholar who, one day, decides to leave the safe confines of academia and join the public debate, thereby taking on the role of intellectual, addresses the world from his ivory tower, using and abusing its heterotopian high ground.

Today, the anti-economical, infra-political logic of heterotopias makes them potentially the contemporary sanctuaries of ‘the multitude’ in a post-civil society. The engaged spaces of conviviality and self-organization, the ritual spaces of mourning and feast that preserve the decorum of life, the bohemian liminal spaces of imagination, the reflective spaces of commentary, study and critique, the holiday spaces of *skholè* and play – all these places that make up the ‘third sphere’ besides, outside and in between the public (political) and the private (economical) sphere, realize heterotopia’s binding role within the *polis*.

Foucault’s first principle, which states that all cultures have their heterotopias, reads more than ever as a programme – no culture without heterotopia – and his conclusion as a dire warning: ‘In civilizations without ships, dreams dry up, and espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police that of the pirates’ (1984: 49). *Heterotopians of all countries, unite!*

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## Part 3

# The mall as *agora* – the *agora* as mall

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The Village at Park Royal in West Vancouver: view down pedestrian street with lighthouse (photograph: Kathleen Kern).

# Heterotopia of the theme park street

Kathleen Kern

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Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* provides a useful tool for the analysis of contemporary public space. Here it provides the occasion to examine and analyse that most ubiquitous of public spaces – the street, or, more specifically, certain contemporary streets – 'streetscaped' malls. What Graham and Marvin (2003) have called 'malls without walls' is the latest trend in shopping mall development in North America and the latest variation on a theme park that the shopping mall industry refers to as 'lifestyle centres'. It is the 'next big thing': the reconfiguration of the fortress-like, interior-oriented mall into an open, outdoor simulated 'Main Street', complete with sidewalks, street furniture, street parking and cross-walks. Indeed, in the past five years there has been an explosion across North America of 'theme park'-like street environments in suburban locations. Highly detailed and scenographic, they resemble a 'critical regionalist' version of Disneyland's 'Main Street', with climate-appropriate landscaping, contextually sensitive buildings and abundant pedestrian amenities.

Lifestyle centres are conceived to supply urbane 'experiences' for sophisticated wealthy shoppers, but in a hermetically safe 'public space' – safe from the intrusion of real-world nuisances such as panhandlers, homeless people or street kids. As one planner pointed out: 'Lifestyle Centers are a sort of safe choice for some shoppers, giving them an urban fix where people feel like they're going to town but really going to a mall' (Thayer 2004). What is not only interesting but also a matter of concern to those of us who are worrying about democratic public space, is the way in which the heterotopian logic of exclusion characteristic of shopping malls and theme parks has also come to dominate the makeover and governance of public commercial streets, as the managerial techniques constructed within the confines of the mall increasingly provide the model for the organization and management of public spaces.

The classic heterotopias or 'other spaces' that Foucault identified were very much spaces distinct and set apart from the everyday world most people inhabited, institutions that were worlds unto themselves – such as mental institutions, prisons and hospitals – spaces of crisis, of deviance and abnormality, and spaces of transformation. In contrast, streets are very

much a part of the everyday world and not distinct heterotopian spaces. Traditionally, urban designers and planners have seen the place for these other spaces as being literally outside and apart from the city. The rational city had no place for these spaces of deviance: or, rather, the place for these spaces was outside the city. Today there seems to be a sort of inversion of the 'garden city' ideal; those heterotopian spaces of deviance are now to be found 'contained' in the inner city, and in the areas of affluence on the outskirts of the city. The shopping mall – and even more so the lifestyle centre – is the ultimate heterotopian, phantasmagorical, enclosed, safe havens, the 'realized utopias' of the cult of today: shopping.

In the heterotopian world of the shopping mall, there is social homogeneity and social order. Private security services make sure that 'undesirables' are escorted out of the mall, protecting those deemed worthy through their behaviour and their appearance from having to encounter those portions of society that may be disturbing – the poor, rowdy teenagers, the politically volatile. Protecting them from contentious viewpoints – rallies, petitioners, religious zealots – as well. Perhaps it is true, as both Margaret Crawford (1992) and Chung *et al.* (2001) have suggested, that, indeed, 'all the world is a shopping mall'. This chapter, however, tries to suspend such conclusions, thereby resisting both the nostalgic lament of the 'loss of public space' (Davis 1992; Sorkin 1992) and the cynical celebration of shopping as the *only* public space left today as represented by Koolhaas and others. Instead, I would like to find hope in the diverse proliferation of everyday heterotopias.

### **The lifestyle centre: the cutting edge of the experience economy**

'Lifestyle centre', a term officially sanctioned by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), was coined, apparently, by the Memphis-based developers Poag & McEwen (Yue 2001). Lifestyle centres or 'theme park streets' are shopping malls that use the design typology of a main street instead of an enclosed indoor atrium: they are outdoor shopping environments that include open-air plazas, sidewalks, street lights, street-side parking, and differentiated architecture usually reflecting some local theme – such as 'desert town' or 'seaside village' – in short, a 'Disneyfied' shopping environment 'imagineered' to evoke the feeling of a real-life urban street – sometimes urban, sometimes like a small town, sometimes 'European', sometimes historical even (Blum 2005).

The ICSC estimates that there are already 130 to 140 lifestyle centres in the USA and that there are 30 more scheduled to be completed in the next couple of years (Gose 2004). Developer G. Dan Poag of Poag & McEwen takes credit for building the first lifestyle centre, the *Shops of Saddle Creek*, in Memphis in 1987. However, most lifestyle centres have sprouted since 1996, making them the fastest-growing retail format today (Bhatnagar 2005). An ICSC research paper investigated and defined the lifestyle centre in

2001 (Baker 2002) as distinct from traditional shopping malls, lifestyle centres are open-air and usually include at least 50,000 square feet of space devoted to upscale national chain specialty stores (for instance stores such as Pottery Barn, Restoration Hardware, Chico's, Barnes & Noble, Nine West); they include architectural embellishments such as courtyards, fountains and distinct exterior finishes for each retailer to create the illusion of separate buildings; they include other features such as restaurants, entertainment facilities and even live events such as weekly antique markets, or street musicians that make them an appealing destination for more than just shopping. In short, a lifestyle centre is a 'multipurpose leisure time destination'; in the words of Wendy Ellis, senior marketing manager at the Woodlands Mall: 'Today's Shoppers are looking for an *experience*' (Kaplan 2004).

An important concept within the discourse on lifestyle centres is 'design ambience' – in particular, an urban design ambience. Using the tools and techniques of pedestrian-oriented design, lifestyle centres work hard to create a 'sense of place', and the amenities and ambience of a thriving urban street. There are ample pedestrian amenities: benches, pedestrian-scale lights, 'public' gathering spaces, decorative fountains, abundant landscaping, sidewalk cafés to hang out in; and there is often a 'look' or 'theme' to the place: not monumental and homogeneous, but an eclectic blend of architectural styles and forms – carefully designed to appear as if it had grown over time. In a recent *LA Times* article, Virginia Postrel (2006) argues that lifestyle centres are 'recreating the essence of urban life' by 'reinventing the city street' and that 'Shoppers are no longer trying to escape their environment but to enjoy it. Even in suburbia they value the hum of city life'.

This urban 'design ambience' can amount to additional construction costs of \$200 per square foot – apparently double the cost of a typical neighbourhood big-box shopping centre (Gose 2004). But this investment pays off; apparently the average lifestyle centre makes about \$500 sales per square foot annually, compared to the \$211 for the average retail mall (Yue 2001). Interestingly, lifestyle centres are cheaper to maintain than traditional indoor malls: there is no expensive heating or air conditioning for expansive arcades. The shared maintenance costs of the common areas of lifestyle centres are about one third of similar costs in a traditional mall (Bhatnagar 2005). Michael Bayard, a retail fellow with the Urban Land Institute stated: 'What we are seeing are major changes in how malls are being configured and marketed. In many instances malls are becoming less mall like and more community-center like and reintegrating shopping back into people's daily pattern' (Kaplan 2004). The latest trends within the lifestyle centre phenomenon include the fact that big-box retailers such as Home Depot are beginning to show up on these nouveau Main Streets, and that lifestyle centres are becoming integral parts of planned mixed-use communities. It all fits well into the spirit of New Urbanism.

However much they may appear to be public streets, lifestyle centres are still fundamentally shopping malls and most decidedly private spaces: they



are privately managed and completely on private property. Like interior shopping malls, they are policed by private security firms and, because they are private property, the normal liberties and rights of truly public space do not apply: one does not have the right to hand out leaflets or make political speeches; indeed, in some places apparently, photography is prohibited. In essence, the successful formula that lifestyle centres deliver is to provide affluent shoppers with the best of both worlds: the vitality and ambience of a city street with the social homogeneity and parking convenience of a typical shopping mall.

As a case in point, the Village at Park Royal (in my hometown of West Vancouver) is apparently ‘Canada’s first lifestyle centre’. It is the most recent addition to the Park Royal Shopping Mall – a regional mall that, over its 50-year history, has undergone a number of facelifts and additions. The stores of the Village at Park Royal are to be found along a spine of a pedestrian-friendly street – actually called ‘Main Street’, complete with street furnishings and individuated buildings. Angled street parking is found along the street, and more free parking can be found ‘behind’ the shops. Although you might not guess by first looking at it, the Village at Park Royal includes a Home Depot, a Whole Foods Grocery, and Home Sense (Sears’ home furnishing store). These ‘big-box’ retailers are carefully disguised by down-playing their boxiness (look, it’s a cylinder!) and by the addition of expressive architectural detailing.



The Village at Park Royal, Vancouver: view of Home Depot (the cylinder) (photograph: Kathleen Kern).



The Village at Park Royal, Vancouver: view down 'Main Street' (photograph: Kathleen Kern).

The development also includes a small 'town square' within one of the crossroads of the configuration: the space includes lots of seating, a stream-like fountain area with stepping stones across it, and patios for the adjacent Whole Foods Café area and for the Cactus Club Café. The stores are articulated using various materials and different massing forms, and there are ample pedestrian amenities in the form of benches, pedestrian-scale street lighting and numerous raised crosswalks. It's a little kitsch, perhaps, trying to play on the seaside theme of Park Royal with a fake three-quarter size lighthouse (that's a couple of blocks from the ocean) and the use of iconographic forms of early twentieth-century coastal industry – much like that found at Granville Island – the urban theme park that was named the best neighbourhood in North America by the Project for Public Spaces in New York. But there it is, 'The Village' as an instant 'Main Street'.

### **The theme park street as heterotopian, postcivil paradigm**

Lifestyle centers are upscale strip malls on steroids . . . Downtowns, and even wimpy little strip malls, will dry up and die in their wake.

(Thayer 2004)

While lifestyle centres are a relatively recent phenomenon, regular public streets and downtowns have had to compete with suburban shopping centres

for almost 50 years now. In response to this retail competition, many downtowns and commercial districts have given their streets ‘makeovers’, either through the creation of pedestrian malls, transit malls or festival marketplaces or through streetscaping projects. This is nothing new; downtowns have been remaking their commercial streets since the late 1950s, but what is new is that downtowns and commercial districts are borrowing some of the management techniques of shopping malls, and even getting city councils – and provincial governments – to pass new laws and ordinances to provide additional policing powers. Downtowns and other commercial districts have responded to the challenge of the mall, not only with coordinated streetscaping to make their environments more amenable to shoppers, but also with forms of management of public space that resemble the private management of shopping malls and theme parks (Graham and Marvin 2003; Kohn 2004).

Over the past 20 years there has been a significant increase in business improvement districts (BIDs) or business improvement areas (BIAs) – semi-public organizations (or public–private partnerships) that are neighbourhood specific. BIDs receive revenue from mandatory taxes from area businesses and then use these funds to promote and manage the public spaces within the area, including streets and sometimes also plazas and parks. The ‘remarkable success’ of Bryant Park in New York City, for example, is due to the formation of and management by a BID, and has made it into the textbooks as a success story. Beyond funding advertising, promotional events, flower baskets and banners, BIDs often also provide extra cleaning services and extra security in the form of private security patrols, and ‘goodwill ambassadors’ or greeters. These private ‘rent-a-cops’ are known to be rather heavy-handed in banishing the homeless, or dealing with ‘street kids’.

Seattle and Vancouver are, once again, cases in point: in Seattle, the Downtown Seattle Association helped to initiate the MID in 1999 – Metropolitan Improvement District – a BID for the downtown core. According to their website, the MID aims to ‘improve the safety, cleanliness and vitality of Downtown Seattle’; it employs more than 60 ‘ambassadors’ who patrol the streets of downtown assisting the Seattle Police Department and offering ‘security escorts’, as well as providing services such as street sweeping, pressure washing, graffiti removal and trash collection ([www.downtownseattle.com/content/programs/MIDOverview.cfm](http://www.downtownseattle.com/content/programs/MIDOverview.cfm)).

In the early 1990s, before the dotcom boom, downtown Seattle was in a bit of a slump; downtown retailers felt especially vulnerable, as one of the major local department stores closed its doors forever. By 1993 there was a ‘flurry of local news articles testifying to the “unfriendly shopping atmosphere” descending upon downtown streets’ (Gibson 2004: 173). Many of these articles also painted the city’s homeless population as a significant part of the menace responsible for creating this ‘hostile’ environment. In 1993 the City Attorney, Mark Sidran, who was ‘an early convert’ to Wilson and Kelling’s ‘broken windows theory’ (1982), proposed a set of ‘civility

laws' that would send the message that Seattle is a place where 'people behave themselves and respect the rights of others' (Gibson 2004: 175). The ordinances, which were passed by city council in the autumn of 1993, included prohibitions against sitting on sidewalks, public drinking and urination, and aggressive panhandling, and provided the authority for police to close alleys that they suspected of being sites for drug trafficking.

In passing Sidran's 'civility ordinances', the Seattle City Council was quite openly trying to reverse the apparent negative image of the downtown core and reacting to pressure from the Downtown Seattle Association, who claimed, based on evidence from their own survey of downtown users, that one of the top reasons King Country residents gave for disliking downtown included the presence of homeless people and perceived threats to personal safety (Gibson 2004: 189). Despite its reputation for upholding civil liberties, this logic – of essentially criminalizing homelessness – is invading Canadian cities as well. In Vancouver, the Downtown Vancouver Association, the Downtown Vancouver BIA, the Gastown BIA and other BIAs from around the city helped to form the 'Safe Streets Coalition', which successfully lobbied the provincial government to pass legislation called 'the Safe Streets Act', which bans 'aggressive panhandling', 'not taking no for an answer' and begging near places with 'captive audiences', including near bank machines and transit stops, as well as soliciting stopped cars (at traffic lights) by providing windshield-cleaning services. According to those who lobbied for the legislation:

Our members are extremely concerned about the increased 'disorder' on city streets and the impact this is having on the quality of life of citizens and visitors to our communities. By 'disorder' we mean property crime (including robberies), aggressive panhandling and squeegee persons, graffiti and litter.

(Safe Streets Coalition 2004)

Fully buying into the 'broken windows theory' of Wilson and Keller, the Safe Streets Act attempts to remove the 'symptoms of disorder' (such as poverty, homelessness, runaway street kids) without removing their essential causes. Modelled after the Safe Streets Act of Ontario, it was passed by the legislature in October 2004. While it has the support of about 80 per cent of the province mayors, then Mayor of Vancouver (Larry Campbell, a former cop and chief coroner) was sceptical and the Civil Liberties Association and homeless advocates protested against the passing of this legislation.

What is most interesting however – and is somewhat of a relief – is that, in the first few months that the new law has been put into force, it is police officers who have proved to be the most sceptical: the police inspector responsible for downtown Vancouver has publicly questioned the effectiveness of the Safe Streets Act. While the police have enforced the law, and had, by early April, handed out tickets and warning to ten panhandlers,

Inspector Val Harrison said that the law is unlikely to have a dramatic impact on life on the streets as ticketing and fining those who have no money doesn't do much: 'the poor and drug-addicted need treatment and housing she stated, not tickets and fines' (CBC 2005).

Unfortunately, the new Mayor of Vancouver, Sam Sullivan, has, in late 2006, launched the 'Project Civil City', which once again aims to address the issues of 'public disorder', including aggressive panhandling, street disorder, open drug dealing and drug use. With the stated goals of eliminating the incidences of aggressive panhandling, and open drug markets 'with at least a 5% reduction by 2010' (City of Vancouver 2007) – the year that Vancouver will host the Winter Olympics – one suspects that the motivations are more about cleaning up the city's image for the world media that will descend on the city in four years' time than on a sincere attempt to cultivate a more civic urban populace and institute a more civilized and civic response to urban poverty and drug addiction.

### **Public (and 'other') space as practice**

In *Splintering Urbanism*, Graham and Marvin express concern regarding the 'secessionary streetscapes' of BIDs (2003: 262). Margaret Kohn, in *Brave New Neighborhoods*, expresses a similar concern over the privatization of the public space of the street and downtown shopping areas by BIDs (2004). Kohn is particularly concerned that BIDs are not democratic organizations in their structure and that their management of downtown public realms reduces the fundamental democracy of the street. According to Kohn:

Public sidewalks and streets are practically the only remaining available sites for unscripted political activity. They are the places where insurgent political candidates gather signatures, striking workers publicize their cause, and church groups pass out leaflets . . . Public spaces are the last domains where the opportunity to communicate is not something bought and sold.

(Kohn 2004: 70)

Kohn's concern was articulated a decade earlier by Mike Davis in a chapter from his book, *City of Quartz* (1992), entitled 'Fortress LA': Davis feared that the sadistic streetscapes of Los Angeles were destroying some of the last public spaces where people from dramatically different cultures could freely mingle.

But, as Margaret Crawford (1999), Don Mitchell (2003) and, later, Graham and Marvin (2003) have pointed out, this concern for the loss of public space is often mingled with a nostalgia for a vision of public space that perhaps never truly existed: public streets have always been, or included, a porous zone between public and private; and the idyllic public spaces of the *agora* – the town square – were often *not* freely accessible to members

of society who were not deemed citizens, for example, women and slaves. Why does this complaint of the loss or 'fragmentation' of public space and the public realm come just when those of us who are 'others' (women, people of colour, sexual minorities) finally get the opportunity to occupy the city? We must not forget that the struggle for civic and civil rights for all 'others' is a project that is still not complete.

Overemphasizing the particular spatial configuration – the design – of public spaces, whether streets or town squares, runs the risks of putting too much weight onto static images of what 'democratic public space' looks like. But, on the other hand, Davis, Kohn and others have made convincing arguments that the attempt to secure the city – through 'Fortress LA' tactics of 'sadistic street environments' or the private management of public spaces by BIDs and BIAs – risks destroying the democratic ecology of the street. As Don Mitchell, in *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* suggests: 'the search for a *democratic* order of public space must begin by questioning that crusade to secure the city' (2003: 230). Mitchell is suggesting that public space is not a static place, or object, but, rather, very much about the struggle to *create* public space:

Public space . . . is not only the space where the right to the city is struggled over; it is where it is implemented and represented. It is where utopia is both given spatial form and given life too. Utopia is impossible, but the ongoing struggle toward it is not.

(Mitchell 2003: 235)

Crawford, relying on Nancy Fraser's 'Rethinking the public sphere' (1992), has argued for an expanded concept of both 'the public' and 'public space' from a homogeneous entity to one that includes a multiplicity of 'counter-publics' that occupy a diversity of spaces, new and old: 'Change, multiplicity, and contestation – rather than constituting the failure of public space – may in fact define its very nature' (Crawford 1995: 9). For Crawford, the street, however imperfect, still articulates some sense of hope, instead of the decidedly dystopian images of the fortress conjured up by Mike Davis (1992).

While it is true that parts of the city have been 'Disneyfied', the downtown core of Vancouver, over the past 30 years, has gone from a place that was dead at night to a lively, lived-in, active, diverse urban environment. The Seawall has been extended to almost 22 km along the city's waterfront, creating an extensive public promenade from the industrial port to the University of British Columbia; neighbourhood commercial streets are thriving, expanding and gaining individual identity; a 'greenway' system of bike and pedestrian routes has been established throughout the city, and there is a diverse plethora of cultural, neighbourhood and community festivals throughout the year. There is a much more expansive and diverse public life than there was 30 years ago. Alternatively, Vancouver also has North America's first officially supervised injection site, developed in large

part as a harm-reduction strategy to counter the downtown eastside's significant HIV infection rate and in the realization that the American-style 'war on drugs' was a failure.

In Seattle too, neighbourhood streets are thriving; numerous farmers' markets are popping up and flourishing; and it is possible to see how connections made possible through the internet have helped to develop alternative semi-public spaces and realms: for example, the 'Society for Human Sexuality', at first an email 'list-serve' based at the University of Washington, helped to create a nexus of people who have gone on to found 'The Wet Spot' – Seattle's first 'sex-positive' pansexual community centre, an adult 'play space': a true cyber-heterotopia!

Public space, then, is in essence – to borrow from Lefebvre – the production of public space: that is, public space is the process, the act of making things public. Or, as Foucault would say, 'Liberty is a practice':

I do not think that there is anything that is functionally – by its very nature – absolutely liberating. Liberty is a practice . . . [I]f one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again, owing to the practice of liberty . . . [I]t is somewhat arbitrary to try to dissociate the effective practice of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves. If they are separated, they become impossible to understand. Each can only be understood through the other.

(Foucault 1984: 245–6)

While Foucault is right that one doesn't have to reify or fossilize the meaning or the locus of space, be it public or other, into any one form, we should not forget that form *does* matter. Urban form is not deterministic of social life, but it must be recognized that certain forms cannot sustain an open public realm, and that a progressive network urbanism needs, at the very least, some form of a network. In the built environment this network takes the form of streets – streets carry multiple networks – and it is worth advocating for open and public street networks, whether a gridded or more rhizomatic (organic) form. It is not the static image of what public spaces look like that is the issue – what matters is that they exist and how they are managed and lived. If liberty is a practice then there must be spaces and places that are open to its exercise. If we want a network of public spaces, then we have to continuously construct and expand it – literally and figuratively.

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La Défense, Paris, in 1971: the CNIT (front left) and the *dalle* (front right).

# Between shopping malls and agoras\*

## A French history of ‘protected public space’

Clément Orillard

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During the 30 years between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the oil crisis in the mid-1970s, an intense modernization programme gave birth to a new France, one very different from the pre-war France of the 1930s. This period is known as ‘Les Trentes Glorieuses’, the ‘Thirty Glorious Years’ (Fourastié 1979). During these three decades, the state administration grew rapidly and began to engage a number of new domains: one of these was *urbanisme*. After decades of experimentation, a new national urban policy was developed, establishing a significant break with past urban practices.

This break led to the emergence of a peculiar urban and architectural object, among other things, which we refer to in this chapter as ‘protected public space’. The word ‘protected’ designates two characteristics that separate this heterotopian type of space from ‘traditional’ public space. The first is a physical designation. A protected public space is not an open space but it is a public space that has boundaries, an artificial ground area and a roof. The second designation is a legal one. A protected public space belongs not only to the traditional public authorities – municipal or national – but also to a number of other actors in the city, such as public enterprises, private real estate developers and so forth. The play between the different actors is codified through complex contractual systems quite different from the legal frameworks at work in traditional city centre streets.

This chapter proposes to understand the origins of one type of French ‘protected public space’, its functioning, its limits and its broader relationship to key discussions in architecture and urbanism.

### ‘Building’ public space: La Défense

In the 1950s, urbanism became an important national issue connected with welfare and industrialization policies. After the Second World War, France not only had to face urgent rebuilding demands due to war damage, but it also entered into a period of intense urbanization and rapid population growth. In order to respond to this situation, policies were gradually developed to reorganize the national territory.

The rapidity of this post-war effort gave birth to a paradox: very powerful tools were placed in the hands of a limited number of people who had little experience in dealing with urban issues. These *urbanistes*, mainly architects from 'l'Ecole des Beaux Arts' and engineers from 'l'Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées', had been working closely with the state administration, especially on experimental projects in the colonies. When the question of a national policy arose, the state almost automatically chose to rely upon the expertise of these professionals (Claude 2006).

In this context, experimentation had to be wedded with pragmatism: experimentation, since much had to be invented; pragmatism, because the programme had to go ahead in the absence of intellectual and other resources needed to face the problems of the new society. Lack of experience, however, was compensated by great ambition.

In the beginning, urban policies and practices were concentrated on limited projects, which grew bigger as the power of the state administration expanded. Part of the expanding agenda was the housing programme known as the 'Grands Ensembles' and a number of key urban projects. La Défense is one such exceptional project and can be understood not only as a paroxystic version of the kind of urban policy developed at the time, but also as exemplary for the moment in which the question of the protected public space first arose. At its origin, La Défense was simply a project to build a national exhibition hall on the outskirts of Paris, but the ambition for the development of this area changed quickly as it became a kind of central business district for the French capital (Lefebvre 2003).

The initial images produced for the first phase of the La Défense development included two objects that blur the traditional distinction between open space and built space. On the one hand, there is the new exhibition space, named the National Centre for Industry and Technology, which is just a floor slab with a thin concrete roof resting delicately on three points. On the other hand, there is the creation of the *dalle*, a new artificial urban ground plane, covering an underground world composed of different levels, one for each type of transport, the top one being reserved for pedestrians. In the La Défense project, public spaces are transformed into buildings and buildings into public spaces. However, as considerations of public space and indoor space open to the public are not yet fully integrated, these spaces have not yet fused completely, producing the type of 'protected public spaces' we are interested in here. To witness the emergence of the object in question we have to jump forward a decade and study the New Towns policy.

## **A double choice at the birth of the New Towns policy**

The New Towns policy constituted a key chapter in the founding of French contemporary urbanism (Murard and Fourquet 2004). It was the most

important catalyst in the emergence of a number of new practices, patterns and actors onto the urban design scene. The New Towns policy of the 1960s sought to counteract three interconnected tendencies: first, the fragmented urbanism created by isolated planning projects; second, the inability of these projects to generate a vibrant urban life; and, third, the uncontrolled sprawl at the urban fringes, in particular in the Parisian region.

### **The SDAURP, or wishes without means**

The first step was a regional master planning effort, the first such effort in French history. The Institute of Development and Urbanism for the Parisian Region (IAURP) headed the planning process for the area around the French capital. This recently founded, small organization was controlled directly by the state in the person of the new 'Délégué Général' for the Parisian region, Paul Delouvrier. Delouvrier had enormous power, the ear of the president, and strong ambitions for France.

The master plan for the Paris region, named the SDAURP and published in 1965 (District de la Région de Paris 1965), reflected this power and ambition by proposing a u-turn in urban design practices: this plan sought

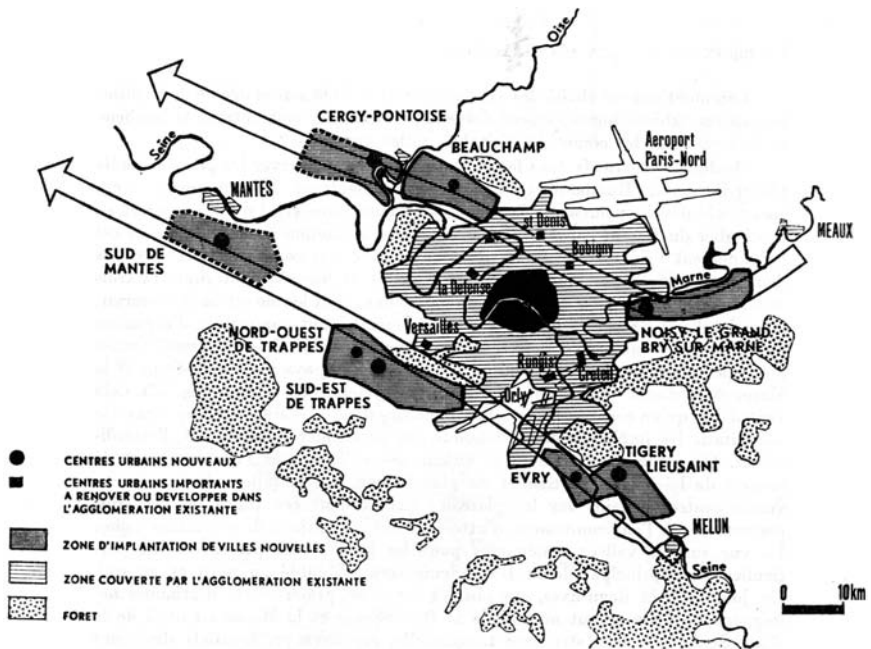


Diagram of the master plan for the Paris region (SDAURP) with the location of the different New Towns.

to integrate different projects into one single strategy and to control the coordination of all urban development. The plan proposed initially seven, which later became five, New Towns around the city of Paris in order to reorganize its suburbs and to steer its development.

Each New Town was supposed to attract the maximum number of people. Their new centres would be of regional importance. Tools were specified for the organization of the global scheme, such as new public transport lines. Little was clear, however, regarding the realization of the centres of these New Towns. The SDAURP of 1965 and its New Town plans were primarily ambitions without means.

### ***Between social utopianism and realism***

During the two years following the publication of the SDAURP, the IAURP tried to respond to the challenge of making ambitions a reality. It decided to proceed simultaneously with the development of two different policy directions. Their investigations corresponded to the two main tendencies of the modernization of French society in the beginning of the 1960s: on the one hand, the need for the reorganization of social and cultural public services offered to the new suburban population who came mainly from the countryside; on the other hand, the reality of a growing consumer society focused on shopping (Péron 1993).

Different kinds of shopping centres in the suburbs of Paris suddenly proliferated during this period. In order to control this development, the IAURP chose to produce a new master plan solely for retailing activities (Fournié 1982). Of course, New Towns had to be the places for major regional shopping centres. But because efficiency was needed and the French *urbanistes* had no experience in dealing with this kind of programme, an appeal was made to the American consultants Larry Smith and Victor Gruen.

Even if French society was moving towards a consumer model, an evolution that increasingly escaped state control, the state had a strong desire to culturally and socially organize this new France in the making. Since the 1930s and the birth of the welfare state, the organization of social and cultural facilities had been the subject of many experiments (Korganow 2003). In the 1960s, this question became a central interest of the state administration. The IAURP quickly saw New Towns as opportunities for a great leap forward in the creation of a new generation of such facilities. It charged a group of its urban planners to survey precedents in France and Europe.

These investigations reflected two opposing directions of thought: efficiency versus experimentation, American versus European models and actors, private consultants versus public administration, etc. The New Town centres became the main battleground between two kinds of actors, between two architectural models, between two urban philosophies.

## Two kinds of actors, two models

During this period, things had to happen fast, especially in urban development, where the need for an organizational structure was imperative. From 1967, the government began to create new structures, one for each projected New Town. These planning teams, the *missions*, were offshoots of the IAURP. Many employees had in fact worked on the SDAURP. As the IAURP matured, it became a centralized structure coordinating the different *missions*, providing them with studies and other intellectual resources. The overlap between the central IAURP and the different *missions* would exacerbate the struggle between the two approaches to urban planning.

### **Real estate and the mall**

The IAURP chose Larry Smith to help work on its retail master plan for the Parisian region developed alongside the SDAURP (Goldberg and Edouard 1965) and decided a few years later, in 1967, to commission his long-time collaborator Victor Gruen to work on the New Town centres as both architect and planner. The exact conditions of this choice are not totally clear. The link between Smith and Gruen must have played a role, but the main reason probably is the importance and renown of the latter's work. Not only was Gruen the most famous shopping centre architect, but he was also one of its main theoreticians. The French department stores, hoping to expand into the suburbs, but frightened by the idea of moving into yet unknown territory, placed great trust in him.

Attracting main Parisian department stores to New Town centres was a central objective in the strategy of the *urbanistes*. Department stores, key urban elements in central Paris, were expected to quickly establish an urban atmosphere for the centres and offer a high level of services. This need was urgent because the development of the suburbs was very rapid, with a very low density, giving birth to a new kind of retailing system far from the luxury American shopping centre. This new system was organized around the 'hypermarché', an architectural type created in 1963. This gigantic box with the minimal architecture of a warehouse and the commercial motto of 'everything under the same roof' (Jungers 2002) better served low-density urban development, but was unable to constitute an anchor in New Town cores.

The IAURP first asked Gruen to devise strategies that would attract the department stores into these new developments. His contract, however, gave him a broader mandate: he was designated a consultant for the entire design of the different New Town centres. This contract created an ambiguity in which it is very difficult to know who ended up on the losing end of the deal. In the beginning, Gruen, enthusiastic about the SDAURP plans, worked on three New Town centres. He quickly proposed schemes directly taken from his own New Town projects, such as Valencia, or urban

renewal projects, such as Fresno. All were based on one main architectural model of which he is not the inventor but rather the theoretician: the mall (Clausen 1984; Longstreth 1997).

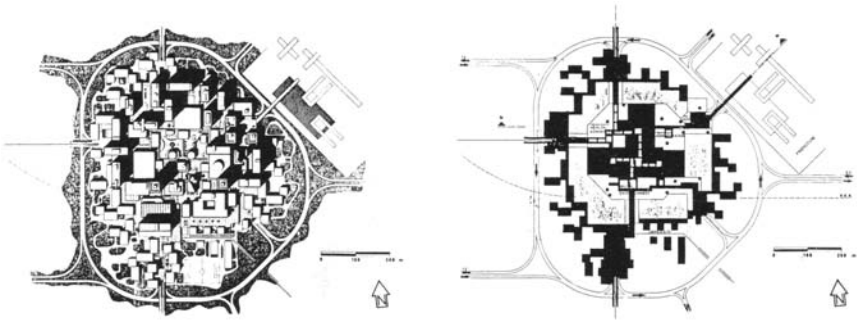
Since the 1950s, Gruen, an architect specializing in commercial buildings (Hardwick 2004), had realized a number of suburban shopping centres with the help of the real estate consultant Larry Smith. Through their different projects, they tried to systemize an architectural vocabulary in order to produce the most efficient retailing machines. The mall became the main element of this vocabulary, increasingly taking the form of a fixed model. In 1960, Gruen and Smith published a book, *Shopping Towns USA* (Gruen and Smith 1960), which set their reputation as the theoreticians of this new architectural type. Their analysis celebrated the mall for its capacity to produce future community centres in the suburbs. If commercial activities were advanced as the key element establishing centrality in an urban context, they proposed to supplement the shopping programme with other urban functions, such as public facilities, and an urban atmosphere.

The mall was presented as follows: a closed and linear pedestrian space open to the use of the public, but cut off from the outside world of cars; in short, the reinvention of the traditional urban element of the street for a suburban society. As the entire American society was engaged in a process of progressive suburbanization, it was easy to see the mall as an integral recipe for urbanism. If the mall succeeded in suburbs by separating 'public space' from car traffic, it could be used to the same end in the core of the city, where retailing progressively disappeared because of problems of congestion or lack of accessibility. For Gruen, 'main street', the key commercial element in the city, had to be turned into a mall in order to survive (Gruen 1964). For the different French New Towns, he proposed schemes designed in that vein only to be confronted by public actors who didn't agree with his point of view.

### **Public urbanism and the agora**

Not only this model, but also Victor Gruen himself, were rejected in the end, somewhat violently, by the *urbanistes* of the *missions*. The conflict was particularly outspoken in the New Town of Evry, which was the most advanced in its development among the New Towns. The main reason for this rejection was the belief that a space first designed for business couldn't also serve the public good. Another problem was that the *missions* never fully accepted Gruen's services, probably perceived as having been imposed by the IAURP.

Nevertheless, the growing opposition inside the *missions* teams of *urbanistes* against Gruen's position and schemes was more than circumstantial. In the case of Evry, the strong insistence on the creation of new kinds of social and cultural amenities can easily be seen as a search for a counter-



Victor Gruen's 1969 master plan for the centre of Evry, France: aerial view (left); pattern with a mall as the core (right).

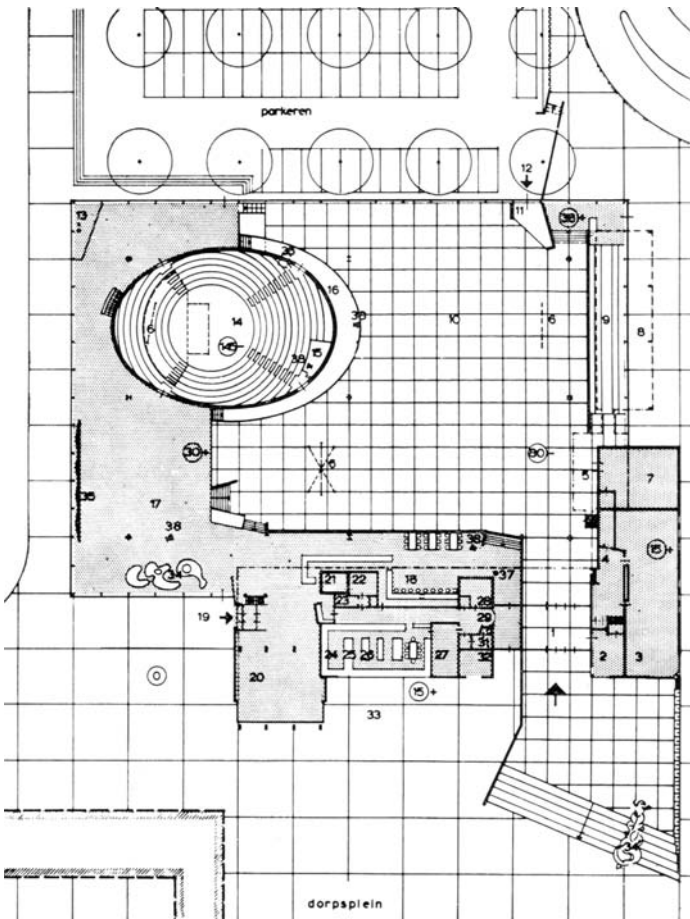
model for New Town centres. By chance, the *urbanistes* of Evry discovered the work of Frank van Klingerén in 1968. They went to the Netherlands in 1969 to meet him at his office and visit his projects. The date is very important because it corresponds to a turning point in van Klingerén's work.

Frank van Klingerén (van den Bergen and Vollard 2003) was an engineer by training who became an established architect through his practice. After the Second World War, he specialized in new social facilities combining programmatic elements such as schools and community services. In the 1960s, the Dutch 'poldermodel' provided the context to fully develop this line of experimentation. He designed different projects, all for the new Flevoland polder, all under the name of 'Agora'. All these proposals reflect the same philosophy. However, there are two distinct steps in the development of this philosophy that address two different scales.

The first step corresponds to his solution for a new kind of community centre for a small New Town, Dronten. The building proposed there grouped together social and cultural facilities around a covered free space intended for use as a marketplace, and for sporting and cultural events. The aim was to concentrate the civic life in one point of the New Town in order to give it an urban atmosphere through a concrete built element that could be put in place from the very beginning. The result, however, was rather strange: a covered public space that was cut off from the outside, cut off from the public space of streets.

When he was commissioned to design the same kind of facility but for the new regional capital of Flevoland, Lelystad, he took a second step in the development of this new typology. In the beginning, the project was a big version of the one in Dronten. But it quickly became very different, while keeping its name, 'Agora'. In Lelystad, he decided to connect the building to the surrounding open spaces and added a great number of





The Agora of Dronten, Netherlands (Frank van Klinger). Plan of the central, protected public space.

functions, in particular shops. The Agora became a kind of semi-enclosed public space, like a square, surrounded by a flexible architectural structure. This last project was closer to the scale of French New Town centres.

The work of Frank van Klinger provided the elements for the counter-model that the *urbanistes* of the *missions* were searching for. This model included a spatial figure similar to that of the mall, but at the same time offered a distinctive European point of view by holding on to a set of European architectural types. The mall is linear; the *agora* is central. The mall is disconnected from the open spaces surrounding it: the *agora* has to be open to them. But, more importantly, the mall is primarily for private businesses. The *agora* is first and foremost for the public good.



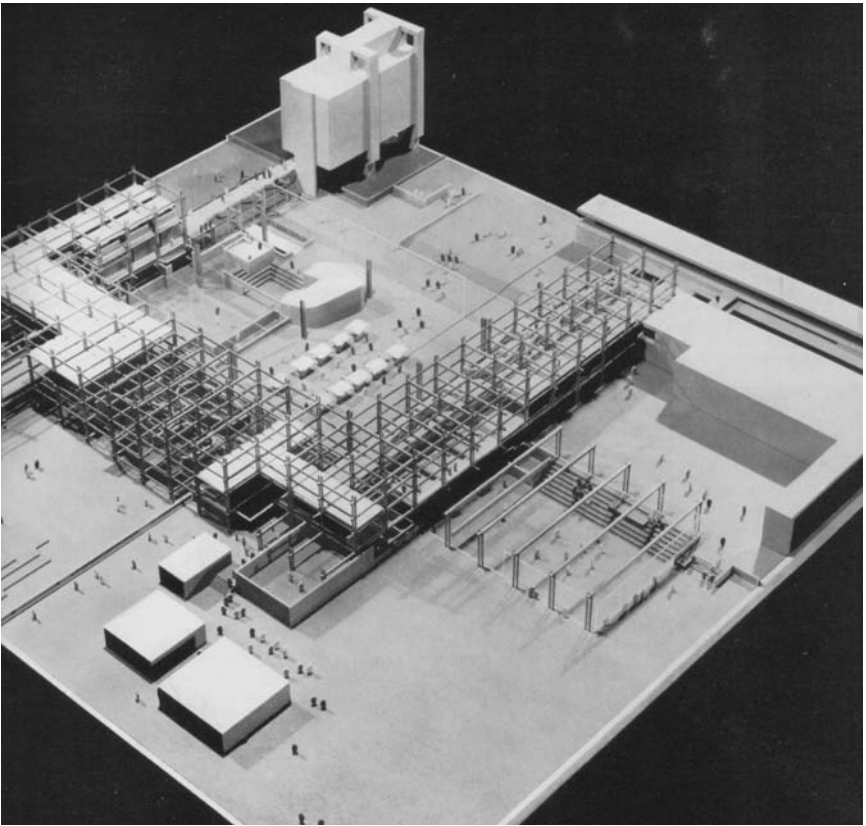
The Agora of Dronten, Netherlands (Frank van Klingereren). In the background a traditional 'outdoor' market, including the shelters, has taken over the protected public space.

As one can see, the pattern of the mall and the counter-pattern of the *agora* were elements of a broader dialogue that brings together the different actors implicated in the making of the city: *urbanistes* and private consultants; the state and real estate developers. Beyond the conflict, the counter-model created an opening for a range of different solutions for New Town centres.

### **The building of protected public spaces**

With the departure of Gruen, a new kind of actor took charge of the issue of retail in the New Towns: the commercial real estate developer. Their role and knowledge naturally limited them to the design of shopping centres rather than entire New Town centres – and so the *urbanistes* of the *missions* finally became the sole designers of New Town centres.

But, in the autumn of 1968, a former banker in real estate development, Albin Chalandon, was named Minister of Urbanism. From the beginning, he was very sceptical about the New Towns policy. Shortly after this



Model of the second layout for the Agora of Lelystad, Netherlands (Frank van Klingeren).

appointment, Paul Delouvrier, the ‘inventor’ of the New Towns policy, was forced to quit, leaving the *missions* alone to face the government and its new minister.

This new climate pushed the *missions*, gradually transformed into public corporations of development (‘Etablissements Publics d’Aménagement’, or EPA), to go faster in the realization of the New Towns. Conflicts between the two models for the centres needed to be surpassed. This was the time of elaborate negotiations. In the three main New Towns, this negotiation took different trajectories leading to different solutions and progressively giving birth to the protected public space.

### **Cergy-Pontoise: the break**

Cergy-Pontoise, the most precocious New Town (Hirsch 2000), showed a simple and clear first answer to the conflict between social and cultural

facilities and the shopping centre: a clear break. The development of the master plan shows that this strategy appeared very quickly.

In 1971, the heritage of La Défense was evident in the design of this centre. In the master plan, a *dalle* as a single ground plane supported the different buildings. The scale and its placement in relationship to other buildings made the shopping centre a central component in the development of the city core. However, the shopping centre is broken up into three separate buildings connected by malls designed as open commercial streets. The social and cultural centre, itself organized around an open space, is directly connected to the shopping centre.

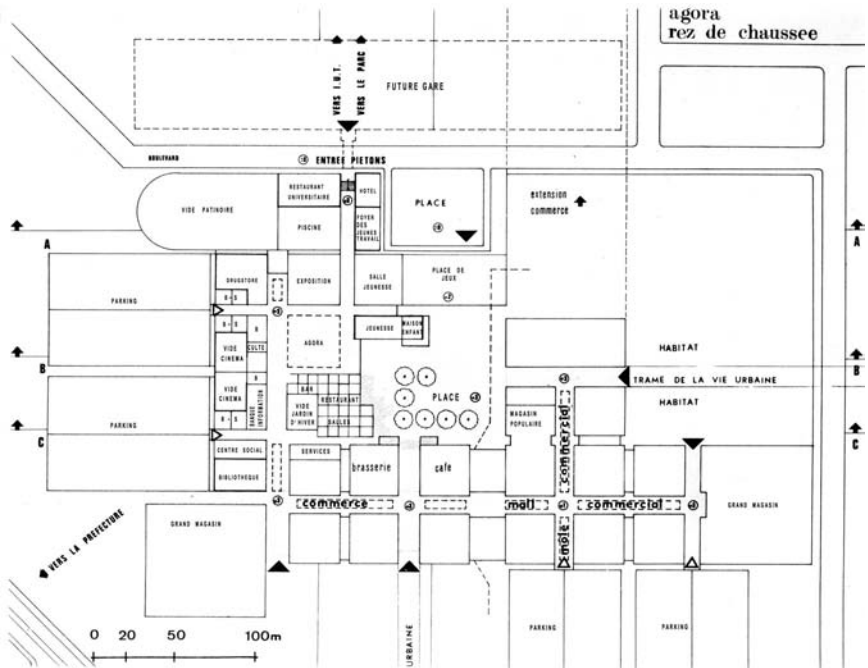
In 1974, the plan took a radically different turn. The shopping centre began to be developed as a closed building, the malls became interior spaces, and the social and cultural centre was moved further from the shopping centre. In 1977, this division became definitive: the closed shopping mall was isolated on the edge of the city core, far from the social and cultural centre realized with a design strongly inspired by the design of Evry's Agora, which we will discuss later in this chapter.

Thus, the conception of Cergy-Pontoise's centre evolved from an integrated design into a divided one. The central part of the town centre remained empty for a long time, a separation between two *dalles* designed as two different worlds: the 'public' part with the different administrative buildings and the social and cultural centre, and the 'private' part with the shopping centre. This break is strange because the real estate developer chosen for Cergy-Pontoise's shopping centre had a track record of working with *urbanistes* and had been ready to work in close collaboration. Moreover, the two main architects of the team of *urbanistes* designed both the shopping centre and the social and cultural centre. But the urgency to move ahead and the lack of experience of the Cergy-Pontoise team probably led to this division.

In the end, there was no real protected public space. Cergy-Pontoise can be seen as the direct heir of La Défense through its *urbanisme de dalle* and the initial ambiguity of its plan has only been resolved by the clear break.

### **Evry: the association**

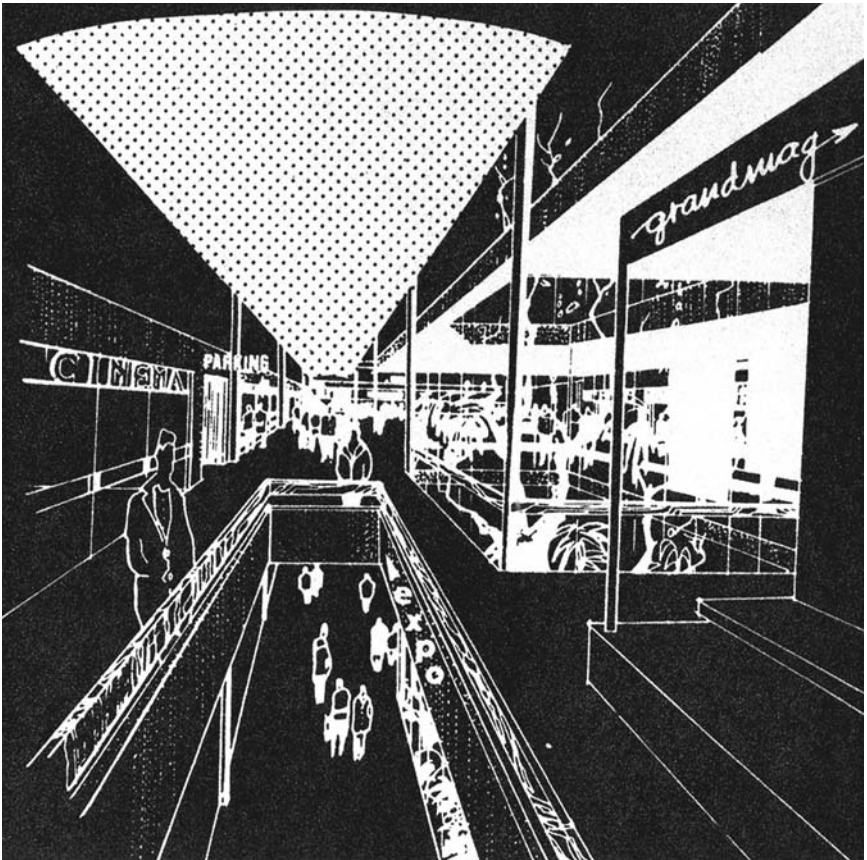
The story of Evry (Fouchier 2000) is more complicated and far more interesting. The conflict between Gruen and the *urbanistes* was nowhere more important than here. The search for a counter-model was the explicit aim of Evry's team. After 1968 and the discovery of Frank van Klingeren's work, the word '*agora*' not only appeared in all the documents, but also a clear description of its functions and its architecture. The Agora was proposed as the main element of the New Town centre, in a manner that directly betrays the van Klingeren model. It concentrated different public facilities around a central covered space, as in a square, to create a lively atmosphere in the heart of the New Town.



The centre of Evry, France, project of 1968: ground floor plan with the Agora (centre) and the shopping mall (bottom).

However, the use of the square versus the notion of the linear mall was confused from the beginning by the fact that the Agora, in turn, needed to be associated with the shopping centre. First, in the proposed T-shaped shopping mall, the Agora was designed to replace a department store as the third magnet. Second, in the definition of the activities that the Agora was supposed to house, a number of these are not only cultural or sporting programmes, but also commercial functions. Even the architecture itself showed an Agora with two levels and a system of signs very close to the architecture of a mall. One can see Evry's Agora as both an act of resistance against, and at the same time a complement of, the shopping mall model. This ambiguity is probably the reason why, despite the evolution of the situation, the idea of the Agora survived and was finally realized.

During the following year, both projects, the Agora and the shopping centre, were the object of intense negotiations that reinforced their mutual association but also led to the improvement of their designs. For instance, the Agora was quickly divided into two parts: the private *agora*, with the commercial facilities, and the public *agora*, with the public ones. The heart of the negotiation between the *urbanistes* and the real estate developers



The centre of Evry, project of 1968: interior impression of the Agora.

was their respective ability to take ownership and organize the activities proposed for the private *agora*, acknowledging the fact that the EPA was not in a position to manage this kind of activity. In order to secure the interest of the commercial real estate developers, the *urbanistes* had to stay closer than intended to the model of the mall.

On the other hand, the commercial real estate developers wanted to obtain the contract for the shopping centre of Evry because yet another shopping model, the 'hypermarché', was beginning to emerge in the low-density suburbs of Paris. The mall model needed more density to be able to compete. The New Town centres were able to offer that kind of density. Given the circumstances, they accepted the move away from the traditional scheme of the mall as requested by the *urbanistes*.

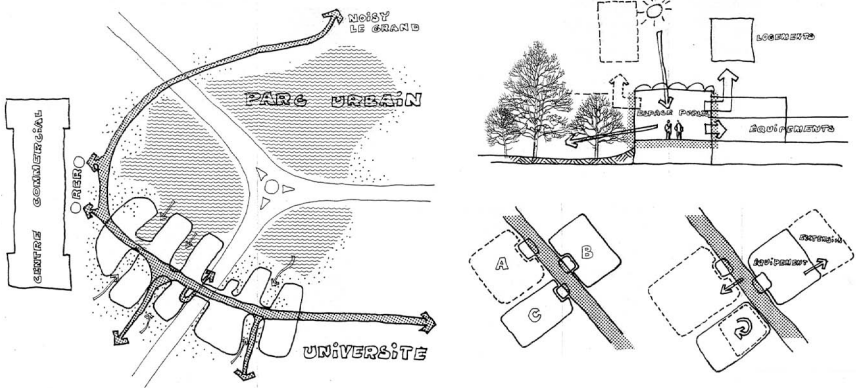
This kind of exchange gave birth to a new kind of architectural object: the 'central mega-complex'. This object is in fact a combination of two different constellations, the socio-cultural centre and the shopping centre, all arranged around a protected public space, not only covered but also closed. The 'central mega-complex' is a town centre in itself and totally blurs the differences between building and open space, but without being a new pattern. This architectural object and its protected public space appeared solely as exponents of the complex negotiations involving the models of the Agora and the shopping centre.

### **Noisy: the opposition**

The invention of a new pattern would finally happen in the design of the centre of Noisy-le-Grand, the first part of the New Town of Marne-la-Vallée. Originally, the *urbanistes* of Noisy had decided to follow the model of Evry. They designed a social and cultural centre, which was a copy of Evry's Agora, just changing its name from Agora to Piazza. The Piazza was a public complex of facilities organized around a central space: a covered square, on two levels, which were directly connected to the shopping centre. The Piazza was located on a pedestrian path, which had already been introduced in the first master plan, linking two parts of the New Town. This initial scheme was fairly quickly replaced by a radically different scheme. This change of strategy might have been a reaction to Evry's complex negotiations, but also reflects the ambitions that the team at Marne-la-Vallée entertained for their New Town, well aware of the fact that it was the largest New Town established.

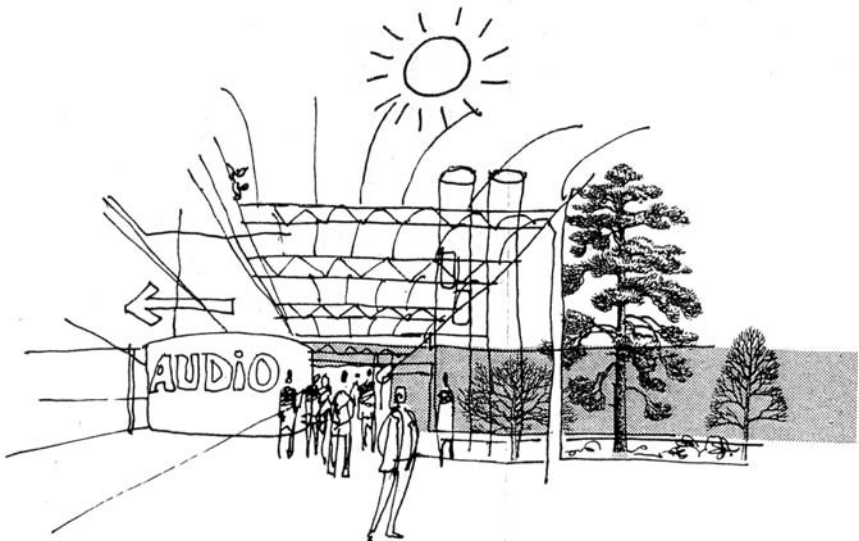
The *urbanistes* proposed a totally new pattern organizing the social and cultural activities not around a square, but along the path itself. From a centred design, the Piazza became a linear design. Strangely enough, it thereby became a new kind of street. The team of *urbanistes* described this change of design as an architecture diametrically opposed to the architecture of the shopping mall as a closed box cut off from public space.

This scheme was developed on the model of the mega-structure that emerged during this period (Banham 1976), in particular in French experimental public facilities (Lucan 2001). First the pedestrian path, equipped with a roof and an artificial ground plane, was transformed into an infrastructure element in and of itself, very different from the traditional street. Small buildings were attached to this structure, each receiving the different functions in a disaggregated architecture open to the rest of the city. The double principle of an integrated infrastructure supporting a composite architecture was so important that the path was designed like one architectural element and some functions were even decomposed into several units to increase the sense of fragmentation and, then, to create a contrast with the unity and scale of the pedestrian infrastructure.



The Piazza, project of 1974: scheme of Noisy's centre with the Piazza opposed to the shopping centre (left); principles of the Piazza's architecture (right).

Here again the main reference for the design of the socio-cultural centre was the shopping centre, even though it was believed to be an outright rejection of this model. Fragmentation was privileged over unity, and flexibility over rigidity, an opening to the rest of the city against enclosure. In following master plans for the centre, the shopping centre was drawn as a single building from which the Piazza was disconnected. This pattern exacerbated



Interior impression of the protected public space of the Piazza.



a sense of opposition between the architectures of shopping centre and socio-cultural centre, the last becoming the real core of the New Town.

Unfortunately this ambitious project was never built. Due to insufficient resources and a slump in the development of the region, the scheme was scaled back, leaving only a bleak shadow of the Agora first built at Evry: the protected public space disappeared and gave way to a proposal for a traditional pedestrian square.

So, from Cergy to Noisy, we see the way in which the New Town planning process gave birth to a new object: the protected public space. But this object had no clear architectural configuration. From its inexistence in Cergy-Pontoise to its elaborated version in the second design for the Piazza, each configuration depended in a fundamental way on the negotiations between the two main actors: the commercial real estate developers and the *urbanistes*. In turn, the protected public space enabled the forced integration of the competing interests of these main actors. The history of the New Towns policy shows how this protected public space is a strange hybrid between traditional urban open spaces and the shopping mall, producing a friendly monster, with remarkable transformative capacities.

### **When the protected meets the unprotected: Les Halles**

During the 1960s, and parallel to the New Towns policy, the government launched a complementary policy of urban renewal in the main city cores to build modern metropolises. At the end of the 1970s, this process led to projects that directly reflect the experience and insight gained in the New Town experiments.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the projects for ‘Les Halles’ in the centre of Paris. Indeed, the first phase of the project was built by the same commercial real estate company and EPA architects that built the shopping centre at Cergy-Pontoise. The use of a word like *forum* – the Latin translation of *agora* – as a name for the project of ‘Les Halles’ also betrays this heritage. In ‘Les Halles’, the same combination of functions returns: a shopping centre, further shops, social and cultural facilities, and a similar protected public space holding these functions together. ‘Les Halles’, however, is not an exceptional case. The same pattern can be found in Lyons’ ‘Part Dieu’ and Marseille’s ‘Centre Bourse’.

The renewal policy consisted mainly in the transplantation of the mega-complex pattern experimented with at Evry in a totally different milieu – the core of the city. This transplantation, by connecting two different worlds that normally excluded each other, old urban fabrics and modern urban design devices, ended up producing a public space that is far more fragmented than is the case in the New Towns.

This latent conflict between the creation of the mega-complex and its integration into an existing urban fabric led to a compromise: the mega-complex was built underground. Because a metro station cut the site into two parts, the project had to be planned in two phases, each housing different functions and designed by different architects. The protected public space of the operation had therefore to be divided. To make the connection to the main commuter train station, yet another underground public space had to be added.

The project of 'Les Halles' was part of a big renewal project for the centre of Paris, which included the Centre Georges Pompidou. The main principle of the adopted renewal strategy was to exclude cars from this part of the city in order to create a big pedestrian zone. This caused an unanticipated fragmentation of the public space system in the centre of the city. Already in the early stages of the development of the 'Les Halles' project, one sees a far more complex equation at work than a simple opposition – 'protected' versus 'unprotected' public spaces.

In reaction to this growing fragmentation of publicly accessible spaces, the municipal authority tried to legally unify all public space: it retained ownership of the whole system of pedestrian circulation, even that of the shopping centre. All of these spaces were given the same legal status: they are streets of Paris that continue in the underground level. It would, however, quickly become clear that the municipal authority was unable to manage the circulation spaces of the shopping centre. It left the management company of the shopping centre to do this, while holding on to its property rights. The 'streets' of the shopping centre were 'privatized' and managed like malls.

Even an ally of the municipal authority like the RATP, the public metro enterprise, would begin to function as if its spaces were not public property. During the last ten years, the RATP decided to make the commuter train station more profitable by taking advantage of the sheer numbers of people who pass through this station every day. It started to operate like a private enterprise, renting spaces for shops and substantially increasing the control of access.

In 'Les Halles', we see the culmination of the fragmentation of public space through the articulation of different kinds of 'protected public spaces'. This heterotopian pattern proves to be the most flexible and fertile construction that enables the complex dance of public-private development relations that shape our contemporary cities. But in this protected experimental world, a new urban culture has also been constructed: an urban culture that, after it first conquered the suburbs of our cities, has most effectively transformed the core of the old metropolis, and continues to do so. It is not a question today of celebrating or rejecting this model, but rather of our absolute need to carefully study different cases belonging to

this heterotopian pattern in order to understand, in a more realistic way, what is meant by the notion of ‘public’ in our contemporary urban society.

## Note

- \* This chapter builds on a research project undertaken as part of the ‘Programme Interministériel d’Histoire et d’Evaluation des Villes Nouvelles Françaises’: Alexis Korganow (ed.), Tricia Meehan and Clément Orillard, *L’Équipement socio-culturel en Ville Nouvelle. Réception et adaptation de la formule innovante de l’équipement intégré*, Paris: Ministère de l’Équipement, 2005.

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*Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (Stephen Herek, 1989 – film still). Bill: 'This is the San Dimas Mall. This is where the world hangs out.' Bill and Ted with Billy the Kid, Lincoln, Freud and Beethoven in the international food court.

# ‘A kind of instinct’

## The cinematic mall as heterotopia

*Douglas Muzzio and Jessica Muzzio-Rentas*

---

*Fran:* What are [the zombies] doing?  
Why do they come here?

*Stephen:* A kind of instinct. Memory.  
What they used to do.  
This was an important place in their lives.

*(Dawn of the Dead, 1978)*

### Opening scenes

As the living dead take over America’s cities in the 1978 horror classic *Dawn of the Dead*, two SWAT-team members (Peter and Roger), a TV traffic report helicopter pilot (Stephen) and his girlfriend production assistant (Fran) flee Philadelphia by helicopter to escape the zombies. What they come upon is a giant shopping mall (in Monroeville, a suburb of Pittsburgh). They find the upper storerooms of the mall safe and they quickly secure them. The stores in the main mall arcade are locked and the shuffling zombies want to get at the goods inside.

The mall is a seductive cornucopia. The film’s working script describes the scene:

Stores of every type offer gaudy displays of consumer items. Everything from clothing to appliances. Photo equipment; audio and video outlets; sporting goods and weaponry; gourmet foods and natural organic foods. There is a Book Store, a Record Store, a Real Estate agency and a Bank; a Novelty Shop, a Gift Shop; all with the absolute latest in American consumer items. And at either end of the concourse like the main Altars at each end of a Cathedral, stand the mammoth two storey Department Stores; great symbols of a consumer society.

*(Romero 1977)*

Peter first notices that ‘there’s an awful lot of stuff down there we could use’. Roger agrees: ‘This place could be a gold mine.’ The three men become

enchanted by the deserted mall, and when they find the control centre they turn on all the lights, the fountains and the sound system with its muzak and promotional announcements. Stephen reports to Fran: ‘You should see the great stuff we got, Frannie. All kinds of stuff. This place is terrific . . . It’s perfect . . . We’ve really got it made here.’ Fran wants to move on: ‘You’re hypnotized by this place all of you. It’s so bright and neatly wrapped you don’t see it’s a prison, too.’ But the men believe it will make an ideal sanctuary. They kill the zombies inside and secure the entrances. They then turn the mall into their own paradise. They play video games in the amusement arcade, prepare gourmet meals at the restaurant, give and get haircuts at the beauty parlour, play poker using money from the bank and shoot mannequins in the ice-skating rink.

But utopia is shattered. A motorcycle gang comes across the mall and exuberantly begins to loot it, taking particular delight in re-killing the undead. Stephen, protective of his domain and its goods, fires on the bikers and a gun battle ensues. Peter and Stephen kill several of the marauders. In their rampage, the bikers allow the zombies to enter the mall and these overwhelm and then devour the wounded gang members. Stephen and Roger succumb to the zombies’ bites. As the zombies close in, Peter and Fran fly off without much fuel into the light of dawn. The end credits appear as the walking dead shuffle triumphantly to the canned music. Some moan along with the tune. Going through the motions of their former lives. A kind of instinct (Romero 1977).

\* \* \*

Somewhere in suburban New Jersey, *Mallrats* (1995) Brodie and T. S. have been dumped by their girlfriends, Renee and Brandi. The two discouraged guys seek comfort in the soothing familiar rhythms and rituals of their real home, The Mall (actually, the Eden Prairie Center in Minnesota) with its boutiques, food courts, 3-D art stores, ‘Burning Flesh’ tanning salon, ‘Rug Munchers’ carpet store, the Easter Bunny Corner and a topless psychic with three nipples. Upon entering the mall, Brodie inhales deeply and exclaims: ‘I love the smell of commerce in the morning.’ They discover that their exes are also at the mall. Brandi’s taping a TV dating show; Renee’s fooling around with the hot-shot manager of ‘Fashionable Man’, an ‘upscale wannabe shop’. The boys decide to take action – ‘a sabotage mission’ – with the help of ‘hatchetmen’ slackers Jay and Silent Bob, ‘the only two guys who have less to do than us’. Brodie commands them to ‘go forth and wreak havoc’. After having sex in the mall elevator with his ex, he is beaten up by the ‘fashionable man’, who tells him:

I see you every week in this mall. I don’t like shiftless layabouts. One of these loser fuckin’ mallrat kids. You don’t come here to work or

shop. You hang out all day. Act like you fuckin' live here. I have no respect for people with no shopping agenda.

(*Mallrats*, 1995)

These mall-lingerers consume without purchasing. Getting something for nothing. A kind of instinct.

### **The script: how to read the shopping mall?**

The shopping mall is the contemporary icon of American culture, an exemplar of US social and commercial values. It is America to the world (and, increasingly and seemingly inevitably, to Americans themselves). 'The Egyptians have pyramids, the Chinese have the great wall, the British have immaculate lawns, the Germans have castles, the Dutch have canals, the Italians have grand churches. And Americans have shopping centers' (Jackson 1996: 1111).

This icon has been communicated, understood and experienced in a multitude of social settings, and has been transmitted through a variety of media – in the deliberations of government, in scholarly treatises, in newspapers and magazines, and on radio and television. And in the movies.

Movies are cultural texts that in some way reflect their time but also 'actively explain and interpret the way in which the world is to be perceived and understood' (Hill 1986: 2–3). Movies influence the way we construct images of the world and, through these cognitive maps (Suttles 1972), how we operate in it. The images and representations of the American shopping mall projected by movies react with other elements of culture, including TV, music, legend and folklore, and literature, to produce metaphors and systems of metaphors, themselves parts of even more open-ended narratives and discourses.

Over the quarter century from George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* to its 2004 remake, movies projected the mall shopper as zombie and the shopping mall as capitalist consumption centre, as centre of rebellion and as 'theme park', festival and celebration centre – a bazaar and locale of the bizarre. But the overarching representation of the cinematic mall corresponds to Foucault's 'heterotopias' – 'real places . . . counter-sites' within which 'all other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted'. These places are 'outside of all places and yet [are] actually localizable' (Foucault 1986). The mall, though not mentioned by him, is like Foucault's utopia: a 'placeless place', a 'fundamentally unreal space'. The mall of the movies is, indeed, a utopia. And the 'real' mall a heterotopia, a real space of economic, social, cultural and political activity and conflict. Both the 'real' mall and its reel projection are texts to be read (Backes 1997). The size, configuration, internal layout and external design of the shopping mall, as with all built



environments, are 'signifiers' that, through culturally determined systems of association, reveal social relations and networks of power.

Shopping is the second most important leisure activity in the USA and, although watching television is number one, its prime purpose is to promote purchasing. Indeed, so great is Americans' attraction to shopping that they prefer it to sex (Levine 1990, in Goss 1993). Americans spend more time in shopping centres than any place outside home and work or school. Despite the rise of the internet and e-commerce, shopping remains a spatial activity, and, in the USA, much of that shopping takes place in malls. In 2005, there were 48,695 shopping centres in the USA with a combined gross leasable area of 6 billion square feet (up 1.8 per cent from 2004). Sales were up, too – 5.8 per cent to \$2.12 trillion. And centre-related employment stood at 12.7 million jobs, up 1.5 per cent from 2004. Spending on shopping centre construction projects exceeded \$14 billion, a record (Nair 2006).

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the average American made 33.2 trips to the mall per month and shopped for about 75 minutes each time. The amount of money spent per mall trip had grown by 35 per cent from \$53.08 per trip in 1995 to \$71.40 per trip in 2000. Large planned suburban shopping centres arose in the early 1950s, part of the deconcentration of economic activity and dispersal of population away from America's cities. Shopping centres, 'pleasure dome[s] with parking' (Hardwick 2004: 145), 'complete with closed arcades of shops, large anchor department stores at the ends of the arcades, and sprawling parking lots, became major retail marketplaces for the metropolis' (Chudacoff and Smith 1988: 266).

The mall was the "new city" of the post-war era, a vision of how community space should be constructed in an economy based on mass consumption'. The mall reflected the visionary concerns of architects/designers, as well as the obvious commercial motives developers and investors shared (Cohen 1996: 1052–3). The ideal was the creation of centrally located public space that brought together commercial and civic activity. To its most prominent and articulate designer and promoter, Victor Gruen, the shopping centre offered dispersed suburban populations 'crystallization points for suburbia's community life . . . By affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, by incorporating civic and educational facilities, shopping centers can fill an existing void' (quoted in Cohen 1996: 1056).

Mall design emphasized the psychological effects of mall environments – 'the experience'. A whole complex of orthodoxies emerged, including the 'village' atmosphere with irregular lines, changing effects, the 'lure of around-the-corner', and the focus on the 'psychological needs' of shoppers. Mall shopping became a quasi-cinematic spectacle, 'a sort of "moving picture", with a coyly erotic plot of Girl Meets Goods . . . the building – should be considered as a frame for the picture of the love affair' (Gibian 1981).

The readings of the America suburban shopping mall have produced two competing visions – two opposing narratives. One is dystopic, presenting the mall as a ‘seemingly endless concatenation of crass, vulgar displays urging consumerism and overspending’. The other offers the mall as the representation of ‘an idealized city, a contemporary fabrication of the mythical utopian city’ (Backes 1997: 1). One narrative, principally by Marxist critics, in broad terms describes the baleful impact of capitalist production on those whom it exploits and ‘the depoliticizing effects of commodity fetishism on consumers’. That consumerism is the oppression of the consumer has been a ‘sociological orthodoxy’ (Grayling 2001).

Critics in the Frankfurt School tradition tend to treat the consuming public as ‘witless and uncritical’. Mass culture is a ‘manipulative contrivance’ with its power such that ‘conformity has replaced consciousness’ (Adorno in Modleski 1986: 157). In this view, mass culture is a monstrous and monolithic machine where false needs are injected – hypodermic style – into a docile populace. In this view the masters of industry and their media henchmen strive to ‘infantilize us so that we are docile, anxious, and filled with reified desire’ (Twitchell 2000: 19). We are trapped in this commodifying system, this fetishism that only the enlightened can correct.

A counter-narrative, produced primarily by postmodern ethnographers and sociologists, notably students of popular culture, tells of a consumerism that ‘empowers capitalist subjects by granting them a limited, but politically important space in which to live out utopian fantasies of autonomy’ (Harper 2002). Consumer tactics can be liberating (Fiske 1989). ‘If the world is understood through commodities, then personal identity depends on one’s ability to compose a coherent self-image through the selection of a distinct personal set of commodities’ (Crawford 1992: 12). The mall not only helps shoppers realize what they are but what they might be able to become. The acquisition of goods plays a central role in the process of constructing self-identity. All societies invest physical objects with socio-psychological meaning. Consumer goods have long marked ‘invidious distinctions’ (Veblen 1953). Consumers symbolically construct both individual and collective identities with the goods they acquire.

In this depiction, consumers ought not be despised as the ‘cultural dupes’ of capitalist producers nor patronized as idiots who compliantly consume the images and products imposed on them by the dominant ideology. Rather, they are instead ‘secondary producers’, finding value in their consumption and making use of capitalist products for their own ends. They practice the ‘art of being in between . . . using *their* products for *our* purposes’ (Fiske 1989: 36). Thus, the consumer cannot be identified by the ‘commercial products he assimilates: between the person . . . and these products . . . there is a gap of varying proportion opened by the use he makes of them’ (de Certeau 1984).

The key question is: does the consumer manipulate things to make meaning, or do other people use things to manipulate the consumer (Twitchell 2000)? A secondary question asks whether the mall creates an ethos of consumption or is the mall the apotheosis of this ethos? Or both?

### **The mall in the movies (1978–2004)**

The mall has played two roles in movies: as a star and as a set. Sometimes the mall is so essential to a film's nature that it could not take place elsewhere without being fundamentally altered. Movies such as *Dawn of the Dead*, *True Stories*, *Mallrats* and *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* are 'mall-centred'. They are sited in a US shopping mall for all or a major part of the film; the mall is a central character, influencing the behaviour of the human actors. Human actors relate to a 'mall ethos', real or imagined.

In other movies, the suburban shopping mall is a reference point, an icon of the modern American suburb or of contemporary American culture. It serves as a locale not essential for the unfolding of the plot. These movies could have been set elsewhere: *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Scenes from a Mall*, *Blues Brothers* and *Valley Girl*. These movies are 'mall-set'. We focus on mall-centred movies and in them we can see three visions of the mall.

### **The mall as capitalist consumption centre/mall shopper as zombie**

'They're us' according to *Dawn of the Dead* creator George Romero, when asked what the zombies represented, echoing Peter's response to Fran's question: 'What the hell are they?' Indeed, to Romero, the 'gods and customs of the mall' rob people of their souls, reducing them to mindless consuming zombies. The message is not subtle: mass culture deadens and alienates. The soulless zombies are 'the large community, the massive majority, and the four human protagonists have to struggle to preserve their differences from the homogenous deadness' (Horne 1992).

*Dawn of the Dead* was a marketing phenomenon, the biggest cult blockbuster of the decade, earning \$55 million on a \$1.5 million investment. Even more surprising, the movie was praised by the critics for its biting satirical presentation of the shopping mall as a metaphor for the numbing effects of materialism and the vacuity of consumer society. The 2004 remake/'re-imagining' of this subversive send-up of the mall moved it from Philadelphia to Milwaukee and transformed it into a frenetic actioner, drained of any social bite. Lampooning the suburbs and Americans' insatiable and vacuous consumption had proceeded for more than a quarter century; what the new version provided was more gore and speedier zombies. The remake did retain the original's signature line that it was 'a kind of instinct' that drew the zombies to the mall. In *Dawn of the Dead*, like

many horror movies, 'the attack on contemporary life strikingly recapitulates the very terms adopted by many culture critics', who have long envisioned the will-less, soulless masses as zombie-like beings possessed by the alienating imperative to consume (Modleski 1986: 159). Ironically, *Dawn* became a midnight fixture at shopping malls all over the USA.

The mall and its consuming patrons are far less caustically viewed in *True Stories* (1986). The denizens of Virgil, Texas, an edge city in the middle of nowhere, are in the midst of a 'Celebration of Specialness'. Their mantra? 'Shopping is a feeling.' And they shop in the mall ('Everybody could hardly wait until the mall opened . . . I go there just about every weekend. So do two of the other girls at work'). The narrator (director and screenwriter David Byrne) explains to the audience:

The shopping mall has replaced the town square as the center of many American cities. Shopping has become the thing that brings people together. The music is always playing there . . . What time is it. No time to look back. The shops are clean. They're fairly new . . . Not hard to find. Plenty of parking.

(Byrne 1986: 70)

Had Aristotle lived in Virgil he would have called Man not a political animal, but a shopping animal, for it is in buying things that the residents seem to exhibit their true nature and potential. A kind of instinct? Or human nature redefined by consumer capitalism?

### ***The mall as teen hangout/street corner***

The mall has been a staple of American teen movies, from *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1981) and *Valley Girl* (1983), to *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1989), *Mallrats* (1995) and *Clueless* (1995). In these movies, teenagers use malls as their personal spaces in which to meet, to have trysts, to display and consume fashions – as well as to work. The mall's stores are an inexhaustible bank of images to be turned into personal style and statements. The suburbs have always lacked public turf for teenagers; they have always been a 'teenage wasteland' (Gaines 1991). For them, the mall became the place – often the only place – where they could be independent of home and school. T. S., Brodie, Silent Bob and Jay are *Mallrats*. They may love the smell of commerce, but it is only the love of the spectator, for the mallrats are too lazy and purposeless to work or even to experience alienation. While they talk, scheme and fight an ever-encroaching boredom, the film pokes fun at staples of the modern mall: food courts, cookie snack bars, security guards and shoppers with anti-mall pretensions.

For mallrats, shopping malls are the 'system', the 'establishment' whose 'disciplinary agents must be challenged, tricked and overcome' (Harper

2002). The slackers in *Mallrats* have no money but time to spend; they consume the place and the images but not the commodities. They turn the physical place of the mall into their space to ‘enact their oppositional culture, to maintain and assert their cultural differences’. In both the real mall (and its reel projection, the ‘powerful are cumbersome, unimaginative, and over-organized; whereas the weak are creative, nimble, flexible’. The mallrat invents ‘innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other’s game’ (de Certeau 1984: 18).

There’s a hierarchy of malls for the *Mallrats*. Not all malls are worthy of their attention. There are class differences. Brodie and T. S. flee their mall home. Where do they go? Another mall. But a ‘dirt mall’ with its grubby sign, bare fluorescent lights, exposed electrical wiring and déclassé proprietors and customers.

*Brodie*: This is the dirt mall. The cops never come here.

*T. S.*: Neither does any self-respecting consumer.  
I could never figure out what you saw in this place.

*Brodie*: Good buys, great people, earthy aromas.  
And they know me here.

(*Mallrats*, 1995)

For some youngsters the mall is an escape, a refuge. Ultra Valley Girl Cher in *Clueless* (1995), the contemporary reworking of Jane Austen’s *Emma*, denies that she is without ‘direction’, but her friend Dionne cracks ‘Yeah, toward the mall’. The mall provides her solace and relief from the care of high school: ‘I felt impotent and out of control, which I really hate. I needed to find sanctuary in a place where I could gather my thoughts and regain my strength.’ Later, after another stressful day in class, she suggests ‘Let’s go to the mall, have a calorie fest and see the new Christian Slater [movie].’ The message of the movie is simple: ‘Go out and have fun. And go shopping.’ And do it at the mall.

The mall is also an escape for Mark Hunter, an alienated teen in the American suburban wasteland of the late 1980s in *Pump Up the Volume* (1990). He laments:

I just arrived in this stupid suburb and all I can do is drive out to the same stupid mall, and play some video games and maybe if I’m lucky smoke a joint. All the great themes have been used up and turned into theme parks.

(*Pump Up the Volume*, 1990)

Despite the fact that ‘there’s nothing to do anymore’, Hunter and other disaffected youth of movies do it at the mall. The mall is a space where they both search – and construct – meaning.

**The mall as 'theme park'/bazaar**

In 2688, the narrator of *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* intones 'the two great ones almost fell off the path'. Bill and Ted are failing history. And they will fail the future. If our brain-dead heroes do not get an 'A' on their final project, they will not graduate. And the world will be doomed. Their project is to choose a figure from history and explain how he or she would react to the San Dimas of 1988. Rather than just speculate, the boys go back in time and pick up Napoleon, Billy the Kid, Socrates, Sigmund Freud, Joan of Arc, Genghis Khan, Abraham Lincoln and Beethoven. To give them a taste of 1988, they bring them to San Dimas Mall – 'where people of today's world hang out' – and tell them to 'look around and see what you think'.

They like it. Joan of Arc takes over an exercise class that is being held where Santa likely presides during Christmas season. Beethoven winds up in a musical instrument emporium wowing a crowd with his virtuosity. Socrates, Billy the Kid and Freud try to pick up women while Ghenghis Khan trades his club for a baseball bat and destroys the sporting goods store. And Abraham Lincoln gets his picture taken in a booth that is set up where you can dress as historical figures. There is something for everyone at the mall, wherever it is and wherever and whenever they're from.

In *Scenes from a Mall* (1991), a wealthy LA couple – Nick Fifer, a sports lawyer (Woody Allen) and Deborah Finestein-Fifer, a best-selling psychologist (Bette Midler) – are planning dinner for their sixteenth anniversary party, and go to the mall to prepare for the night's celebration. Deborah wishes they could just once have their anniversary alone. Nick responds 'We will be alone . . . I'll be alone with you until six o'clock, tonight. If you count the mall as alone. Which I do. The Lonely Crowd. Man Against Humanity. Kafka in California.'

It's Christmas: Santa and the children, carollers dressed in traditional clothes and singing traditional songs. A group of young black men with a boom box walk throughout the mall singing their own rap version of these songs. And there is also a mime who almost intrusively involves himself with the shoppers around him. The couple's first stop is an opulent sushi restaurant where they buy the food for their party. They ride enormous escalators, they buy expensive anniversary gifts in upscale shops. At the food court, Allen admits to having an affair. During the huge argument that ensues, a group of Asian men below the food court perform tricks with wine glasses. Later, there is a magician in the mall, which makes the mall feel more like Disneyland or a circus rather than a place of commerce.

The mall is the perfect world; your every want is at your fingertips through your wallet. There is a Mexican restaurant with an ersatz mariachi band transporting you to Old Mexico; a movie theatre playing *Salaam Bombay*, taking you to another continent (and where the couple have sex); a stress



*Scenes from a Mall* (Paul Mazursky, 1991 – film still). The still captures well the alienation of the individual's inner life (or neurosis) and the estrangement in social relationships in the noisy, tacky ambience of the mall.

management centre; and a ritzy restaurant, *Maison du Caviar*, where they go to have champagne and caviar after making up from their fight. The mall is a sumptuous artifice, a fiction. But it has what you want and what you (at least, think) you need.

### ***The reel/real mall as heterotopia***

The notion of heterotopia has been adopted and adapted by a variety of critics and commentators, most notably 'postmodern' architectural and literary theorists. Heterotopia is either a 'space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned as still more illusory' or, on the contrary, a 'place that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed and jumbled'. These are heterotopias of 'compensation'. The shopping mall is the quintessentially heterotopian space.

The 'terror of time and space evaporates for millions of Americans at the mall' (Goss 1993: 32). The mall is 'set apart from the rest of the world as a place of earthly delight like the medieval walled garden' (Simon, in Backes 1997: 231). The mall is a 'pseudoplace' (Goss 1993: 19), which works through spatial strategies of 'dissemblance and duplicity'. Designers and architects manufacture the illusion that something else, other than mere shopping, is going on.

The mall is a 'private, instrumental space designed for the efficient circulation of commodities which is itself a commodity produced for profit'. To mask this, developers construct shopping centres 'as idealized representations of past or distant public places' (Goss 1993: 19). The shopping centre is a contrived space seeking to resemble a spontaneous social space (1993: 30). Such things as food courts serving 'ethnic' cuisine further enhance the experience of elsewhere. Malls as real spaces and reel places are, indeed, heterotopias, exhibiting the characteristics suggested by Foucault. The mall is capable, among other things, of 'juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault 1986).

The mall as heterotopia is a place of 'public otherness' on the inside of a privatized 'public space'. The mall is a heterotopian convergence of museums and libraries with their 'indefinitely accumulating time' and festival sites, fairgrounds that are far more transitory. The malls are, indeed, 'compressed, packaged environments that seem to both abolish time and culture, that appear somehow to be both temporary and permanent' (Soja 1995: 16). The mall combines present and future, artifice and nature (Backes 1997); it is 'hyperreal' (Baudrillard 1988). The mall is 'ahistorical', combining, as in the West Edmonton Mall, a full-sized replica of Columbus's Santa Maria and an operational fleet of modern submarines. The mall has 'recombinant properties' that offer 'democratic hope and possibility, despite its connection to private enterprise' (Backes 1997: 2). The architecture and design elements encourage a kind of performance in which the shopper is sometimes audience, sometimes participant. Frequently, the audience literally gets on stage, most notably the karaoke characters of *True Stories*.

The cinematic mall is a heterotopian projection of a heterotopia, for movies themselves are heterotopian. Different audiences in different places or different periods can see the same movie in very different ways. Indeed, each individual viewer can see the same movie in different ways. As the time traveller in *12 Monkeys* (1995) explains: 'The movie never changes. It can't change. But every time you see it, it seems different because you are different. You see different things.' Both the mall and the movies are – as Hortense Powdermaker famously described Hollywood – 'dream factories', whatever form these dreams take. Writer-director-narrator David Byrne of *True Stories* captures the heterotopian quality of the reel/real mall: 'What time is it? No time to look back. Everyone has their own system of beliefs. Originality. Creating it. Doing it. Selling it. Making it up as they go along. Experiencing it' (Byrne 1986: 74).

## Closing takes

The modern shopping mall is 'at the core of a world wide transformation of distribution and consumption' (Jackson 1996). Malls represent contemporary American, and increasingly global, cultural sensibilities and longings.



And worldwide economic realities. As a bystander in *True Stories* exclaims: 'Everything is here.' Ted, during his excellent adventure, simply notes: 'This is where the world hangs out.' Indeed, according to Paco Underhill, the 'Margaret Mead of Shopping': 'if you really want to observe entire middle-class multigenerational American families, you have to go to the mall' (Underhill 2004).

'A kind of instinct' is a reconnaissance of the cinematic shopping mall as a landscape of the imagination and as a heterotopian locale. It also comments on the debate over public space between those who see a 'loss of public space' – that is, spaces of modern society becoming privatized in a postmodern world: malls, freeways, gated communities – and those who see new forms of public space located in private places such as shopping malls.

The mall is a heterotopia – an architectural fiction but a real place. The mall is, since its beginnings and by design, also a utopia, a 'placeless place', a 'fundamentally unreal space', literally nowhere, outside time and place while within them. It is the inexhaustible cornucopia of earthly delights to everybody. The cinematic mall brings this utopian/dystopian character to the fore. Ultimately we all have the same kind of instinct, zombie or not.

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Part 4

# Dwelling in a postcivil society

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Gated community in San Antonio, New Mexico (photograph: Joel Lefkowitz). The simulation of normality in a postcivil society: behind a seemingly innocent wall, lies a gated community. The houses in the background try hard to look like just another neat little suburb. Segregation in disguise.

# The gated community as heterotopia

*Setha Low*

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The post-structuralist writings of Foucault theorize heterotopias as places where the technologies and discipline of social order are broken down, or at least temporarily suspended, and reordered (the school, the military camp) or reconstructed to create new spaces where microcosms of society are transformed and protected (museums, heritage sites). Heterotopia is a place where there is a blurring of public–private distinctions, a conceptual or physical border or boundary separating heterotopia from everyday life, a regiment of rules and practices that are distinct within heterotopia and a sense of sanctuary or safe haven such that a special kind of community develops expressed in inclusion/exclusion or insider/outsider distinctions (see De Caeter and Dehaene in this volume). I use these heterotopian characteristics to consider whether gated communities in the USA constitute heterotopias. I use the ‘talk’ of residents and conceptual constructs developed from the discourse analysis of resident interviews and participant observation field notes from former research (Low 2003) to substantiate how the gated community may be another kind of heterotopia – one that does not enhance urban space, but reduces and subverts it.

## **Gated communities in context**

A ‘gated community’ is a residential development surrounded by walls, fences or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a secured entrance. In some cases, protection is provided by inaccessible land such as a nature reserve and, in a few cases, by a guarded bridge. The houses, apartments, streets, sidewalks and other amenities are physically enclosed by these barriers and entrance gates operated by a guard, key or electronic identity card. Inside the development there is often a neighbourhood watch organization or professional security personnel who patrol on foot and by automobile (Frantz 2000).

Gated residential communities in the USA first originated for year-round living on family estates and in wealthy communities such as Llewellyn Park in Eagle Ridge, New Jersey, built during the 1850s, and as resorts

exemplified by New York's Tuxedo Park, developed as a hunting and fishing retreat with a barbed-wire fence 8 feet high and 24 miles long in 1886 (Hayden 2003). Other early resorts were Sea Gate and, later, Breezy Point in Brooklyn, established with its own private police force in 1899. The architect and real estate developer Julius Pitman designed the majority of St Louis's private streets between 1867 and 1905, borrowing from the English private square to create exclusive residential enclaves for the business elite (Hayden 2003). Planned retirement communities such as Leisure World in Southern California, built in the 1960s and 1970s, however, were the first places where middle-class Americans walled themselves off. Gates then spread to resort and country club developments, and finally to suburban developments. In the 1980s, real estate speculation accelerated the building of gated communities around golf courses designed for exclusivity, prestige and leisure.

Gated communities first appeared in California, Texas and Arizona, drawing retirees attracted to the weather. One third of all new communities in Southern California are gated, and the percentage is similar around Phoenix, Arizona, the suburbs of Washington, DC, and parts of Florida. In areas such as Tampa, Florida, gated communities account for four out of five home sales of \$300,000 or more. Since the late 1980s, gates have become ubiquitous, and by the 1990s common even in the north-eastern USA. Gated communities on Long Island, New York, were rare in the 1980s, but by the early 1990s almost every condominium development of more than 50 units had a guardhouse (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Low 2003). The number of people estimated to be living in gated communities in the USA rapidly increased from 4,000,000 in 1995 to 8,000,000 in 1997. By 1997, there were in excess of 20,000 gated communities with over 3,000,000 housing units. Two questions on gating and controlled access were added to the 2001 American Housing Survey, establishing that 7,058,427 households, or 5.9 per cent of all households, currently live in gated, walled housing areas (Sanchez and Lang 2002).

Gated communities exist throughout the world. While there are few gated communities in Western Europe, only 1,000 gated communities in the UK, and even fewer in Germany, there is a long history of gated residential communities just outside Paris (Le Goix 2006). On the other hand, Latin America, the Middle East and China are experiencing a rapid expansion of these neighbourhoods.

At a macro level of analysis, the impact of globalization and flexible accumulation, increasing heterogeneity, levels of perceived crime, and increasing disparities between rich and poor emerge as the major underlying factors in the fear of crime and of other people that is apparent in all regions. At a micro level, differences in cultural meanings are explained by specific social and political contexts, while provisions of goods and services and governance depend on club realm economic explanations. For our purposes

in understanding the gated community as a heterotopia, it is significant that the retreat of the state, fear of others, violence, as well as new forms of economic organization produce the residential changes we are observing. The gated community is the preferred form of dwelling in postcivil society. Gating has increased in the face of disintegration of what is perceived as a normative social order (Low 2003).

### **Gated communities as heterotopias**

The reasons people decide to move to a gated community are extremely varied, and the closer you get to the person and his or her individual psychology, the more complex the answer. At a societal level, people say they move because of their fear of crime and others. They move to secure a neighbourhood that is stable and a home that will retain its resale value. And they move to have control of their environment and of the environment of those who live nearby. Residents in rapidly growing areas want to live in a private community for the services. Retirees particularly want the low maintenance and lack of responsibility that comes with living in a private condominium development. At a personal level, though, residents are also searching for the sense of security and safety that they associate with their childhood. The gates are used symbolically to ward off many of life's unknowns, including unemployment, loss of loved ones and downward mobility; but obviously gates cannot deliver all that is promised. There are, of course, many aspects of why residents move that lead us to consider gated communities as heterotopias.

#### ***Desire for a safe haven***

The gated community is perceived by residents as 'a safe haven against the violence of society', and thus to have a sanctuary-like character similar to other heterotopian spaces. Like other heterotopias such as military bases or hospitals, the sense of sanctuary is produced both by physical boundaries and by a special discourse that reinforces the importance of these boundaries as a means of protection.

For example, most gated community residents say that they are moving because of their fear of crime. It is a psychological fear for which there is no physical or technological solution. Policing, video surveillance, gating, walls and guards do not work because they do not address the basis of what an emotional reaction is. The psychological lure of defended space becomes even more enticing with increased media coverage and national hysteria about urban crime. News stories chronicle daily murders, rapes, drive-by shootings, drug busts and kidnapping – often with excessive and extended media coverage. An ever-growing proportion of people fear that they will be victimized. Not surprisingly, then, fear of crime has increased



since the mid-1960s, even though there has been a decline in all violent crime since 1990 (Stone 1996; Brennan and Zelinka 1997; Colvard 1997; Flusty 1997).

My conversation with Cynthia, who was concerned about staying in her old neighbourhood, illustrates this point:

*Cynthia:* And then I have a lot of friends who live in [my old] neighbourhood in Queens, and there's been more than 48 robberies there in the last year and a half. And I said to myself those are homes with security and dogs and this and that . . .

*Setha:* And are they gated?

*Cynthia:* No, they're not gated. They had alarms, and they were getting robbed because they were cutting the alarms, the phone wires outside. So I'm saying to myself, all this is in my mind, and I'm saying . . . I can get robbed. That's why I moved . . .

Cynthia goes on to explain that she needed something more secure, but she seems unsure of the Manor House guards and still feels afraid at night:

*Cynthia:* During the day it's great with James [the guard] who you've met. But at night, it's like anything else [she worries]. I feel ok because if I had a problem I could call the guard house. I remember the first night I stayed here by myself. I said if something goes wrong, who am I going to call? I don't know what to do.

### ***Landscape of fear***

In order for residents to maintain the illusion that the gated community is a safe haven and a sanctuary, they socially construct an external landscape of fear that rationalizes and legitimates their architectural and social choices. Gated communities, as opposed to traditional suburbs, are seen as 'fortresses' where people are closing themselves off. This postcivil society type of housing is permanently changing the way we plan and design our neighbourhoods, and is a unique phase of residential development in which walls and gates, not just distance and street patterns, are used to separate and segregate housing. The social/psychological meaning embedded in the architectural form is that people need to protect and differentiate themselves from others.

Felicia exemplifies this need by expressing her feelings about her fear of poor people who live outside the gates:

*Felicia:* When I leave the area entirely and go downtown [little laugh], I feel quite threatened, just being out in normal urban areas, unrestricted urban areas . . . Please let me explain. The north central part of this city, by and large, is middle class to upper middle class.

Period. There are very few pockets of poverty. Very few. And therefore if you go to any store, you will look around and most of the clientele will be as middle class as you are yourself. So you are somewhat insulated. But if you go downtown, which is much more mixed, where everybody goes, I feel much more threatened.

*Setha:* Okay.

*Felicia:* My daughter feels very threatened when she sees poor people.

*Setha:* How do you explain that?

*Felicia:* She hasn't had enough exposure. We were driving next to a truck with some day labourers and equipment in the back, and we were parked beside them at the light. She wanted to move because she was afraid those people were going to come and get her. They looked scary to her. I explained that they were workmen, they're the 'backbone of our country', they're coming from work, you know, but . . .

### **Insider/outsider difference**

The gated community as a safe haven and sanctuary from fear unintentionally exacerbates a sense of being an insider or outsider by architectural features such as walls and gates demarcating a threshold keeping inside and outside apart. This threshold effect reinforces my argument that gated communities function much like other heterotopias. Unfortunately the demarcation can have a negative impact on children growing up in these new residential communities. Living behind gates reinforces the perception that people who live outside are dangerous or bad. I refer to this as social splitting – the good people live inside and the bad outside – and, of course, this has always existed, but the walls and gates make what were social distinctions more concrete.

Donna's concerns, as a mother of three, focus on her youngest child.

*Donna:* You know, he's always so scared . . . It has made a world of difference in him since we've been out here.

*Setha:* Really?

*Donna:* A world of difference. And it is that sense of security that they don't think people are roaming the neighbourhoods and the streets and that there's people out there that can hurt him.

*Setha:* Ah . . . that's incredible.

*Donna:* That's what's been most important to my husband, to get the children out here where they can feel safe, and we feel safe if they could go out in the streets and not worry that someone is going to grab them . . . we feel so secure and maybe that's wrong too.

*Setha:* In what sense?

*Donna:* You know, we've got workers out here, and we still think 'oh, they're safe out here' . . . In the other neighbourhood I never let him get out of my sight for a minute. Of course they were a little bit younger too, but I just, would never, you know, think of letting them go to the next street over. It would have scared me to death, because you didn't know. There was so much traffic coming in and out, you never knew who was cruising the street and how fast they can grab a child. And I don't feel that way in our area at all . . . ever.

### ***Inclusive exclusion: fear of downward mobility and change***

At the same time that gated communities create spaces that are communal internally, they also restrict access to those who 'belong'. Following Foucault's lead, most heterotopias have systems that limit entry to members, as in a club or association, or to those of a particular class or status, as in the case of a military camp or hospital. Gated communities in this sense closely resemble the restricted access of Foucault's examples and create an 'exclusive inclusion' or 'inclusive exclusion'.

One aspect of this inclusive exclusion is reflected in the micro-politics of distinguishing oneself from the family who used to live next door. Status anxiety about downward mobility due to declining male wages and family incomes, shrinking job markets and periodic economic recessions has increased concern that residents' children will not be able to sustain a middle-class lifestyle (Newman 1980; Ortner 1998). Middle-class status anxiety also takes the form of symbolic separation from other families who have fallen on hard times – families who share many of the same values and aspirations, but who for some reason 'did not make it'. Assurances that walls and gates maintain home values and provide some kind of 'class' or 'distinction' is heard by prospective buyers as a partial solution to upholding their middle- or upper-middle-class position.

This separation from others and the maintenance of the 'nice' can take the form of desiring a 'stable' neighbourhood with the 'right' kind of stores and people. For instance, Sharon was willing to 'give up community convenience for safety', even though she knew everyone in her old neighbourhood and enjoyed walking to the corner store:

*Sharon:* When Bloomingdale's moved out and Kmart moved in, it just brought in a different group of people . . . and it wasn't the safe place that it was . . . I think it's safer having a gated community . . . They are not going to steal my car in the garage . . . [In the old neighbourhood] every time we heard an alarm we were looking out the window.

Ted and Carol, on the other hand, explained that Great Neck, where they used to live, was a great community socially, and the children had a good school. 'It's almost like living in the city,' Carol says, 'but better':

*Ted:* But it's changing, it's undergoing internal transformations.

*Carol:* It's ethnic changes.

*Ted:* It's ethnic changes, that's a very good way of putting it.

Carol agrees and adds that it started to happen 'in the last, probably, seven to eight years'. The changing composition of the neighbourhood made them so uncomfortable they decided to move. They hope that their new gated community will keep those 'changes' out.

### **Community and moral minimalism**

Gating can generate a sense of community within the walls or enable some residents to experience a sense of community, through the imposition of the external barrier and economic restrictions on who can enter. This heterotopian characteristic is magnified in the gated community because of the walls and gates, but also by the internal processes of control that residents are willing to 'put up with' in order to maintain the sense of oneness and safety at home.

There are profound contradictions in the way that this communal oneness is achieved. While at least half of the residents I spoke to said they were looking for an old-fashioned neighbourhood where they knew and saw their neighbours, the corporate nature of private governance creates more 'moral minimalism' (Baumgartner 1988) than community spirit. Many people who move there do not want to have to deal with their neighbours, and hope there will be little conflict; and if there is conflict between neighbours, they want it handled by the homeowners' association board, not by themselves. Moral minimalism changes the nature of community by reducing the amount of conflict and contact residents have with each other.

At the same time, however, there are complaints about the restrictions of the homeowners' associations, their sometimes excessive degree of control, and the way that conflict is minimized by placing responsibility for all decisions onto an independent body. For example, Laurel was complaining about not being able to plant in her garden:

*Laurel:* I asked the manager of her development and he said, 'Well, you know, we have a committee, and you have to tell them what you want to do, and I'm sure they'll let you do it, but . . .

According to Laurel, the committee is made up of tenants. Her husband, Howard, has been to a number of meetings, but they do not have enough people to have a sense of the consensus of the community:

*Laurel:* It's totally ridiculous, especially if you want to make a rule. The committee that's going to run the development, who decides things like whose house gets painted, or what colour, you know [does not represent the community]. Once the developer is out of the community, they'll make some logical rulings like if you want to do planting it has to be in the backyard, unless you do something very limited, because they don't want anything outrageous, which I can understand. I think it should be whatever you do in your own backyard, it's your business, but in front it has to meet certain requirements.

I ask if they allow pets. Laurel replies that they would not have moved in if they did not allow pets. But they have put in some rules about it since some people let their animals run everywhere and do not pick up after them. Some gated developments are even more restrictive and do not allow pets even to visit. The committee even gave them trouble about putting up a television satellite when they moved in. Some communities regulate even the colour of curtains in a resident's front windows.

### ***The blurring of public and private boundaries through private governance***

Gated communities redefine public and private by their legal organization as CIDs (community interest developments), that is, collective private ownership of what constitutes public space within the gated community (Judd 1995). This reconstitution of the public and private creates another form of 'third space' – a space that incorporates both the economic and political spheres, but is not wholly constituted by either. This intermingling of public space and private law may be symptomatic of the 'perverse effects of the blurring of boundaries' characteristic of heterotopias, and is often considered a kind of 'club realm' from an economic perspective.

These club realm entities in the form of homeowners' or landowners' associations exist throughout the USA, both with and without gates. They are a rapidly growing form of private government that is competing with public governance by municipalities, counties and townships. Cities and townships allow these private communities (some gated and others not) to be built because they do not have to pay for the expanding infrastructure of the housing developments. For the initial period residents are able to support their own services – eventually, though, the gated community turns over its roads and lights (and policing and fire protection) to the city, or the city annexes the area, and again cannot provide adequate service. Residents of the private community are often triple taxed (city, county and homeowner fees) for services that are inadequately provided. The public suffers as well because the deals that are made by the developer when

constructing these communities allow them to build at a higher density for adding 'amenities'. The catch is that these amenities are only for the use of the residents within the gated community or private development.

Wayne, a resident, is familiar with the municipal consequences of developing these large-scale gated communities:

*Wayne:* A lot of what's happening in these gated communities is that local government continues to annex. [Annexation is a process by which a town, county or other governmental unit becomes part of the city, in this case the metropolitan region of San Antonio.] As they annex, the level of service goes down, not only for the annexed areas, but also for the inner parts of the city. [The idea is that] we'll get more money and everybody will benefit. [But in fact] they get more taxes and dilute the level or quality of services.

So developers say, 'well, I have got to have my own amenity package, I have to have my own gated community'. All this is a reflection of the inability of the government to deal properly with the problems at hand. They create another level of service: homeowners' associations in these gated communities. So the type of development we get is because the city is ambitious in terms of annexation.

I see problems with gated communities in the future . . . The reality is that when gated communities are annexed, the city does not take responsibility for repairs of streets [and infrastructure]. Homeowners' associations have to provide that.

Gated communities in many cases precede annexation as a result of extreme urban sprawl – that is, urban/suburban expansion without municipal infrastructure. The gated community serves as a government-like service provider. Eventually public government catches up, but it may be too overstretched and indebted to provide adequate services, except to impose a new level of taxes to support the older city. Gated community governance remains with the public government on top of it. There may be some gated communities that form inside cities, in an attempt to provide their own services, but generally the gated community precedes annexation, which is when the problems for residents concerning taxes start (Briffault 1999). Thus, there is confusion of the private concerns of residents and the public obligations of the state. In cases of gated communities in Southern California, private development has gone as far as incorporating a city, so that the private gated community is in political and economic control of the finances of all the public and private land and businesses. This blurring of private/public boundaries may not have been what Foucault envisioned, but suggests the social construction of a new economic and political space that is neither public nor private, but instead a pervasive new quasi-public/quasi-private form.

## Conclusions

The recent trend in California of building fake gated communities for the upper-middle- and middle-classes dramatizes the point that 'gates' are about deeper psychological and social concerns. They do not reduce crime or keep 'others' out, but offer the illusion of physical safety and security, an illusion that does not require the 'hardware' of guards and real locks. The illusion is equally important for homeowners because it still enables them to feel better about their social status and place in the world in a period of social and economic transition. This evolution of fake gating substantiates the heterotopian character of these developments: the heterotopian qualities contained within – the perception of safe haven and sanctuary inside and danger outside – are purely symbolic and not in any sense real. Like the camp, the hospital, or Disneyland, the interior is marked by the transition of a 'threshold', through the gates, not by whether the gates are locked.

The ultimate argument to call the gated community a heterotopia might be its origin as a Victorian leisure-class dwelling, holiday resort and retirement facility. It opens a 'space of the holiday' as opposed to the space of the everyday. That is precisely its attraction: the eternal holiday is the ultimate sales argument for all such secluded condominiums. The 'perversion' of dwelling in the postcivil society is that it is taking on heterotopian overtones: it takes the holiday as model, a vacation from ordinary life, a leave from the disorder of the everyday and, in a sense, from society all together.

Gated community residents use gates to create the new community they are searching for. But their personal housing decisions have had unintended societal consequences. Most importantly, they are disruptive of other people's ability to experience 'community': community in the sense of an integration of the suburb and the city, community in terms of access to public open space, or even community within the American tradition of integration and social justice. In this case, the heterotopia only opens possibilities and new experiences for the residents, excluding the rest of society from its private domain. Entrance is purchased with the price of a house or apartment, but, without money, a person is relegated to the outside.

Architecture and the layout of towns and suburbs provide concrete anchoring points in people's everyday lives. These anchoring points reinforce ideas about society at large. Gated communities and the social segregation and exclusion they materially represent make sense of and even rationalize problems Americans have with race, class and gender inequality and social discrimination (Marin and Talpade 1986; Massey 1994; Fine 2000). The gated community represents one version of the ultimate dwelling in a postcivil society, providing the benefits of community life, while excluding others and separating its residents from the concerns of the world at large. The gated community, in short, contributes to a geography of social relations that produces fear and anxiety simply by locating a person's home and

place identity in a secured enclave, gated, guarded and locked. It provides a vision of heterotopia as a safe haven and sanctuary for the few, rather than the urban solution for the many.

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Faux historical marker, Spanish Springs town centre, The Villages, Florida (photograph: Hugh Bartling). In the artificial paradise of the themed gated community history returns, as neither tragedy nor farce, but as sheer fantasy. Memory in a 'post-historical' age.

# A master-planned community as heterotopia

## The Villages, Florida

*Hugh Bartling*

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The master-planned community has been a feature of North American urbanism for much of the industrial and post-industrial era. In the late nineteenth century the emerging capitalist city contained concentrations of both great wealth and poverty, making reformist efforts most clearly concerned with balancing the interests of capital with the management of labour. Industrialists like George Pullman developed towns that offered upgraded housing, green space and opportunities for (highly regulated) recreation and leisure, in exchange for a measure of control over the daily lives of workers.

The paternalistic planning typified by Pullman, however, rarely resulted in the promised utopian ends. Tensions between the capitalist imperative to maximize profit and the material and civic interests of the inhabitants in nascent industrial-planned communities proved difficult to resolve. In the end, the industrial-planned community exhibited the same level of distrust between labour and capital that had existed in the industrializing city.

In spite of the failure of the industrial-planned community to live up to its utopian expectations, the idea of creating new towns in response to urban ills persisted. The Progressive Era had its own attempts at developing master-planned communities that looked to temper the excesses of the capitalist city through rational design. Focusing more on consumption than production, New Town and Garden City movements developed the template for the coming suburban revolution. In its post-war iteration, however, the planned suburb became an essential component of the era of mass consumerism wherein the culture industry provided images of suburban life that centred around consumption and social insularity. Civic connectedness retreated in favour of a consumerist solipsism where a landscape of homogeneous consumptive experiences expanded concomitantly with a social landscape of anonymity. The planned community re-emerges in this contemporary era as an arena for mass consumption.

Georg Lukács' argument in *History and Class Consciousness* (1972) is no less apposite today than it was in the 1920s when it was first published: the commodity form is a major prism through which individuals in capitalist

society see the sum of social possibilities. As the symbolic value of commodities has eclipsed use-value as the primary source of importance, ever-expanding mechanisms are developed to distinguish commodities and expand their reach. One of the more prominent examples of this trend has been in the area of 'theming'. Mark Gottdiener conceives of theming as an interrelated process of production and consumption of particular environments whereby symbolic meaning both *reflects* and *is reflective of* larger social relations (1997).

While themed spaces are most commonly associated with decidedly commercial enterprises, such as amusement parks or shopping malls, the process of theming is permeating into other arenas of socio-spatial design. One of the more intriguing aspects of this trend is evident in the development of themed planned communities. Unlike the mall or the restaurant, where visitors are implicitly asked to 'exit reality' to take part in a collective fantasy, the themed planned community is a heterotopia with a 'permanent' quality.

The theme acts as the hook, playing a central role in the marketing, representation and manufactured appeal for the community. With both an increasing standardization of housing construction methods and stylistic patterns characterizing the North American housing market and a somewhat contradictory tendency in post-Fordist capitalism to expand the number and precision of demographic categorizations, theming emerges as a process for resolving the tensions between homogeneity in supply and heterogeneity in demand. Because our relation to commodities is normally marked by the ephemerality of 'planned obsolescence', the fact that the 'product' in the case of a planned community is a permanent residence requires a rethinking of notions of civic engagement. What occurs is a disconnection between the representations and social processes of spatial production. It is in this sense that we can think of themed master-planned communities as heterotopias.

One of the more interesting master-planned communities in the USA is The Villages. With around 40,000 residents, The Villages is an age-restrictive retirement community located west of Orlando, Florida. The original owner, Harold Schwartz, purchased a small mobile home park in 1982 in this largely agricultural region of the state and embarked on an ambitious effort to acquire property and develop one of the largest master-planned real estate ventures in the USA. Keenly aware of the demographic shifts that would see a rise in the demand for retirement spaces and services, Schwartz developed a community that places strong emphasis on maintaining a 'healthy, active lifestyle'. The Villages combines this emphasis with design elements that exemplify an embrace of nostalgic representations, manifest in the community's claim to be 'Florida's Friendliest Hometown'.

Under Foucault's understanding of heterotopia, there is an emphasis placed on the simultaneity of contested representations that reflect the incongruities of social relations at a particular historic moment. The Villages operates

as a contested space where corporate visions of the past intersect with the lived experience of residents' everyday lives and the fundamental social processes animating the town's development pose significant challenges both for the developer's profit motive and for the residents' pursuance of their civic interest.

At the core of this contestation is the strategy of representation employed by The Villages' developer to distinguish the community from other communities/commodities in the competitive retirement development market of Florida. As Foucault has argued, 'heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable' (1986: 26). In The Villages, the first 'line of distinction' comes through its representational aspect as a thematic conception of the community's identity and, by implication, its desirability as a commodity.

The developers of The Villages use two primary themes to distinguish the community. The first is guided by an appeal to a selective understanding of history. The Villages advertises itself as 'Florida's Friendliest Hometown' and, through both the built environment and its aggressive marketing, the town appeals to nostalgic renderings of American 'small town' life. These nostalgic renderings, of course, rely on shared understandings of abstract concepts. Because of their abstractness, the forms of representation are not simple, offering ample spaces for residents to act upon their own – often antithetical – understandings of the same concepts.

The second theme employed by The Villages is more straightforward: that of a space of recreation and consumption. In its promotional material it touts 'The Villages Lifestyle' as being marked by recreational opportunities found in many of Florida's planned communities: golf, tennis and swimming. Additionally, the town expands the parameters of commonly held understandings of older adult recreation by supporting more 'active' sports and activities such as softball, rollerblading and dancing.

A recent sales brochure exemplifies the discursive invocation of these two themes. In its dramatic opening, the brochure provides an introduction to the community based on nostalgia:

Welcome to our hometown. Remember enjoying good times while on vacation with family and friends? The excitement of what to do each day and the possibilities of tomorrow and wishing that it didn't have to end? Life at The Villages is like being on a permanent vacation! Here you'll discover the perfect place to enjoy life as you've always dreamed.

(The Villages 2004: 2)

The most immediate discontinuity is between the invocation of 'hometown' immediately followed by a nostalgic discussion of leisure, for the spaces of vacation are – almost by definition – decidedly not 'hometowns'.

Furthermore, The Villages, being a new master-planned community, inhabited primarily by people at or close to retirement, cannot be called a hometown at all – at least not in accordance with popular understandings of the term as being the place where one was born or has roots stemming from early life experience. In order to negotiate this apparent contradiction, the second page describes the ‘Hometown Happenings’ in The Villages:

In the heart of every great community there’s a special place ‘where good friends gather for a great time’. In The Villages you’ll discover two charming destinations for old-fashioned fun all year long: Spanish Springs Town Square and Lake Sumter Landing Market Square. These turn-of-the-century squares will make you feel like you’ve taken a step back in time to a simpler, more enjoyable way of life. Stroll along the quaint streets . . . do some shopping, grab a bite to eat, see a movie or sample one of ‘Florida’s Best’ at our microbrewery.

(The Villages 2004: 3)

As this passage indicates, ‘hometown happenings’ are almost exclusively acts of consumption; and in a way similar to exercises in theming evident in spaces like Disney World, they satisfy a nostalgic yearning for the ‘old-fashioned’ and a ‘simpler, more enjoyable way of life’ with market-mediated practices, linking nostalgia with commodification.

While other master-planned communities have also marketed themselves using themes such as ‘community’, they rarely attempt to engage with marketing affectations through the built environment, preferring instead to ignore the unavoidable contradictions that would be evident in any effort to theme contested abstract affectations. In The Villages, however, the developer has attempted to pursue ‘hometown’ theming with particular relish.

From a town planning perspective, The Villages assumes a modified New Urbanist framework. Much like the proponents of New Urbanism call for ‘traditional neighbourhood design’ (for instance Duany and Plater-Zyberk 1992), the designers of The Villages have adopted a pedestrian-oriented environment in the two showpiece business districts: Spanish Springs and Lake Sumter Landing. Each district has a ‘town centre’ replete with gazebos, benches, landscaping and, in the case of Spanish Springs, a monument to The Villages’ founder, Harold Schwartz. They act as flexible public spaces, serving as sites for informal conversation as well as for more organized events. Surrounding the centres in each district are, most prominently, the sales offices and, secondarily, restaurants, clothing and gift shops.

While the town centres exhibit at least the pedestrian-centred aspect of New Urbanism, they depart from that framework in significant ways. Unlike textbook New Urbanist design, all residential development is situated in subdivisions a fair distance from the town centre, making travel from a Villager’s home by foot challenging. As a way to minimize the inevitable



Spanish Springs town centre, The Villages, Florida (photograph: Hugh Bartling). 'Instead of specific memories, the associations the Generic City mobilizes are general memories, memories of memories; token memory, a déjà vu that never ends, generic memory' (Koolhaas 1995: 1257). Here the déjà vu is the film set for Los Angeles half a century after *Zorro*.

problems with parking and traffic, the developers made The Villages a 'golf cart community'. This entails providing separate trails and parking for golf carts. From the point of view of the developer, this type of design allows for the requisite mobility of residents as well as being a literal symbol of the idea of permanent vacation. The golf carts are ubiquitous and many residents customize their carts, adorning them with stickers showing allegiance to their favourite football team or having their names painted on the hood.

The separation of residential districts from the 'town centre' districts is further dramatized by gating the residential subdivisions and the establishment of more traditional suburban strip mall shopping centres on the outskirts of the community. The latter house the essential supermarkets, gas stations and discount stores that are absent from the town centres. The culmination of these spatial arrangements is a replication of the modern North American suburban landscape under the subterfuge of the 'friendly hometown'. While the developer showcases the town centres in its promotional material and situates its sales offices there, the development would be almost uninhabitable without the sprawling shopping centres.

As an implicit recognition of this, The Villages goes to great lengths to downplay the generic sprawl by investing a considerable amount of effort



Gated entrance to residential district, The Villages, Florida (photograph: Hugh Bartling). The golf cart might become the ultimate vehicle of the (post-historical) suburb and (post)historical city centres. It is ecological, slow, therefore pedestrian, smooth and almost silent. Behind the friendly vehicle we see the gates with a little gatekeeper's house, to keep things friendly.

in making the town centres spaces of spectacle. Architecturally, the development adorns the main concrete block buildings with faux-historic façades. To further the theming, placards claiming to be historical markers are placed in front of the various buildings, encouraging pedestrians to go on a self-guided tour of the town's 'history'.

This deliberate myth-making is, on one hand, a playful gesture that is clearly cognizant of the ironic practice of constructing a fictitious 'history'. In the sales centre for the newest town centre, Lake Sumter Landing, visitors are given a 'Historical District Map', which contains a message from 'Frank Butterfield', the 'Chairman Pro Tem, Lake Sumter Historical Preservation League':

Uncovering and, in some cases, interpreting the history of Lake Sumter Landing has been a protracted labor of love for members of the Historical Preservation League. In instances where uncovering and interpretation have failed us, we have resorted to invention. Where invention has faltered, we have borrowed . . . from Florida history, from American history, from local legends and from family stories.

(The Villages n.d.)

While on a literal level the fictitious nature of the constructed history is obvious, the discourses appealed to in these efforts speak to a particular vision

of urbanism that reveals assumptions about urban space and social relations. In an interview with The Villages, Inc. Vice President Gary Lester, he indicated that the 'idea was we were creating a small town. Not a city, not a suburb – a small town'. Authenticity was less a concern than 'something people could relate to' (interview with author, 16 August 2004). Creating something that potential residents could 'relate to' requires adhering to a different set of criteria than if the desire were for historical accuracy.

Each town centre is themed according to particular understandings of a potentially 'relatable' small town. The older of the two town centres is Spanish Springs, which uses, as its name suggests, a historical and architectural template that speaks to Florida's legacy as a site of exploration and settlement by the Spanish. While Lester asserts that the Spanish theme was an afterthought and could not remember if any alternatives were contemplated, its appositeness for imparting a nostalgic 'small town' feel that would appeal to a retiree demographic is undeniable. While most Spanish settlements were situated near coastal areas miles away from The Villages, the theme is recognizable as being 'Floridian' due to its prevalence as a motif in larger, more well-known Florida cities, such as Miami. Additionally, the Spanish Springs motif fits nicely with the myth surrounding Ponce de León's quest for the Fountain of Youth, which allegedly motivated his 1513 expedition to the peninsula. For a development that stresses a reconsideration of old age along the lines of youthful vitality and that, curiously, was planned without reserving space for a cemetery, the fantasy of perennial youth is appealing. This is reinforced in numerous ways that relate synergistically with other aspects of the built environment and the decorative theming.

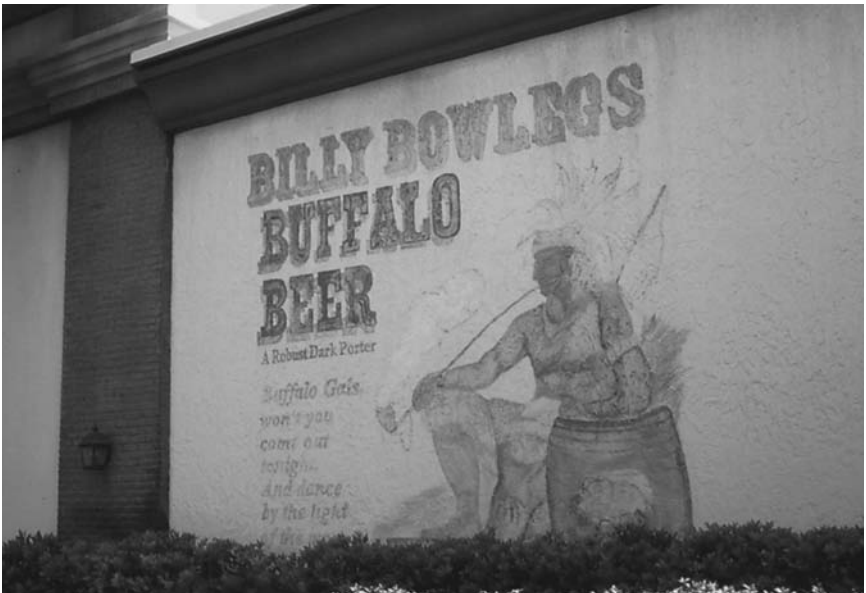
The Town Square is adorned with a gazebo that hosts bands and dancing nightly, a fountain meant to symbolize the Fountain of Youth and the only memorial to an actual 'real' person – founder Harold Schwartz. A variety of restaurants surround the square, including the Spanish Springs Brewing Company, whose proprietors claim that the town has 'the highest consumption of draft beer in the state of Florida' (Mackie McCabe, quoted in Kunerth 2002).

A major component of theming The Villages as a 'Florida Hometown' has been through the actual creation of a historical narrative for the two town centres. Placards are placed in front of buildings that speak of fictional early residents of the town, their exploits and the role they played in the growth of the region. These placards not only portray a cohesive story, but they reflect a selective discussion of history, economics and social interactions that reflect dominant understandings of an American myth that is based on the uncritical invocation of individualism, capitalism and social progress. This mythos reinforces particular social, political and economic prejudices that form the substance of much of the country's contemporary political and social malaise, but that simultaneously act as effective theming strategies.



The Villages' 'history' follows a familiar allegorical path of European settlers conquering a fierce frontier, acquiring wealth and developing a civilized society out of uncharted wilderness. The earliest 'figure' discussed on the faux monument is Maria Portiz Fontana 'Silencio' Sanchez, a woman who arrived at 'what was then only a wide spot in the trail in 1788' and assumed a position of distinction in the community for developing a 'recipe for the potent local brew known as "Mosquito Juice" and opened the budding settlement's first tavern, The Blind Mosquito' (see frontispiece of this chapter).

For the purist, the discussion contains significant historical inaccuracies. Homesteaders and 'young immigrant[s]' would have been an anomaly in the area during the late eighteenth century as the central interior region of Florida was inhabited primarily by runaway slaves and Seminole Native Americans who were hostile to the European presence (Benwell 1853; Weik 2002). Similarly, the Spanish architectural style adopted in The Villages – adopted from similar efforts in the state dating back to the 1920s – is not regionally accurate. The Spanish Colonial Revival style owes more to a hybrid vernacular developed and popularized by Anglo boosters and real estate speculators during San Diego's Panama–California Exposition of 1915, which found its way to Florida during the period of real estate speculation and growth during the early 1920s (Newcomb 1937; Amero 1990).



Mural in The Villages, Florida (photograph: Hugh Bartling). A reference to Native American culture: history not as tragedy but as innocent fantasy.

The historical representation of people who were actually prevalent in the region – Seminoles and runaway slaves – is generally absent in the constructed historical story. This is especially ironic given the fact that Sumter County – the site of the largest section of The Villages – was also the site of one of the largest defeats of US forces in the decades-long war against the Seminoles. The only Native American presence in The Villages is in a mural advertising ‘Billy Bowlegs Buffalo Beer’, reinforcing offensive stereotypes endemic in American culture with regard to native peoples and denying the violent reality of the European conquest of North America.

### **Realizing heterotopia – beyond representation**

The image of The Villages as a ‘hometown’, of course, belies key omissions in the town’s development. As a restricted age community, there are no children living in the town; while there are commercial districts along the model of Traditional Neighbourhood Design, the general pattern of the development mimics post-war patterns of suburbanization, replete with uniform architecture, a housing stock dominated by single-family detached homes and gated entry to the residential districts. Furthermore, The Villages is not a ‘hometown’ for the simple reason that it is not an actual town. Mechanisms of municipal governance, such as a town commission, city council or elected mayor, are absent.



A typical residential district in The Villages, Florida (photograph: Hugh Bartling). *The Truman Show* as ‘realized utopia’.

It is in the development's regional impact, however, where the existence of The Villages as a heterotopia reliant upon rather dystopian practices is most apparent. The Villages extends into three counties: Lake, Sumter and Marion. During the first phase of development the fragmentation of land uses coupled with the fragmentation of political boundaries created a curious phenomenon. The town centre of Spanish Springs and an adjacent shopping centre as well as the petrol stations serving the town's residents are located in Lake County, while the vast majority of residential districts are situated in Sumter County. Because the development is in unincorporated territory, most of the essential municipal functions are borne at the county level. The spatial configuration of businesses results in Lake County getting essential sales tax monies to support infrastructure while Sumter County – where most of the residents live – gets minimal revenue. While the developer paid impact fees that go to offset many costs borne by the county as more people move to the area, the lack of sales-tax revenues has caused significant strains on Sumter County government's resources, particularly in the area of road maintenance and expansion.

In the area of affordable housing, the county is similarly suffering from the pains of growth. The Villages employs more than 3,000 people, making it the largest private employer in Sumter County. However, due to the fact that the developer has not built any rental properties and restricts its market to people older than 55, there is literally nowhere for most workers to live in the community. Because many of the jobs associated with the growth of the town are in low-paying service industries, the lack of rental properties creates significant costs in community time and traffic congestion for many of The Villages' employees who live outside the development.

While the developer of The Villages has displaced many of the costs of growth on the surrounding region, residents of the town have also had to bear unforeseen costs associated with the development's expansion. Most explicit in this regard is the financing scheme underpinning The Villages' expansion. The developer took advantage of a Florida state law establishing community development districts (CDDs) to secure significant amounts of capital for expansion. The CDD is established by the state following an application by a petitioner. Upon establishment, the district is able to assume many of the planning, development and revenue-generating functions of a local government. For the developer, this allows for the issuance of tax-free bonds at the early stages of a development by the CDD, freeing up capital that would otherwise go towards building the basic infrastructure. Bonds are paid off through gradual monthly assessments of landowners in the CDD over the period of the bond's life.

CDDs, being governmental bodies, are technically subject to democratic accountability. However, representation is based upon land ownership rather than conventional norms of citizenship. Owners of land in a CDD are allocated one vote per acre when electing the CDD's Board of Supervisors.

Since the developers generally own virtually all of the land at the beginning of a project, they have effective control over the CDD until the point at which new residents' land outweighs that of the developers. However, much of the debt accrued by the CDD is generated in those early years of the CDD before residents move in; because of the long servicing of the bonds, financing is paid off by future residents. This allows the developer access to a risk-free source of capital.

One of The Villages' CDDs has purchased numerous amenities, properties and utilities from Gary Morse, The Villages' CEO, and companies associated with The Villages' development arm. Because this CDD excludes residential property, it is perennially controlled by the developer since it is the primary property owner in the district.

Many of the properties that this CDD has purchased from Morse are the golf courses and utilities that serve The Villages' residents. When the CDD purchases improved property it can negotiate directly with the property owner. In one case in 2004, the CDD issued a \$50 million bond to purchase two golf courses from Morse that were assessed at \$8 million. Not only was the purchase price excessive, but the golf courses are revenue generators. Homeowners are not only assessed monthly for debt-servicing payments in their own residential CDDs, but they also pay monthly assessments for golf course access and maintenance. Thus, in this case, Villagers will be paying indirectly for an overpriced land transfer through increases in the recreational amenities fees (Curry 2004a). A similar transfer from Morse's Little Sumter Utility – the provider of water and wastewater treatment in The Villages – to the Village Center CDD in 2003 has resulted in The Villages' homeowners indirectly servicing Village Center CDD bonds through their water and sewage fees (Curry 2004b).

The political response on the part of the citizens to corporate excesses in The Villages has been complex and, in some sense, contradictory. Residents have organized an independent Property Owners' Association (POA), which has maintained consistent critique of the developer. Due to the nature of the legal arrangements described above, the POA has little access to formal mechanisms of objection to CDD activities; thus, their main role is as an educational and advocacy group. Their ultimate goal is expressed in their 'Residents' Bill of Rights', which calls for the election of governmental supervisors and top administrative officers, and voter approval of property purchases and debt expansion, ceasing relationships that can be construed as having a conflict of interest and other related demands for accountability.

The Villages-Lake Sumter, Inc. has not publicly attacked the POA, but has instead been adept at channelling political energy elsewhere. In July 2003, residents backed by the developer established a political committee called One Sumter. The purpose of the committee was to promote a referendum that would change the way in which commissioners in Sumter County were chosen from a district-based system to one where commissioners were

voted for at-large. Given the fact that The Villages is the largest community in the county, critics of the developer viewed the initiative as a shameless power grab by the developer, Gary Morse. Funded primarily by contractors and other businesses with identifiable economic interests in The Villages and, often, headquarters outside the county, the developer-appointed administrative head of the CDD, Pete Wahl, sent residents a letter informing them of rising maintenance assessments explaining that they were forced to raise the costs due to decisions made by the Sumter County Board of Commissioners and conveniently enclosed an application for an absentee ballot to be used in the August 2005 election (Curry 2004c).

While the POA is an active voice of opposition, the ambiguity of living in a commodified space limits the scope of political consciousness. As implied by the discussion of the 'Residents' Bill of Rights' above, the political rhetoric of the POA emerges from a fundamental sense of unfairness generated by the unrepresentative nature of the CDD legislation, which directly affects homeowners' self-interest. Efforts to link unfairness and democratic accountability to other struggles outside The Villages, however, are negligible. The phlegmatic nature of politicized opposition, I would argue, is indicative of the power and effectiveness of The Villages' production as a heterotopian space.

The Villages is successful as a capitalist enterprise precisely because it produces a commodity that speaks – however superficially – to the major factors of alienation in modern life. The developer offers the promise of 'community' in a 'friendly hometown' to a generation that found the utopian promise of suburbia unrealized. They offer 'permanent vacation' and 'free golf for the rest of your life' – in spite of the hidden costs of such freedom – to a generation of people who experienced the USA's economic growth and stability of the 1950s and 1960s and the insecurity and growing gap between rich and poor that marked the globalizing decades of the 1980s and 1990s.

The Villages as a heterotopia rationalizes the inconsistencies evident in the town's representations of its manufactured history and the concomitant heavy-handed profit-making by the developer at the expense of town residents. The Villages offers a space of familiarity through its theming and an elevation of leisurely consumption that resonates with the dominant values promoted by American cultural and political institutions.

However, the theming also offers the seeds of a counter-narrative exemplified by efforts such as the POA: The Villages' developer asserts that Villagers are getting a 'real American small town'. When the 'small town' lacks mechanisms for governmental accountability and employs mechanisms that enhance the developers' profit at the expense of the residents, many residents are inspired to question certain components of the developer's theme. But, in summation, The Villages is not a space separated from the real processes of spatial production guiding political, economic and social relations in the USA. It is a space that is simultaneously completely fabricated

and extraordinarily real; a space that generates significant profits through manipulating the institutions of public governance that enrich a developer who is a strong supporter of a political ideology of 'limited government'; a space where vacation is permanent, but where residents of a town and region are faced with the costs of growth that threaten the very viability of their 'vacation'. But, above all, The Villages is a space where the reactions to these contradictions become resolved in the (nearly always false) promise of gratification by consumption; where golf courses are substituted for cemeteries and the promise of a leisurely 18 holes extends into eternity.

## Note

- \* A version of this chapter appeared as Bartling, H. (2006) 'Tourism as everyday life: an inquiry into The Villages, Florida', *Tourism Geographies* 8(4).

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Condominium *The Caribbean*, Singapore (photograph: Xavier Guillot). Venice as the inevitable reference for waterfront development. Here a Caribbean Canal Grande with swimming pool.

# The 'institutionalization' of heterotopias in Singapore

*Xavier Guillot*

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Since its independence in 1965, Singapore has undergone a far-reaching transformation of its territory. The small country was radically restructured in order to house its growing population in New Towns. This transformation, which was conducted by a single governmental body, the Housing Development Board (HDB), and which reached its peak in the 1970s and 1980s, was largely based on the principles of functional city planning, as stated in the Athens Charter.

HDB planning produced a normative and highly repetitive built environment. The housing landscape can be summarized by two types of buildings, called 'slab blocks' and 'point blocks', with little variation from one New Town to the next. Today, more than 85 per cent of the population lives in one of these two types of buildings, regardless of their social and ethnic origins.

The transformation of the nation, which some authors have called a 'social re-founding' (Goldblum 1986) or a 'territory revolution' (De Koninck 1992) illustrates what Michel Foucault means when talking about 'contemporary space': the culmination of a long process leading from a 'space of localization' to a 'space of de-localization'. The internal coherence of this 'space of de-localization' Foucault describes as that of the 'emplacement', 'defined by the relations of proximity between points or elements, which in formal terms can be described as series, trees or lattices' (1998: 176).

It is in this context that I will study the status of the condominium: an alternative form of housing, in sharp contrast to the HDB models that appeared at the end of 1970s, originally targeting foreign expatriates looking for housing in the city-state for short periods of time. More specifically, I will try to understand the condominium as a dissident form of housing, starting from the idea that they constitute a heterotopian residential landscape.

The development of the condominium is part and parcel of a post-colonial planning strategy aimed at the renewal of HDB-built housing stock and the further densification of the territory by a process of 'virtualization' of the built environment at the scale of the nation. With around 4,600,000



inhabitants in a territory of 647 square kilometres, Singapore constitutes one of the highest urban densities in the world.

As its Latin root indicates, the condominium is a property that is shared and owned by several people. The common objective of this type of property, in Singapore and elsewhere, is to optimize the cost of running and maintaining the property through a system of co-ownership. This ownership system, however, is only a legal characteristic. Other architectural and urban particularities are linked with local demand and regulations.

Although privately built, condominium development is strongly controlled by the public authorities. These strong regulations have produced a set of unique architectural features and lie at the root of the condominium's status as a 'dissident' form of housing in contrast to public housing. Each requires a minimum plot of 0.5 hectares, two thirds of which have to remain unbuilt. This arrangement, which tends to preserve large green areas, has some important planning consequences at the scale of the island. Moreover, in terms of physical and social planning it has produced a new residential ecology in which housing and amenities (sports and leisure) are combined in a single all-in environment.

The advertising for these condominiums is unambiguous. More than just shelter, condominium development offers its residents a whole way of life. Furthermore, a condominium is also an investment opportunity, and is also a mark of social status. It offers a marked alternative to the dominant form of housing that marks the post-independence period, that is, HDB housing and New Towns, also known as the HDB Heartland. However, progressively, the make-up of the inhabitants of condominium housing has diversified to encompass the local middle-class population (Wong and Guillot 2004).

### **'Space of compensation' versus 'space of illusion'**

In many ways, condominium housing can be compared to gated communities as they exist in other parts of the world. The analogy is particularly relevant in respect to the social status of their inhabitants. The condominium estates form an 'other' residential space, complying with the notion of heterotopia. The strongly demarcated border enables a radical redefinition of the relation between public and private. In many countries, this separation finds its origin in security concerns. This is not the case in Singapore, which prides itself on its safe environment. The dividing line is one of social distinction setting itself apart against the repetitive and highly normalized background of HDB housing. In this respect, condominiums embody the double characteristic that Foucault associates with a heterotopia regarding its function: being at the same time a 'space of compensation' and a 'space of illusion'.

Due to strict design regulations, condominium construction appears as highly normative and the resulting space is as meticulous and arranged as its HDB counterpart. However, the differences are also considerable: the

size of the property (number of units), the standing of the apartment, and the presence of leisure and sports facilities. Both interior and exterior are highly designed by architects and landscape designers, reflecting the expectations of today's society. The condominium is not a static model but rather evolves with the market and the changing social demands. A quick glance at the regular advertisements in *The Straits Times* and other Singaporean and international media gives a good idea of the different styles and trends these condominium estates seek to cater to.

The condominium is first of all a 'space of compensation', in contrast to the standardized and homogeneous New Town landscape that is virtually the same across the island: the same number of public facilities per inhabitant, standard sizes and apartment designs. There is compensation because it offers a kind of 'disorder' in an all too ordered, too meticulous, too arranged context.

Simultaneously, this 'space of compensation' is also a 'space of illusion', that is, following Foucault's description, 'a space . . . that denounces all real space, all real emplacements within which human life is partitioned off, as even more illusory' (1998: 184). Naturally, it is the normative and modelled space of the HDB New Towns that here plays the role of the Foucauldian mirroring device that instils the condominium landscape with desire.



View of Singapore from the condominium *The Colonnade* (photograph: Xavier Guillot).



Condominium *The Colonnade*, Singapore (photograph: Xavier Guillot). The building is undoubtedly inspired by Kurokawa, particularly the Nakagin Capsule Tower in Tokyo. 'Capsule architecture is cyborg architecture . . . A device which has become a living space in itself in the sense that man cannot hope to live elsewhere, is a capsule. And signs of such a development are beginning to appear around us' (Kurokawa 1969).

The illusion of escaping the real space, in particular that represented by the New Town, is materialized by the numerous leisure and sports facilities that can be found in condominiums and by the 'added extras'. Their presence within the same compound is aimed at creating a sense of distance. The residents of the condominiums are invited to isolate themselves in an exclusive bubble of greenery, water features and relaxation facilities, which produce a 'specific ambience'.

One recurrent notion that accompanies this specific aim is the idea of 'revitalization'. Condominiums usually comprise facilities that are supposed



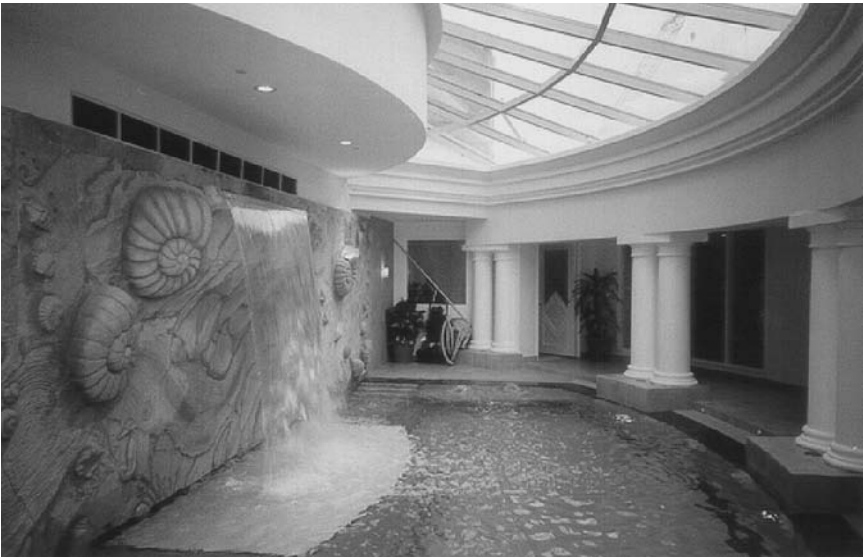
View from the club house of the condominium *The Caribbean* (photograph: Xavier Guillot). Singaporean synthesis of the best of Western modernity (Mies?) with the eternal Orient (the Oasis!).

to revitalize the body and the spirit. Nowadays, every condominium in Singapore includes at least a fitness room, which is housed in the club house, as well as a swimming pool. In the latest condominium designs the conventional rectangular swimming pool is replaced by a variety of pools that form a kind of aquatic landscape. The condominium *Villa Marina* takes this over the top, offering a mini centre of thalassotherapy:

*Villa Marina* is the only prime luxurious condominium by the sea at Katong that is designed to give you peace of mind with Singapore's only therapeutic aquatonic pools. Featuring: back massage pool, warm Jacuzzi bath, bubble pool, aqua chairs, massaging cascade, water jets for the feet, aqua gymnastics exercises pool.<sup>1</sup>

In some condominiums, such as *Ballota Park*, emphasis is placed on the image of a rural habitat:

Picture the opulence of country living amidst the charming neighborhood of Ballota Park. Experience the joy of watching wild flowers wave as



Interior of the condominium *Villa Marina*, Singapore; entry to the thalasso therapy centre (photograph: Xavier Guillot). Even in a lifeless ambience a waterfall can do wonders.



Interior of the condominium *Villa Marina*, Singapore; the relaxation and reading room (photograph: Xavier Guillot). There is something irresistible in the synthesis between a mausoleum and a boudoir.

the cool breeze brushes along. Here within the country setting of Ballota Park, life takes a languid pace.<sup>2</sup>

In other places, the emphasis is on the idea of an oasis in contrast to the hardness of city life:

A Home in the Oasis. An Oasis, green and peaceful. In the gaze of the sun, colorful birds of the tropics flutter their wings of liberty, bringing joy to all around. It's time to celebrate . . . the wonderful joy of life. That's the world of the Sherwood Condominium. An exclusive residential court for the discerning few who treasure a harmonious and gracious style of life set in an oasis of nature.<sup>3</sup>

There are also paths on which to walk, run or cycle. In almost all condominiums, one can find a barbecue pit for outdoor meals, which in Singapore is possible all year long. All these facilities are designed with a lot of attention to landscaping. With some differences from one condominium to the other, the dream offered is that of 'the return to nature': living far from the city while still having its advantages.

This nostalgia of having a green tropical environment reminiscent of colonial times is exacerbated by the rapid speed of development in Singapore and the concomitant disappearance of the natural setting and its consequence on mental health and behaviour. As in other parts of the world, this search for nature and the need to burn energy in sports activities is a symptom of today's society and the fact that our physical exercise is declining. Never before have people living in cities been so sedentary and immobile. For some years now, the Singaporean authorities have tried to minimize this fact by implementing policies aiming at extending the island's green area. The care given, for instance, to greenery along highways is quite remarkable. This goes along with the national slogans by the Urban Redevelopment Authority that they are creating a 'Garden City' or a 'Tropical City of Excellence'.

### **Dwelling as a terminal in the domestic network: 'heterotopia versus heterochronia'**

Beyond the 'revitalization function' of sports and leisure facilities and the illusory dimension, the integrated character of the condominium environments directly contributes to rethinking and optimizing the tempos and temporalities of daily life in a large city. Regarding this aspect, condominiums can be perceived as machines for saving time, offering a clear demonstration of the link elaborated by Foucault between 'heterotopia' and 'heterochronia' (1998: 182).

The incorporation of a panoply of facilities and amenities within the condominium allows for time-saving by minimizing movement. In a way, one can find in condominiums the same strategy that guided the design of

commercial centres: 'one-stop shopping under one roof'. Location is another important time-saving component in condominium development. Generally, locations close to a highway interchange or a public transport node (Mass Rapid Transit) are selected. When that is not the case, a private shuttle bus owned by the condominium regularly makes the trip between the condominium and the next MRT station. In the reality of daily life, this 'marriage' of the dwelling and the facilities provided produces a significant withdrawal from the public domain. The streets giving access to the condominium are mainly designed for the automobile with few considerations for pedestrian movement. The contrast to the pattern of the colonial city and even to the New Town is unmistakable.

This evolution is inscribed within a historical logic. Along with the introduction of mechanical transport, one progressively sees the implementation of 'transportation corridors' and the 'segmentation' of urban space as a response to the acceleration of urban mobility (Graham and Marvin 2001). Urban life is increasingly organized according to a 'logic of flows'. In a direct analogy to the organized circulation of goods, information and capital, one witnesses similar 'tunnel and hub effects' in the organization of the daily life of citizens: moving through the network increasingly happens in corridors that are isolated from the immediate environment (tunnel effects); dwelling in contrast takes place in enclaves like terminals, shopping in fully integrated 'megastructures' (hub effects). This dualization of the territory in tunnels and hubs is further reinforced by the effects of telecommunications technologies that allow people to benefit from services at home, sealing the terminal fate of the dwelling within the logic of the network. Generally, condominiums are equipped with the most up-to-date technology embracing this logic to the fullest.

### **Towards a 'normalization of heterotopias' in the context of the rising cosmopolitan society?**

Originally, condominium development targeted the market of expatriates staying in Singapore for a short time. Since the mid-1980s, condominiums have also been occupied by high-income Singaporeans. Moreover, since the 1990s, the success of this 'dwelling formula' has led the government to relax the control on condominium development by selling land at lower prices to private developers in order to produce cheaper condominiums for middle-class Singaporeans.

The condominium's gradual institutionalization is a sign of the changing society and of the rising middle class (Robinson and Goodman 1996). Furthermore, this process is related to the specific situation of Singapore within Southeast Asia. Indeed, by the speed of its economic development, its high standard of living, high mobility and consumerism, the nation of Singapore looks in many ways like a heterotopia in and of itself, a high-class consumerist island in contrast to the rest of the region.

An exponent of the need to provide a home for a mobile and wealthy foreign population, the condominium has become a local extension of a nation whose wealth is entirely based on worldwide economic exchange and on interactions with foreign expertise. Through this relationship, the condominium found its full legitimacy as a specific heterotopia that resides within a larger one: the City-State of Singapore.

In the language of Singapore's government, the current objective is to build a 'cosmopolitan society' (Long 1999). This notion makes the shift away from the previous approach of social diversity that emphasized social and cultural differences based on the affiliation to one of the four races present at the creation of the nation: Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO society) and the historical and cultural link between these races and the territory. Cosmopolitanism, in contrast, is conceived of as a quality of the mind that allows Singaporeans to navigate successfully in a globalizing world (Yeoh 2004).

This discourse, which tends to emphasize the links of Singapore with the world, rather than with the surrounding states, reinforces the idea of Singapore as being a 'regional heterotopia' within Southeast Asia. This is why sociologists Kwok Kian Woon and Mariam Ali (1998) have argued that Singapore's best option is to become a virtual nation, an abstract entity: a nation that would not exist any more for its citizens, but for travellers: 'Following in the tradition of their legendary migrant forebears, sojourners-citizens use Singapore as a stepping stone and move on to resettle in other countries.'

This official discourse and the interpretation made of it by these sociologists testify to a de-territorialized future of Singapore as a nation. Looking at the geographical entity Singapore, a small island within Southeast Asia, with a population living in the most secure and regulated conditions, one sees the island through another prism. The equation Singapore-Heterotopia shows us a realized Utopia – More's Utopia was an island after all – suspended between its eu-topian promise and its dys-topic shadow.

## Notes

- 1 From an advertisement for the condominium *Villa Marina* in *The Straits Times*, 16 November 1996.
- 2 From an advertisement for the condominium *Ballota Park* in *The Straits Times*, 26 September 1996.
- 3 From an advertisement for *Sherwood Condominium* in *The Straits Times*, 22 September 1996.

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Part 5

## *Terrains vagues*

Transgression and urban activism

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Display of masculinity on the Tel Aviv shoreline (photograph: Michal Helfman).

# Public-space heterotopias

## Heterotopias of masculinity along the Tel Aviv shoreline

*Yael Allweil and Rachel Kallus*

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For many years, only tourists regarded the Tel Aviv shoreline as the most attractive place in the city. Tel Avivians considered it indecent because of improper body exposure and unhealthy due to the seaside humidity. The shore – neglected and detached from the fabric of the city – attracted marginal groups whose behaviour was considered unsuitable or even deviant (Azaryahu 2001). It was only in the 1980s that the municipality and the broader public discovered the beach as an asset and that massive development took off. With these changes the marginal ecology of the shoreline and the patchwork of other worlds suddenly found itself within the fabric of the city. The shoreline's status as 'pockets of deviant behaviour' resonates with Foucault's concept of heterotopia, which we will use to investigate the extent to which these spaces hold the potential to enact a strategy of resistance.

Heterotopian spaces, Foucault writes, are other spaces 'counter-sites, a kind of effectively realized utopias in which . . . all the other real sites . . . are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (Foucault 1997). The scope of the concept of heterotopia in Foucault's essay is wide. Heterotopia performs different functions in relation to the dominant order. Foucault distinguishes between heterotopias of crisis, deviance, illusion and compensation. Depending on their purpose, heterotopias serve as 'steam-releasing' sites, deflecting the forces of change by locating them outside society, in specially designated spaces where social critique (theatres), foreignism and non-matrimonial sexuality (motel rooms) and challenging ideas (libraries) can be filtered and contained.

Foucault discusses 'heterotopias of deviance' as a specific category, which has mostly taken the place of heterotopias of crisis within modern society (the insane asylum, old people's homes, prisons, etc.). However, upon closer investigation, all heterotopias, in one way or another, are spaces that house difference, that accommodate the deviant: stray persons, challenging practices (being foreign, illicit sex), revolutionary or potentially digressive ideas (libraries, museums). Heterotopia segregates these deviant phenomena and makes it possible to control their distribution and place in society.

Benjamin Genocchio, Edward Soja and others have speculated about the possibility of heterotopian spaces to constitute sites of resistance (Genocchio 1995; Soja 1996). It is in fact surprising that Foucault does not at all address the extent to which the status of otherness constitutes a subversive moment. This is inconsistent with his later investigations of the disciplinary workings of power, such as in *The Birth of the Clinic, Discipline and Punish* and the first part of *The History of Sexuality*. The existence of heterotopian sites of 'absolute otherness', distinctly disconnected from the dominant spatial order, severely limits their ability to affect 'hegemonic society'. It likewise bounds any subversive quality one would like to ascribe to them.

The rise of new forms of spatial segregation reflects a number of processes of fragmentation in contemporary society, in which the homogeneous space of the nation-state is replaced by multifarious communal forms of affiliation (economic, cultural, ethnic, etc.). This process of fragmentation is accompanied by the rise of the heterotopian enclave as an exclusionary spatial device. However, most studies of urban segregation, such as gated communities or ghettos, do not view these phenomena as 'other' to the city. Davis (1990), Caldeira (2000), Marcuse and van Kempen (2002) and others see these enclaves as serving and sustaining hegemonic social order through the segregation of strong groups and the exclusion of weak ones. They do not ascribe any subversive qualities to these enclaves.

Recent discussions that focus on the presence of subversive ideologies and everyday activities in urban space do not study difference, alterity or deviance within the context of architecturally confined structures, an aspect that the notion of heterotopia emphasizes. Researchers such as de Certeau (1984), Lefebvre (1991) and Chase *et al.* (1999) see urban *public* space as a site for resistance. For them urban spaces could empower powerless/spaceless groups by allowing them to defy the regulating mechanisms of the established order. However, these studies of the everyday first and foremost define resistance as a temporal, non-territorial action (de Certeau 1984), as opposed to the territorial and architecturally defined actions taken by the establishment.

This dichotomy between spatial practices that are believed to confirm hegemonic order and spaces of resistance, which are identified as temporary, marginal or ephemeral, seems to underscore Tafuri's (1969) strong position that, in the final analysis, there is no such thing as 'an architecture of resistance'. Furthermore, the dichotomy between architecture analytically framed within the confines of power as opposed to temporal practices of everyday life reinforces an opposition between political and infra-political levels of analysis. It rules out any political role for architecture other than a hegemonic one.

This chapter investigates two particular cases of heterotopian practices that occur within public space. It attempts to demonstrate the way in which these practices use architecture to establish themselves as counter-hegemonic

strongholds. The analysis of these cases under the notion heterotopia brings out the inherent ambiguity of any counter-hegemonic practice that draws its own boundaries between who is in and who is out, what is resisted and what is bolstered. Through these cases, we try to shed light on the unanswered question of whether Foucault's notion of heterotopia is open to practices of resistance.

## Public-space heterotopias

Many urban spaces in our contemporary cities accommodate deviant behaviour. Unlike those heterotopias that are formulated by hegemonic society and detached from urban fabric, these places are formed bottom-up by communities that are unrecognized within the public sphere. However, unlike the a-territorial activities identified by the field of everyday urbanism, these informal groups, having no officially demarcated public space to enact their communal identity (for instance temples, party headquarters, playgrounds, etc.), carve out sites within urban public space by using them regularly. Gay men, immigrant workers and other unrecognized groups rely either on weakly claimed spaces to which they give a new definition, or devise mechanisms to establish themselves within the existing order of established spaces. These spaces squarely exist within the full daylight of public space and appear as explicitly deviant with regard to the common codes of conduct. Their status as deviant resides both in the activities performed in them and in their spatial articulation.

We will describe these spaces as 'public-space heterotopias', because they have a distinctly heterotopian character, although they are fully visible territories that exist within the urban fabric of public spaces. Unlike heterotopias per se, they reside within the domain of the open-to-all public space and hold no permanent physical borders. This qualification, we believe, gives these spaces their particular capacity to sustain subversive social codes and values that challenge the supremacy of convention, without being spatially contained within a detached, specialized environment. The significance Foucault ascribes to heterotopias' spatial detachment as a means of controlling subversive behaviour is hereby reversed. Precisely because they operate within the fabric of the city, these public-space heterotopias allow for the diffusion of people, activities and ideas, and possess the ability to affect hegemony.

Hegemony was defined by Gramsci as cultural supremacy, sustained not only as a result of institutional tools installed by the nation-state (army, police, law), but also resulting in the internalization of the ruling cast's ideology by the weaker casts in society. Gramsci stresses the place of culture and its generators in the production and distribution of ideology, adding this crucial factor to the Marxist focus on economy. Confronting Gramsci's analysis with the work of Foucault complements the latter's notion of

governmentality. Possibly, it suggests a cultural analysis, which could break the semblance of totality in Foucault's analysis of the workings of power. Interested in the potential of oppressed classes to lead social change, classes that typically have no access to power or material resources, Gramsci develops the notion of enclaves of resistance. Enclaves of resistance could become a cultural conduit, through which unrecognized groups can pose alternatives to hegemonic ideology, questioning its exclusive supremacy and opening the prospect of gradual change (Gramsci 2002).

The question of whether 'public-space heterotopias' can constitute practices of resistance and serve as agents of change is examined through the study of two groups of men operating along the Tel Aviv shoreline. The first is the homosexual community cruising in Independence Park. The second is the 'circle of drummers' that gathers behind a deserted Dolphinarium, on the edge of the city's promenade. The two sites share with Gramsci's analysis of enclaves of resistance, the fact that their locus of resistance is at the same time a site for the quotidian, infra-political production of culture, and a site of political struggle for the production of and control over space. In this respect, Gramsci's enclaves not only bolster important political forces of resistance, but also appear as vehicles of change within a hegemonic order (Cabral 1973).

### **Heterotopias of masculinity along the Tel Aviv shoreline**

Independence Park is the main site for homosexual cruising in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area. It is the scene of courtship rituals, a place to find partners for brief sexual encounters and a locus of homosexual socializing. Similar to many parks in cities all over the world (Betsky 1997; Hirsh 2005), flexible social codes, pliable opening hours, darkness and thick greenery that reduces exposure, and also being free of charge, make the park a centre of homosexual interaction, practised across social or class divisions. This has made Independence Park an important political icon in gay rights struggles. The explicit existence of homosexuality in the midst of the city challenges normative society by breaking down hetero-normative conceptions of sexuality, the family-based society and the place and status of the male within it. Furthermore, it questions the supremacy of hetero-normativity in public space.

The 'circle of drummers' meets once a week, on Friday before sunset, to perform a communal ritual that draws a large crowd of participants and spectators. The activity takes place in a circle of drummers and dancers indulging in spontaneous rhythms of African drums and several Mediterranean instruments (Katzav 2006). With few exceptions, the drummers are males and the dancers females. During the event a drummer will enter the inner circle and lead the rhythm – gesturing, drumming loudly, exposing his

torso and directing his performance at one of the dancers, who will join him in the inner circle. After a while the drummer will return to the outer circle and another will take his place. The drummers' activity challenges hegemonic sexuality by constantly changing partners. More importantly, however, this practice enacts the traditional, tribal and patriarchal dichotomy between men and women, as emphasized by the drummers' and dancers' respective focus on the different areas of the body – the drummers' torsos and the dancers' hips, marked with a scarf as in belly dancing.

The explicit gender dichotomy staged in the drumming performance contradicts contemporary gender relations in Israeli society, which promotes the blurring of gender differences. Aspiring to a Western model of equality, contemporary dance (both repertoire and spontaneous dances) expresses unisex roles and rejects gender distinctions, both in movement and in dress. It follows one of the most-used cultural demarcations between 'Western' and 'Eastern', along a discursive regime that culturally locates gender roles between an ideal of equality and an ideal of difference (Nader 1989). The drummer community uses the gender conflict to stage its challenge both to the ideal of equality and to the concomitant obligation to be Western.

Within Israeli hegemony, both sites and their related activities define heterotopias. They challenge Israeli masculinity, the essential key and value of 'Israeliness' (Almog 2000). Israeli masculine hegemony is based not only



The drummers at the Dolphinarium, Tel Aviv (photograph: Yael Allweil).



on the traditional sexual roles of gender exclusivity, but is also related to the Zionist aspiration to create the Israeli as the 'new Jew' contrary to the 'old Jew' of the Diaspora (Weiss 2002; Almog 2004), described by early Zionists as pale, passive and effeminate. As opposed to the Greek–Roman model of masculinity adopted by modern Western society, Judaism relied on the anti-hero alternative (Boyarin 1997). This model (a heterotopia, in fact) was developed by Jewish rabbis in the Diaspora as a means to resist foreign oppression. Zionism, challenging the traditional Jew, aspired to the Greco-Roman model. The construct of the Israeli, by consequence, has the same male gender bias (Almog 2000). Any challenge to Israeli masculinity is, by consequence, a challenge to Israeli Zionist hegemony.

The Western ideal of masculinity began to crack in the 1950s, following the Second World War (Moss 1996). In Israel, these were the years of military and political struggles for independence in the aftermath of the trauma of destruction and the Holocaust. The patterns of masculinity at work in the collective Israeli identity retained their value until the early 1970s (Almog 2000). The 'Sabra' (cactus), the iconic image of the Israeli man, was that of a provider and warrior who was morally superior to his Arab rival. This self-image stayed while reality eroded under the seeping forces of materialism, the corrupting taste of power, excessive self-righteousness and disrespect towards Arab and Mizrahi Israelis. This seeping erosion was deepened by the 1967 war, although arguably the 1973 Yom Kippur war delivered the decisive blow to the Sabra's self-perception as invincible (Rozenblum 1996). The historical change in government and the economic system after the 1973 war, the shift from a social economy to a neo-liberal capitalist system, left many men uncertain in their pride as providers. The Palestinian Intifada further undermined the Israeli's self-perception as morally superior to his Arab rival.

Since the 1970s, alternative masculinities emerged that challenged the mythological image of the Sabra. As of today, these alternative masculinities are at best perceived as a temporary deviation from the collective (Weiss 2002).

### **How is the 'public-space heterotopia' formed?**

The construction of the new Israeli identity, according to Weiss (2002), relies on two main tools: territory and body. It is based on the notion that 'people without a land are weak, effeminate, impotent' (Weiss 2002). The image of the Sabra – the manly, strong warrior-provider, the quintessential Israeli – counteracts that of the Jew of the Diaspora. The Sabra, 'the embodiment of his country's landscape' (Tchernichovsky, in Almog 2000), signifies the link between the Zionist ideology, the people and their land. It suggests that a homeland shapes both body and identity. The connection between territory and body, and between body and identity, is not one of containment but of mutual construction (Grosz 1992). Identity is constructed not as a cultural stipulation, but as a result of the bodily performance of rituals (Butler 1991).

The communal practices in Independence Park and at the Dolphinarium directly or indirectly challenge hegemonic Israeli masculinity by the same means deployed in its construction: territory and body. These practices are created and expressed through the bodily performance of deviant behaviour in space. The participants and audience around the circle of drummers are arranged as if in a theatre – actors, choir and audience. Each participant performs for several publics: for fellow drummers/dancers; for members of the opposite sex; and for a large crowd of spectators. The performance, enticing the participants to be overcome by the music, the sea and the moving semi-naked bodies of the other participants, is not based upon words, but upon music, body language, ecstasy and sexuality – all in a combination of African, Middle Eastern and Eastern cultures. The practices of Independence Park also contain theatrical elements. The body that cruises the paths of Independence Park is performing for potential partners. These performances include codes of dress, gestures of invitation and rejection and other non-verbal communication, creating a masculine language of which the body is the text (Gluzman 2000) that communicates several sub-identities within gay society.

The theatrical dimension of these practices most clearly shows the way in which these bodily performances construct space and are constructed by space. Goffman has emphasized the importance of specific sites to the performance of deviant behaviour. Specific settings, he explains, serve as ‘shields of involvement’, behind which individuals can safely perform actions that might lead to negative sanctions elsewhere (Goffman 1963).

The drummers chose to perform behind a deserted building that was used in the 1980s as a Dolphinarium. This single-storey curved building and its breakwater form an urban ‘end’ to the city both from the west (the sea) and from the south (Jaffa). Unlike much of the Tel Aviv shoreline, this site has unique features: the last breakwater adjacent to the Dolphinarium signifies the end of the Tel Aviv sandy beach, beyond which there are only rocks descending to the sea. Thus the site is a cul-de-sac formed by the Dolphinarium building, the breakwater and the sea. It surrounds the drummers’ performance and serves as a natural stage for the circle.

Independence Park is located on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean, to the north of the Hilton hotel. The erection of the Hilton Hotel in the middle of the park in the 1960s, causing the public to abandon the park, which had become a construction site, was an important element in the appropriation of the park by the gay community (Allweil 2006). The park was planned as a ‘wild’ English garden with thick greenery and curving paths. Its layout is open with few formal entrances, but there are many informal paths that allow sneaking in or out. It is elevated above street level by a few steps and physically detached from it by a screen of tall trees and bushes. The park’s location exposes its greenery to the harsh conditions of wind and salt and despite constant maintenance retains a ‘natural’, unsupervised character. Thick bushes conceal the interior from the street and shelter one section of the park from another, making it ideal for cruising.



Independence Park, Tel Aviv, after dark (photograph: Hana Sahar).

The drummers played an important role in putting the Dolphinarium beach on the map. While it was previously considered a marginal leftover site, it is now recognized as a focal point, named 'the Drum Beach' after the community. The drummers identified the site's yin-yang (sea-land, man-woman) typology and transformed its spatial movement. It now revolves around the drumming circle and spreads centripetally, tying this marginal 'end' to the city. The gradual recognition of this site also produced a gradual reorientation towards the old, Arab, step-sister city of Jaffa on the other side of the Dolphinarium beach. This is expressed in the present plans of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality to extend the Tel Aviv promenade over this border zone all the way to Jaffa.

Although the gay community chose Independence Park for its physical features, the community's everyday activities within it highly contribute to the park's current structure. The cruising practices reinforce the curving of the paths and construct 'caves' in the bushes that are used for courtship and sex. Certain parts of the park (a large sculpture, public toilet and a gardening shed) were refashioned for sexual encounters. The activity of many people in the park generates waste and has exacerbated its dilapidated character. However, the most important 'urban design' generated by the gay community in the park is its construction as a lacuna of homosexuality within heterosexual space (Hirsh 2005).

The bottom-up identification and 'design' of the sites and their presence within the open-to-all public space is first of all a quotidian, infra-political one, almost unconsciously introducing a deviant cultural practice. That

same practice can have, however, at the same time, an explicitly political bearing. This political charge these enclaves of cultural deviation might have is very evident when they surround the struggle that specific groups put up to preserve the heterotopian character of their physical strongholds, opposing the forces that wish to return them to the hegemonic practices of the hegemonic cultural codes. In such instances, the presence of heterotopia, we believe, is not only performative and infra-political, but becomes explicitly political, challenging hegemony by exposing its inability to eliminate these pockets of otherness.

As the functional and aesthetic features of the sites participate in the choreography of the performing homosexual and drumming bodies, they become the object of the municipal authorities' attempts to regulate these subversive bodies and restrict their use of space. In 1998 a municipal plan to 'renovate' Independence Park, including a restaurant and a promenade, would have driven the homosexual community away, returning the site to the general public (Mualem-Doron 1998). Strong objections by the homosexual community, other citizens and various organizations brought the plan to a halt. The municipality subsequently turned to specific measures, such as the installation of stronger lighting and the cutting down of dense greenery. The Dolphinarium's location at the edge of the promenade is perceived by the municipality as an obstruction to its plans for the extension of the coast walk from north Tel Aviv to the south of Jaffa. The plans include removal of the privately owned Dolphinarium. The municipality encouraged the exchange of the Dolphinarium site for public land across the street, to make room for the construction of two residential towers, keeping the waterfront free for the promenade and eliminating the unsupervised drummers' site in the process.

The visibility of the 'public-space heterotopia' makes it a political power base. The homo-lesbian community in Israel zealously protects the territory of Independence Park (Blanc 2003; Hirsh 2005). The importance of the park is rooted in the community's self image as informal – one whose recognition and acceptance by hegemonic institutions is fragile. Gay cruising operated along the Tel Aviv beach till the 1960s in a territory-less, fairly unnoticed manner. Only upon the appropriation of the territory of Independence Park in the 1960s did the municipal and national hegemony become aware of the gay presence, gradually accepting it.

The drummers refused for years to recognize the significance of the site for their performance and identity due to their self-identification as 'non-established', thereby accepting the theoretical stance that identifies space and establishment (de Certeau 1984). Decisions regarding the site were taken with no consideration of its importance to their subculture. However, following the erection of a mega-bar on their site in the summer of 2006, the drummers launched a campaign to win over public opinion to support the protection of their site.

## Conclusion

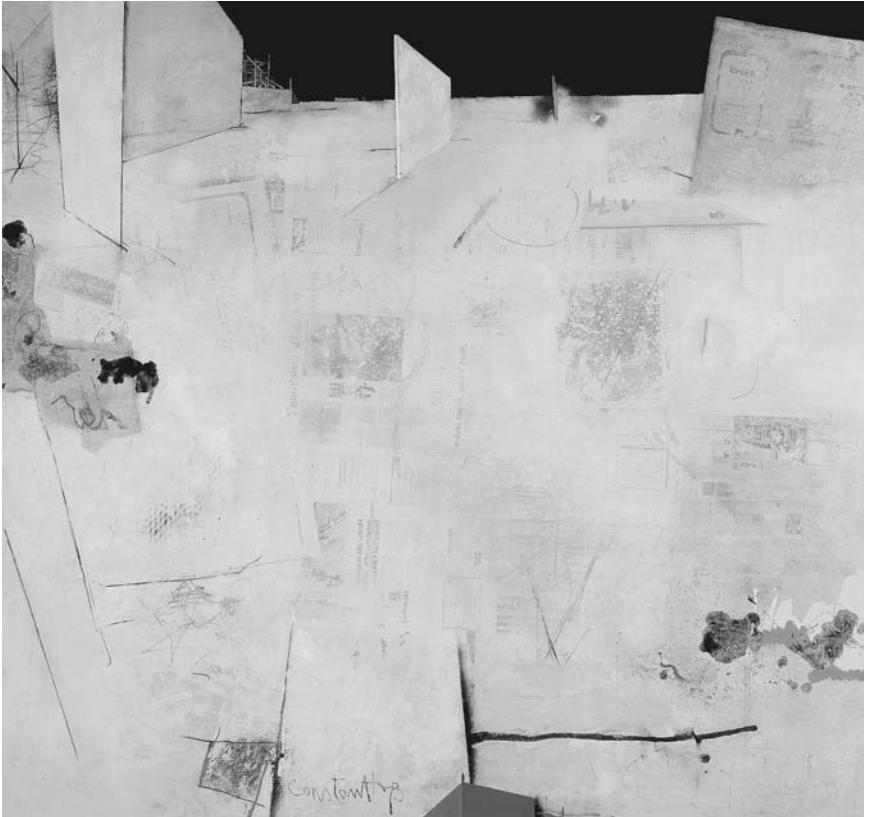
The heterotopias identified by Foucault are mostly physical and constrain the agents of change they contain. Public-space heterotopias, in contrast, support the possibility of social change. Foucault's notion of heterotopia can be extended to include public-space heterotopias, which can be understood as a spatial interpretation of Gramsci's enclaves of resistance. The potential for social change clearly lies in heterotopias that are part of the urban fabric and not detached from it. This potential lies dormant in Foucault's own closing image in 'Of other spaces' (1997), in which he evokes the ship as the stronghold of cultural regeneration: 'in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates'. Being 'a floating piece of space . . . without a place', the ship's ability to touch shore, in the West and in the colonies, produced a dramatic change in both. Along with the wealth and the goods they were designed to carry, the ships also carried the subversive charge of other cultures and people. The ability of the ship to affect society is released when it touches shore – either at the home port or in some distant culture – and organizes a moment of diffusion and affectation.

Public-space heterotopias such as those operating on the Tel Aviv shoreline are both infinitely weaker and stronger in their capacity to affect society. The subversive character of their charge is constantly exposed to the forces outside and does not enjoy the protection of a strong vessel. However, the simple spatial fact that they are constantly in contact with the surrounding general culture gives public-space heterotopias a latent but constant ability to affect and be affected by society. The lack of clear boundaries between the urban heterotopias and the city's everyday lived experience allows for continual exchanges of people and ideas. Hence, Independence Park and the Dolphinarium site are in a position to stage a constant challenge to Israeli masculinity and its hegemonic grip on social values and current power relations.

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*Terrain Vague II* (Constant Nieuwenhuys, 1972).

# **‘... those marvellous empty zones at the edge of cities’**

## **Heterotopia and the ‘dead zone’**

*Gil Doron*

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Foucault’s ‘Of other spaces’ is groundless. Or at least it aspires to be. This is not a critique but a descriptive observation. Like Borges’s ‘certain Chinese encyclopaedia’, Foucault ‘does away with the site, the mute ground upon which it is possible for entities to be juxtaposed’ (1970: xviii). This ‘disappearance’ of the ground, of the opposite and opposing site, of a dichotomous categorization, is not coincidental. The other, or difference, as he asserts a few years later, ‘can only be liberated through the invention of an a-categorical thought’ (1977: 186). Yet, as ‘we do not live in a sort of a vacuum’ (Foucault 1997: 351), the ground, like an iceberg under the ship, does surface here and there. The ground is the desert, buried but always threatening to reappear and cover the Persian Garden; it is the floor that is always creaking beneath the carpet; it is the ‘void’ on the maps that the colonies fill up; it is the building, emptied of space and filled by the simulacra; and it is the empty zone at the edge of cities that is taken over by the fair (Foucault 1997).

As far as I can tell, these spaces and their relation to heterotopia have been overlooked in the prolific discussion about Foucault’s heterotopia. In this chapter I would like to take you on a journey to these grounds, to these ostensibly empty zones. It will be a journey to the margins from where the heterotopia as well as the modern and contemporary city can be re-examined.

### **Vague, dead and blank**

The term ‘dead zone’ covers an array of names that have been used by architects, planners and theoreticians to indicate the same or similar urban and non-urban spaces. Some of these terms are: wasteland, derelict area, terrain vague, conceptual Nevada, urban desert, vacant land, space of uncertainty, free space, nameless space, white area, blank space, temporary autonomous zone, ellipsis space, space of indeterminacy, brown fields, liminal space, no man’s land and urban void. The multiplicity of names, and some of their meanings, show the difficulty in defining those spaces (Doron 2006a).



I have been using the term ‘dead zone’ (translated from Hebrew), which was taken from planners’ jargon and more specifically from a discussion about a regeneration plan that will be mentioned below, to indicate a gap, if not a total break, between the signifier and the signified. Unlike the other terms, the words ‘dead’ and ‘zone’ should always be understood in inverted commas. Of course it is inconceivable to portray a geographical entity, an area, as dead. Yet, I will also show that the qualities of this ‘dead’ space cannot be zoned or delimited and that they are not bounded to this or that locale. I will argue that these ‘dead zones’ have been conjured up and used by the hegemony for political, social and economic ends.

The difficulty in theorizing these spaces lies in the impossibility of defining them empirically. Take for example the fickle definition of the category of derelict land in the National Land Use Database (NLUD) in the UK. The NLUD identified derelict land as ‘Land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment’ (Harrison 2006: 42). This definition does not clarify what ‘beneficial use’ is, and to whom the use is beneficial. A report made for the government indicated that: ‘Estimates of the amount of contaminated land in England vary considerably depending on the definitions used. In its report the Urban Task Force quoted estimates ranging from an area the size of Manchester to one bigger than Greater London (between 50,000 and 200,000 hectares).’ More important, the report indicates that ‘[m]uch of this land is only contaminated at a low level and is still in use. Relatively little of it is available for redevelopment . . .’ (Urban Task Force 2000). Yet the fantasies about solving the UK housing crisis on exactly this land are running high. Similarly, another report on the subject was more blatant, declaring that dereliction ‘remains to some extent a matter for subjective judgment’ (Naabarro *et al.* 1980: 11).

Various studies on the issue in the UK and the USA have shown that dereliction in many cases is created and maintained for speculative reasons, therefore it cannot be conceived as waste. Furthermore, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment’s study on the issue argued that some developers will even make a site look shoddier than it is, as ‘there’s a better chance of gaining planning permission. The council will concede that anything has to be better than this’ (CABE 2003).

‘Those marvellous empty zones at the edge of cities’ (Foucault 1997: 355) have never been empty. Omitted from many of these empirical reports and theoretical texts is the fact that most of these *terrains vagues* have been populated by marginalized communities and that they have certain physical and non-physical qualities that are unique to them. These places also present history (rather than represent it), foster creativity and nourish the aesthetics of ruins; they are a habitat for wildlife and plants, places in which the body has to adapt to its environment rather than being cuddly choked by its surroundings. In short, these zones are a space of suspension, of solitude and silence within the bustling cities, sites that are a viable alternative to the heterotopian public space (Borret 1999; Doron 2000; Edensor 2005).

## Colonizing the void

In 1996 the planning team of the Tel Aviv municipality introduced a new plan for an area at the edge of downtown Tel Aviv, a new park between the city and the sea. This area, known as the Ha'Yarkon Estuary, hadn't been developed since the 1930s, though some marginal functions took place in the dilapidated buildings that were scattered around. When presenting the new plan for the area to the local council, the planners called the area a 'dead zone'. However, the area comprised remnants of a Palestinian fishermen's village, ruins of a small fortress from the Roman era, dilapidated structures and warehouses that were built in the 1930s to house an international fair, and sports grounds. The area was being used for various activities such as rave parties, bonfires, fishing, sex, graffiti art and as a popular film location (Doron 2000, 2007). The municipal plan included office towers, shops, a marina and an affluent holiday village.

While the planners portrayed the area as a void, the city authorities were trying to evict a descendant of one of the Palestinian fishermen, who was claiming back the family hut and had opened a small café in it. The treatment of this area as a *tabula rasa* – as a way to prompt its easy and smooth redevelopment – recalls the depiction of the present-day Tel Aviv area as a desert, and the perception of Palestine as a wilderness by the Zionist movement as a way to prompt their colonization at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: 'to European eyes, Turkish Palestine was an empty landscape, one that invited Herzl and other Europeans to fill it' (Troen 2003: 91; LeVine 2005). Moreover, on these places of weak or soft identity, politically complex and with no determined borders (Nevada 1977), a well-defined, exclusionary, contradistinctive identity has been imposed (Rotband 2005). Nonetheless, Palestinian land, people and ruins have survived underneath this imposition. Hence, it can be argued that both Tel Aviv and the Jewish state are realized utopias.

The depiction of the pre-colonized space as a void is not unique to the Zionist case, but rather is the logic and strategy of all colonization. In *Colonizing the Void*, Hans van Dijk speculates that: 'As far as I am aware, no one has ever written a cultural history of the void. But it would coincide to a large extent with that of colonialism' (van Dijk and Feddes 1996: 46). Similarly, Bauman asserts that the colonies were the 'no man's land territories fit to be defined and/or treated as void of human habitation as well as devoid of sovereign administration – and thus open to clamouring for . . . colonization and settlement' (2004: 5). On a more conceptual level, Bhabha argues that the void or the *tabula rasa* was

necessary to the emergence of modernity – as an ideology of beginning, modernity as the new – the template of this 'non-place' becomes the colonial space. The colonial space is the *terra incognita* or the *terra nulla*, the empty or wasted land whose history has to be begun.

(Bhabha 1994: 352)

When 'The Colonized space turned out to be less empty than the European adventurers thought' (van Dijk and Feddes 1996: 10), this space had to be regulated in order to distinguish the natives from the colonizers and to fortify both groups' identities.

These days I would argue that extensive heterotopian space is, among other issues, a xenophobic response to what is perceived as reverse colonization, and the battleground is concentrated in Western cities (Bhabha 1994). In the case of Ha'Yarkon Estuary, however, the planned erasure of the Palestinian fishermen's village corresponds to the fear of the return of the repressed rather than to a new immigration. Furthermore, the utilization of an imaginary void by the municipal planners concealed the present state of the site, making it possible to propose just anything on this alleged *tabula rasa*. Similar cases have been observed in the gentrification of Lower East Manhattan (Smith 1996), in the redevelopment of Amsterdam's old port (van Dijk and Feddes 1996: 10), and in the restructuring of the centres of Rotterdam and Berlin.

## The Zone

The dead zone, like heterotopia, has probably existed throughout history. It is the space that is neither sacred nor everyday; for example, the outer courtyard of the Temple in Jerusalem, which is a threshold to the holy of holies, yet is inhabited by money changers, vendors and beggars (Gospel according to St John, 2: 12–25). It was the place of the renegade, the grounds beyond the city's walls where the enemies were buried (Rose 1996). It was the boundary itself, the threshold, the wall that accommodated Rehab the whore and led to the literal opening of Jericho and to the inclusion of a prostitute within the Israelites' camp (Book of Joshua, 2 and 6).

A more recent historical example of such an edge space, and specifically the space that lies beyond a wall, was the Zone on the outskirts of nineteenth-century Paris. This no man's land of Paris fortifications became populated by thousands of people whose homes had been demolished by Hausmann's neo-classical restructuring of Paris and by farmers who were drawn to employment in the redeveloping city but could not afford to live inside it. I would say that this place was created by the excess and residue of emplacement. This population of mainly rag pickers were known as *zoniers*. More than just a residential place, this 'ring of ragged wasteland just outside of the city was the working class's nature, their trysting ground, their countryside, their park' (Nesbit 1992: 190). The Zone was abolished and its inhabitants were evicted during the Vichy government. As part of the 'Renaissance of Paris', a green belt was proposed to replace it (Wakeman 2004). Most of the information about the Zone was obtained from Atget's photography. Although the Zone was populated, Atget concentrated on the *zoniers* in one album and in a separate album (the fortification of Paris) on the physical and atmospheric (symbolical) qualities of the space without

showing its populace (Nesbit 1992). Therefore the Zone, observed only from the distant and distancing view of the latter album, seemed to be empty, as it was in the eyes of the Parisian bourgeoisie. And indeed, when the new plans for this area were proposed, the *zoniers* were overlooked by the planning authorities (Nesbit 1992). The Zone has its equivalent today: the shanty towns at the edge of South American, Asian and African cities, slums or what is left of city quarters after much of the population has left (Chicago Maxwell Street, Manhattan Lower East Side, downtown Detroit) and *terrains vagues* on the edges of European cities, which were found to be inhabited by homeless immigrants as I documented in Rome and Antwerp (Doron 2007). These places, like the Zone, are rarely empty but, as in the case of Ha'Yarkon Estuary, they have been portrayed as empty (and often as transgressive and dangerous) for economic, social and political reasons (Smith 1996). What makes these places stand in opposition to both the space of emplacement and the space of the heterotopia are indeed their intrinsic qualities, such as the diffuse boundaries between public and private, the relative lack of formal regulation and so forth, but even more so the way they are viewed and portrayed by hegemonic culture.

### **The dead zone as a product of emplacement (zoning)**

Foucault's 'space of emplacement', which I equal to zoning, has a fundamental role in the creation of the heterotopia as well as in the genesis of the dead zone. Ordering, separating and segmenting the urban landscape leaves gaps between the zones of activity. These gaps have no planned function, and are often of irregular form – for example the spaces between the industrial park and the residential neighbourhood, empty car parks, edges of shopping malls, spaces between tower blocks, between lines of transportation (highways and railways), at the edge of highways, under bridges and at river banks, and parks at night, pavements and so on. Some of these spaces can be perceived as dead zones only during certain times of the day or the year – thus temporality is another key aspect in the creation of such zones.

These spaces are difficult to utilize by the common means of planning and architecture for various reasons: they might be physically demanding, not easily accessible, too small or of irregular shape, with tricky ownership rights, not lucrative, with other regular usage at some part of the day that might be in discord with other suggested usages, and so on. These places, 'left empty', are opened to unplanned activities and unofficial communities. From this perspective they have been places of transgression in two ways: as spaces that cannot be utilized by hegemonic culture and as spaces of minority groups.

I believe that many architects during the 1960s and 1970s sensed the potential of spaces devoid of programme and form. As non-utilitarian spaces, they opposed the capitalist society and even more so the architectural profession, the notion of design and production and as such they were spaces of resistance. For example, the Situationists reproduced such spaces

by cutting out parts in the Naked City map. These were not Corbusian *tabula rasa* gestures, although they can be depicted as a satirical critique and an escape. They cut out from the map the places they had been drifting through (their famous *dérives*); they erased their own traces; they sabotaged the cartographic project and the production of knowledge. Constant's New Babylon reflected this as well – hovering over 'empty' white space. This 'white surface [was] no longer a neutral ground for a drawing. It [was] the drawn ground itself' (De Zegher and Wigley 2001: 45). Similarly, the wilderness is the ground for Archigram's Walking Cities and the void for Libeskind's City Edge.

As architects, they all knew, even before Marcuse and Tafuri, that, no matter how fast their cities walk, when realized or even fully conceptualized they would not be able to escape the hegemonic social and economic constraints of capitalist and conservative society. Superstudio post-1968 expressed these concerns by declaring that the sole purpose of their megastructure projects was to free space. The key to megastructures was not the utopian vision but the patches of wilderness around them. With the current polite yet firm colonization of every patch of wasteland, one yearns for Superstudio's dystopian dreams.

For better or for worse, the megastructure did not inherit the land but the morphology of the closed and autonomous structure surrounded by open and undefined space. It became the landscape of many cities. This new urbanism breaks the centrifugal grid system and transforms it into a system of a fundamentally closed pattern of organization in an open space (Pope 1996). Boeri sees this new urbanism, which he refers to as 'diffused city', as a heterotopian landscape (1993: 124). In this landscape the undefined open spaces are equally important to the closed and built space: they are not 'the peripheries of the closed', but spaces that are often characterized by 'openness and multiple uses' (1993: 124).

## The post-industrial zone

Another type of dead zone is encountered in the post-industrial city. The dead zone replaced many nineteenth-century sites of production, storage and transportation such as factories, slaughterhouses, warehouses, old harbours and train yards, train lines, and quarries and mines on the outskirts of the city. However, the scale and location of the zones vary. The zone can be other urban sites that have lost their original function or the original public they were created for: one can think of public telephone booths, public toilets, instant photo booths and, more generally, of various public spaces and even the pavement.

This type of dead zone can be on the scale of a single building to that of an entire city such as in the case of Detroit and some Eastern European cities (Oswalt 2005). All of these sites were created by the process of constructive destruction – the change in manufacturing technologies or in their geographical location. But rather than being removed and replaced,

they have been sustained, at least as far as the hegemonic power views, as empty, for various reasons – for land speculation, or because of a weak economy, changes in urban zoning, indecisiveness of the entrepreneur or the local planning authorities, etc. (Harvey 1989). These spaces are named ‘dead zones’ when the hegemony wishes to reuse them and confront the reality on the ground in which they were appropriated by marginal groups.

In addition to informal activities, these sites present a living history. In contrast to the mummified ruin, which is suspended outside time, these dilapidated structures are still making history (Buck-Morss 1991). They are also spaces of imagination. The zone’s ‘dead architecture’ losing its total image (physical as well as functional and symbolic) requires the operation of the imagination, if one wants to picture what was there before or what can be there after. Unrestored, the architectural ruins in themselves are the Chora of imagination. In this respect they have much in common with the eighteenth-century fabricated ruins and follies. The aesthetic of the ruins and the fragmented architecture sprang on the corpse of the megastructure, which was declared dead by Reyner Banham in his 1972 lecture ‘La Megastruttura é morta’ in what couldn’t be more of a symbolical place – Naples – a city that lives its ruins (Gilloch 1996).

Some of these architectural visions are, for example, Cedric Price’s Potteries Thinkbelt in Staffordshire – a university that was spread across, but did not colonize an industrial wasteland; the Re-Ruined Hiroshima project by Isozaki, which placed ‘a new ruin’ in nuclear no man’s land; and Ettore Sottass’s ‘The planet as festival: design of a roof to discuss under’, where the legendary Walking City and other monuments such as the Empire State Building are lying dilapidated and reclaimed by nature. A more concrete proposal that incorporates the void and the ruin can be found in much of Lebeus Woods’ work and more recently in the THINK team’s proposal for the World Trade Center. This last example, I would say, is the architectural design that comes closest to embodying the notion of the dead zone: on probably the most lucrative site on the globe, the THINK team suggested a structure that captured the state of the almost ruined and not yet built; they suggested a completely non-commercial project, in which 50 per cent had no programme and was used as a public space. If architecture can at all relate to the dead zone, this space is a place to start from.

## Dead zone versus heterotopia

For academics to be satisfied, it would be necessary, in effect, for the universe to take on a form. The whole of philosophy has no other aim; it is a question of fitting what exists into a frock-coat, a mathematical frock-coat. To affirm on the contrary that the universe resembles nothing at all and is only formless, amounts to saying that the universe is something akin to a spider or a gob of spittle.

(Bataille 1995)

The heterotopia and the dead zone, but this can be said of any space, are real spaces but also unreal as much as they are constructed and viewed via representational space. Therefore, taking into account the subject's position, it is tempting to think about the heterotopia as a place that is seen/created from the Other, unreal side of the mirror – looking at the real, while the dead zone is constructed from the real side of the mirror looking at unreal space and imagining nothingness. This vampire image, in which the subject is erased because it can no longer substantiate itself upon the Other, is one of the sources of anxiety the dead zone engenders (de Sola-Morales Rubio 1995; Doron 2006b). Nonetheless, since the dead zone does exist, even as mere atopia or liminal space, I will now try to measure it step by step, on the basis of Foucault's definitions of the heterotopia.

First principle: if heterotopia and the modern space of organization exist everywhere, so does the dead zone that is their residue and at times their grounds (cause). In my research I have documented such areas in 21 cities in Europe, America and Asia (Doron 2000). Moreover, as identified by other writers, these dead zones also exist in the countryside, in the suburbs and in the urban sprawl (Boeri 1993; Pope 1996).

Second principle: unlike the heterotopia, the dead zone has not changed in content throughout history. Some dead zone sites acquired different activities or communities, but generally speaking they have always been sites of transgression and excess – imagined or real. The excessive element could have been the residue (human or other) created by other spaces (localization, emplacement, heterotopian), but it could also have been the void – an excess of nothingness. Seen as such, the dead zone as the heterotopia has a 'precise and well-defined function within society', although it rarely has been recognized and is often denied.

Third principle: although 'the heterotopia has the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other' (Foucault 1997: 354), the examples Foucault gives (the garden, the carpet, the theatre and the cinema, the colony) show that one component clearly dominates the other, sometimes to a degree that the heterotopia becomes homogenized (Genocchio 1995). Yet the heterotopia can tolerate or has, without being aware of it, dead zones – but not vice versa. Many heterotopian spaces, such as shopping malls, cinemas, hotels, gardens, holiday villages and gated communities, contain some blind spots, some openings either spatial or behavioural, some activities that were not planned to take place there. Although these transgressions occur, like de Certeau's tactics, they do not threaten the entire structure of the heterotopia (de Certeau 1984). However, while the dead zone can subsist within the heterotopia, the heterotopia cannot exist within the dead zone, merely for the fact that the dead zone does not have fixed boundaries. When heterotopia intervenes within what seemingly is a dead zone, it either takes it over or pushes it aside: as with the colonies, the garden in the desert, the fair in the 'empty' spaces and so on.

Fourth principle: in heterotopia, time is accumulated in a timeless space (museums, libraries) or is a cyclical time (of celebrations). In both cases the divine is present. The dead zone is where time is singular and particular;



*The Dead Zone & the Architecture of Transgression – Photography Project (1998–2006 collage, Gil Doron, available online at [www.gilmdoron.com](http://www.gilmdoron.com)).*

it is profane and everyday. Yet, this time-space is experienced only from within the dead zone. From the outside this space (like the pre-colonized space (Bhabha 1994)) is seen as devoid of time; a place whose time is yet to come. Therefore the dead zone always exists between two unsynchronized time frames.

Fifth principle: as opposed to the heterotopia, which is exclusionary (even if at times it looks open), the dead zone is symptomatically open, although at times entering there is ‘at your own risk’.



Sixth principle: I have indicated before that both the dead zone and the heterotopia are at once illusionary space and real space. However, while the heterotopian space of illusion ‘reveals how all real space is more illusionary’, the dead zone imaginary aims to conceal ‘all the locations within which life is fragmented’. And while heterotopias ‘have the function of forming another space, another real space, as perfect, meticulous and well-arranged’ (Foucault 1997: 356), the dead zone creates the exact opposite. It is a site in which the residue of the heterotopian space is dispersed.

Indeed, it is tempting to see the dead zone as standing in opposition to the heterotopia of illusion and of compensation or actually being the true Other of any heterotopia. Yet, ironically, in a heterotopian world, the dead zone, while becoming the Other space, is being constructed, recently by more and more theoreticians and architects, as a space that compensates everything that heterotopia lacks. And there is always danger here. On the white sheet that covers the zone’s decomposing body, various projections take place, some right now, and not without violence:

When architecture and urban design project their desire onto a vacant space, a terrain vague, they seem incapable of doing anything other than introducing violent transformations, changing estrangements into citizenship, and striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated magic of the obsolete in the efficacy.

(de Sola-Morales Rubio 1995: 121)

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Stills sequence of the video *Trespassing* by Aldo Innocenzi (Stalker, 1997). Architecture reduced to performance: instead of making walls, jumping over them. Urban activism as anthropological fieldwork and emancipatory transgression.

# Stalker *unbounded*

## Urban activism and the *terrain vague* as heterotopia by default

Peter Lang

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A new, more finely fragmented social order – a super-industrial order – is emerging. It is based on many more diverse and short-lived components than any previous social system – and we have not yet learned how to link them together, how to integrate the whole.

(Toffler 1970)

### Orphan worlds

If Toffler recognized, back in 1970, the impossibility of overtaking what he perceived to be a swiftly catalysing technological surge propelling unprecedented cultural change, he could barely have foreseen just how much more indeterminate the world would become following the final exhaustion, at the end of the 1980s, of the US–Soviet conflict. The collapse in 1989 of a political entente premised on mutually assured destruction and the subsequent desegregation of a tenuous set of confrontational global alliances ultimately provoked severe and unpredictable reactions that led to the disintegration of an already fragile network of geopolitical relations. Released from decades of US–Soviet political and economic subjugation, numerous countries seized the chance to engage in a massive geopolitical correction. Political scores were settled, often through violent means; new political alliances were forged or old ones abandoned; governments were reversed if not otherwise deposed. And in the midst of all this thousands of refugees moved perilously across borders, waterways, mountain passes and war zones.

Before 1989 one could already witness the strains of overcrowded shanty towns, degraded housing estates and major ecological disasters. But in the massive human scramble following the collapse of the post-war US–Soviet entente, the political wildfires, the collapsing frontiers, the massive population movements and effects of global warming irrevocably transformed the present landscape. The first discernible patterns within this paradigm shift pointed to a new form of global society, unrestricted by national boundaries or regional frontiers, but compromised by its access to communication and

travel networks. The outcome would, as Zygmunt Bauman already observed in 1998, engender ‘two worlds, two perceptions of the world, two strategies’ (1998: 100). Bauman posited the following paradox:

[T]his postmodern reality of the deregulated/privatized/consumerist world, the globalizing/localizing world, finds only a pale, one-sided and grossly distorted reflection in the postmodernist narrative. The hybridization and defeat of essentialisms proclaimed by the postmodernist eulogy of the ‘globalizing’ world are far from conveying the complexity and sharp contradictions tearing that world apart.

(Bauman 1998: 101)

There remains a vast arena that, according to Bauman, is not critically recognized:

Postmodernism, one of the many possible accounts of postmodern reality, merely articulates a caste-bound experience of the globals – the vociferous, highly audible and influential, yet relatively narrow category of exterritorials and globetrotters. It leaves unaccounted for and unarticulated other experiences, which are also an integral part of the postmodern scene.

(Bauman 1998: 101)

It is this other arena of our global society, these neglected communities and their everyday struggles for survival, that is in fact the critical force in the current global chain of events. Confronted with growing waves of refugees, the industrialized nations, despite their clear dependence on these migrant groups to augment their local labour pools, began tightening their borders and expelling these so-called ‘undocumented’ populations. But notwithstanding stiffening governmental policies that sought to harden frontiers and seal off waterways, masses of refugees continued to penetrate across national borders, moving towards areas of economic privilege. Such draconian policies of containment, seeking to repel the growing foreign presence, ultimately forced these transient communities into an underground network of non-sanctioned relations: prostitution, black-market economy and other illegal activities.

But what if this human face of globalization holds the best chance for society’s future advancement? What can we make of these new population mixes and their creative contributions to contemporary society? The increasing presence of what are considered in Europe *extracommunitari* – the growing numbers of legal and ‘illegal’ immigrants finding work and refuge within and around some of the major urban centres of Europe in the course of the last dozen years – has undeniably led to major changes in the urban fabric. These communities have introduced much-needed diversity and

economic stimuli, while extending and consolidating communications networks that connect across the globe. Athens, Rome, Barcelona, Paris, Berlin and London have become increasingly multicultural and multi-ethnic, reflecting the massive influx of populations that have made their way to Europe from all over the world: from Africa, the Mediterranean, Central Europe, the Near East and Oceania. Just as importantly, these cities have become inextricably linked with the far-flung peripheral areas, through new air corridors, electronic trade and overseas transportation links.

In short, these growing communities are bringing a new generation of life to the city, maybe coming closest to reflecting a genuinely heterogeneous transformation in contemporary society's basic make-up. These new communities represent an uncertain future and one that cannot be easily charted according to earlier working methods. Quite on the contrary, many of the lessons on urbanism, planning and city architecture accrued over the last century were developed based on an entirely different political paradigm: it was occidental in principle, privileging national identity, defending national interests, promoting imperial gains. If there were also lofty interpretations of democratic ideals and human self-determination, few nations succeeded in sustaining such worthwhile humanistic goals consistently, given society's proclivity towards extreme forms of xenophobic nationalism. What is new and refreshing, after 1989, in the aftermath of 'globalization', is the gradual realization that the local is now part of the global, that national interests are related to transnational systems and that the environment is an inherently global condition outside any single country's partial interests.

David Harvey grasped this quandary when he recognized that new means and methods would be required to tease out the true nature of these worlds that exist tucked away within the city's extensive urban fabric:

We may also seek to represent the way this space is emotively and affectively as well as materially lived by means of poetic images, photographic compositions, artistic reconstructions. The strange spatio-temporality of a dream, a fantasy, a hidden longing, a lost memory or even a peculiar thrill or tingle of fear as we walk down a street can be given representation through the works of art that ultimately always have a mundane presence in absolute space and time.

(Harvey 2006: 131)

## **Re-education**

In the spring of 1990, sparked by the Italian government's heavy-handed attempts to privatize higher education, several of Stalker's future members reacted by organizing a series of highly effective student agitations at the School of Architecture at Valle Giulia. The revolt against outside intervention in the universities rapidly spread from one end of the country to the other.

These student demonstrations, teach-ins, street spectacles and art actions echoed the ‘revolutionary’ (or by their real nature, ‘involutionary’) events that spread from Beijing to Bucharest during the tumultuous months of 1989. In Italy, geographically proximate to some of the more turbulent zones in political transition, these transformations were brought even closer to home, as waves of refugees began to reach the southern coasts of the peninsula by boat.

The student occupation of the universities, propelled by the previous year’s momentous upheavals, succeeded in radicalizing a generation of students who could no longer willingly accept the usual academic indoctrination. Within the schools of architecture, a veritable process of re-education ensued, whereby students took upon themselves the task of self-instruction, opening their perspectives on more eclectic disciplines of learning. ‘Architecture’ as a practice would be released from its elite self-referential framework and steered towards a more inclusive condition open to change and mutation. For this loose band of student activists, they took it upon themselves to formulate alternative working strategies by testing them in areas outside the familiar realms of the traditional city.

Before this group of individuals came to assume the name ‘Stalker’, a nominative acquired in the lead-up to their founding hike across Rome’s abandoned landscapes, they had already put together an ad hoc working practice, built as a multi-talented collective and geared towards the regeneration of urban sites left fallow in the heart of the city. These early projects, really a series of staged events assembled to attract public attention to sites in the city that had virtually disappeared from the catalogue of popular urban spaces, provided precious experience in the creation and management of alternative approaches to these strangely unfamiliar cityscapes. These early actions would in themselves constitute an ‘architecture’ of organized experiences, forging experimental methods to probe specific territorial conditions, through exploration, documentation and temporary habitation.

Francesco Careri, one of the founders of Stalker and a principle proponent of the ‘Walk about Rome’ project, discussed in an interview with Maurice Fréchuret the association of the name Stalker to this unusual expedition:

So why the name Stalker? Because the first important action for us was the *Tour de Rome* during which we understood that something was in the process of being elaborated . . . In Rome the project consisted in traversing the city’s empty spaces, spaces that one doesn’t normally see and where another life carries on unnoticed. This is what we designate as *actual territory* because what occurs there is always *hic et nunc*, in the here and now. We prepared the Walk about Rome for a year, discussing with our friends what we wished to do – a camping tour of Rome – and there was a friend who told us about Tarkovsky’s film that you perhaps know, and in which the stalker is the guide to

a territory, that is, someone who knows how to go over walls, who knows of openings through barriers, and who certainly knows how to walk in a mutant space. For this is a space that is probably of interest to the extraterrestrials; the nature of this space is therefore mutant, one doesn't really know what happens there, it could be dangerous, one must never proceed on a straight line from A to B but rather always advance by way of detours and find a *modus operandi*, and this is how things finally transpired on our tour: the name Stalker was thus adopted by us without our having seen the film. Sometimes people assume that we are fans of the Russian director, and hence the name. Later, we came to understand what this meant, and after having seen most of Tarkovsky's films, we came to recognize ourselves in him.

(Fréchuret 2004: 28)

In effect the most significant aspect in the group's investigations throughout the 1990s was the way in which the subject of their research, the sites of abandonment that were so attractive to the group's project on Rome, contributed to shaping the group's philosophy and organization. Each of their successive actions in and around the capital, focusing on areas of abandonment within the city and along the river Tiber, succeeded in further galvanizing their fieldwork tactics.

By the time Stalker set out to explore the surrounding marginal territories around Rome in October 1995, the city's population was surging and urban development was expanding towards the outermost ring highway then under construction. The group plotted out a specific four-day itinerary with resupply stops and roughly delineated areas for night camping. The walk was scribed around Rome in such a way as to never really penetrate into the city's hard concrete fabric. Instead, throughout the entire time, Stalker kept walking through abandoned areas, destitute properties, *terrains vagues*, partly completed underground tunnels, upturned roadways. The group jumped walls, crawled under fences, scraped past bushes and crossed waterways. This was a descent into the deep folds of Rome's least-known urban territories, yet at times only minutes walk from heavily populated city intersections. The walk signalled the initiation of a different response towards viewing urban territory; something that would later be characterized by Lorenzo Romito, another of the original Stalkers, and Francesco Careri, as a radically different kind of perceptive attitude:

Stalker is not a group, but an open interrelated system in a state of becoming that is understood through the process itself of coming into place, an event set off by, with or around Stalker. It is a subject that is utilized to catalyze creative phenomena to produce places, environments and situations that are auto-organizing.

(Careri and Romito 2005: 226)



Stalker intentionally sought to construct an experiential passage that would refute classic architectural and urban precedents, that would establish new advances in conceptual artistic practices, and perhaps most significantly that would not intervene where local conditions would be most transient and fragile. The group was determined to forge a different kind of architectural discourse, clearly outside the stringent canons of the Italian architectural academia, that had well into the late 1980s focused on tightly bound formalist, postmodern definitions of architecture and the city. Instead the group drew closer to the pioneers of contemporary art, integrating lessons from the Surrealists, the International Situationists and the American Land Artists – specifically Richard Long and Robert Smithson; as well as recognizing the pioneering works of a number of Italian film directors who set their narratives in the Roman peripheries, such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Flaminia Genari, a young independent art critic, recorded an interview with the group Stalker on the terrace of a private house in Testaccio, Rome in June 1996. She succeeded in pointing out several key issues in their work that would prophetically define Stalker's future trajectory. Present at the interview that day were Lorenzo Romito, Francesco Careri, Romolo Ottaviani, Aldo Innocenzi, Giovanna Ripepi and several others who participated in the 'Walk about Rome' in October 1995. Over the course of the interview it would become increasingly apparent that the group took up the idea of the walk as an extreme gesture of defiance: primarily against the complacent attitude prevalent in schools of architecture at the time, which considered the urban voids of the city as nothing more than blank spaces on the map, isolated in space and time. In the excerpt from the interview below, Genari is probing the group's attitude on an alternative territorial experience.

*Flaminia Genari:* From projecting spaces to perceiving them, has this been for you a means of placing yourselves in front of these spaces, these territories that were different from the usual ones you were taught about?

*Lorenzo Romito:* We changed the object to be experienced: no longer that which we wanted to make but that which was there, that is what really changed our approach to the object. What could we possibly do? Why would we, from wherever we came from, have the right to do whatever crap over there, when in reality there were already in act a quantity of situations, complex, beautiful, fascinating. We couldn't just erase from inside our house something just because for misfortune or laziness we would have to go and verify what is a space?

*Flaminia Genari:* That is this thing of perceiving space as a heterotopia, and to put oneself in its midst like immersing oneself in the sense

of loss that it might give you. To find places by looking at them from the inside, it's a thing I find really interesting. I am thinking about what would happen next, that which would happen in your production of wherever it was that you would be. I see a very precarious equilibrium, and maybe for this reason very fertile between cognitive experience, from the geography of abandoned forms, mapping these voids, and the creative experience. That which I can't properly visualize is the type of objects and actions that you want to produce. In short it seems to me that the nodes that you pull from this are fundamental, but I don't understand how you are thinking of communicating these or you are thinking of defining them, given that the public and visibility are things that interest you so much.

*Aldo Innocenzi:* Well, we don't want to produce anything, its enough that we have found these unconsciously produced landscapes. We have perceived them, crossed them, testified about them and we prefer that they remain as they are. The theme of production we haven't yet confronted in these terms, because we don't know what we want to produce. Our production is the event, the discovery of new territories.

(Genari 1995)

Genari's interview navigated through the genesis of the Roman walk, touching upon issues that ranged from the group's instigative university education to their growing resistance to any kind of on-site intervention, from architectural project to art event; and that eventually led them to withdraw entirely from any kind of 'action' that would leave traces on the city's marginalized territories. Stalker's principal ideological stance, against any form of indiscriminate intervention in or on these neglected urban spaces, evolved over time, gelling through a series of earlier experiments – not all necessarily fruitful, but nonetheless through a process that was enriched by the dynamically different individual attitudes brought together in this one loosely defined collective.

The walk reflected a significant aspect of the group's approach to abandoned territories, but it was precisely this attitude of deep engagement in the subject itself that continued to reverberate through Stalker's formative methodology. Stalker was in constant metamorphosis, absorbing and re-adjusting to a variety of unexpected experiences and becoming in the process transformed by them. This evolutionary process became a fundamental aspect laid out in the *Stalker Manifesto*:

Actual Territories' constitute the built city's negative, the interstitial and the marginal, spaces abandoned or in the process of transformation. These are the removed *lieu de la memoirs*, the unconscious becoming

of the urban systems, the spaces of confrontation and contamination between the organic and the inorganic, between nature and artifice. Here the metabolization of humanity's discarded scrap, or nature's detritus, produces a new horizon of unexplored territories, mutant and by default virgin, that are for Stalker 'Actual Territories'. The term 'actual' indicates the process in which space comes into being. The 'actual' is not what we are, but rather that we are becoming, that is to say the 'other' that becomes other.

(Stalker 1996)

Each successive project beckoned the group in a different direction, propelling Stalker into markedly different and unanticipated territories and unfamiliar social contexts. Each new trajectory introduced bold challenges to be dealt with, always more complex and layered, yet rich in novel experiences. Stalker continued its explorations across different urban peripheries, tracking no man's lands in cities such as Milan, Naples and Berlin. But in time the group was forced to confront the hidden communities that were to be found secretly nestled within these urban folds, often deeply embedded in the territories they came to occupy.

In 1999, following an invitation to develop a project in the heart of Rome's promiscuous Campo Boario, the slaughterhouse district sequestered within the capital's neglected inner-city margins, Stalker took on a Kurdish refugee community recently evicted from their cardboard settlement. Here, exploiting an abandoned veterinary building, the group converted the dilapidated structure into a safe house, baptized the Ararat after the Anatolian mountain revered by the Kurdish population. In the process of establishing this refugee centre, Stalker came to a critical juncture in their work. The group was obliged to improvise a strategy to receive and assist in the making of a community within the confines of a space that had no predetermined rules or social conventions. Yet the experience proved to be fundamental, precisely because it demonstrated the inextricable relationship that takes shape between a territorial context and its inhabitants. This was a living, organic dialectic that underscored the necessity to develop a new kind of mapping of socially adapted spaces. Stalker, in its effort to become defined by its territorial subject, became a reflection of its spontaneous culture.

The Ararat experience demonstrated the necessity to tackle more complex issues simultaneously, with an expanded organizational structure that could adequately address large-scale projects, drawing from an internationally diverse pool of specialists and concentrating on development, production and post-production strategies. In the autumn of 2001, Stalker opened its permanent office in Rome and launched Osservatorio Nomade (ON, Nomad Observatory). The 'Via Egnatia', initiated in 2003, one of the first long-range projects to be organized by ON, grew as a sinuous 'transnational

monument' stretching from Istanbul to Rome through Greece, Albania and Puglia. Subsequently, 'Immaginare Corviale' (Imagining Corviale), promoted by the Olivetti Foundation at the behest of the municipality of Rome, was another initiative focusing on a late 1970s, 1 km concrete megalith in the city's periphery that had come to be known as the 'Bronx'. Both these projects evolved over several years and brought together sizable financial support from the European community, regional administrations and local municipalities (Stalker/ON: 2003). Over the last couple of years, Stalker/ON has jumped scales of operation and tagged on to different institutions, but the group's focus remains tied to new and emergent cultural productions.

## Letting go

It is important to distinguish the group's interactive dynamic and the deeply complex territorial context to which Stalker has been inextricably drawn: these are the new locations where frequently imperceptible transformations in the peripheral urban landscapes are linked to the massive social and political reconfigurations in the aftermath of 1989. Besides coming to recognize these emergent territories, by what means can one operate within them? Or, more succinctly, how have these spaces contributed to the rearticulation of the contemporary landscape that increasingly stretches across the hyper-local and the meta-global? If we are willing to accept that something new and radically creative is taking place in these furrows and pockets of the city, does this suggest a heterotopian condition in the making?

The abandonment of the 'project'; the refusal to erase one reality in the conceited pursuit of another; the recognition that the ground context is far richer than any imagined imposition might ever achieve; the gradual realization that any form of engagement or intervention in the local would be artificially deterministic if not outright threatening to the actual environment as it exists in the present, and its state of isolation; the incalculable encounter with the non quantifiable: these are the spaces in transformation that offer new opportunities for understanding.

Stalker's approach opposes dropping arbitrary constructs on a given landscape simply because it reads like a blank on a map. In effect, a blank on a map is really a living condition gone unrecognized, an uncharted territorial context, an unmediated space of vitality. The work of Stalker purposely withdraws from exerting influence on these environments and instead attempts to join itself to their emergence. The letting go of these spaces, stepping back from the temptation to interfere in their destiny, through their rearranging or erasure, to prevent the negation of that something which exists inside the spaces not demarcated or assigned with official value, is part of an approach that recognizes their unique otherness. That something that stands outside determinate or designated space is in itself a heterotopia by default, an enclave that acquires autonomy despite its open nature. This is

a heterotopia of its own special accord, with a formidable potential to spread and prosper. To take delight in its becoming, to respect its autonomy, to assist in its emergence is to understand the magic of Stalker. It's a shared attitude, as Gilles Tiberghien observes:

Stalker is an 'acrobat'; which means, literally, that it paces out the extremities in a perilous equilibrium, following a unique guiding thread along which we must learn to move, on occasion turning ourselves into Stalker, or seeking out, in Stalker's footsteps, the dizzying prospect we might share. This is a naturally untenable position, which explains the need to advance and evolve, while always remaining elusive. Stalker pushes back the borders from the periphery to the center, going ever further and taking possession of new spaces. It has to segment, divide and inspect the anfractuosités of the territory, which are folds in the human mind.

(Tiberghien 2004: 59)

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Part 6

# Heterotopia in the splintering metropolis

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The Whitechapel Idea Store, Spitalfields, London (David Adjaye, Engineering Arup, 2005) (photograph: Maureen Heyns). This high-profile building is conspicuously present in the street and opens up to the crowds passing by on the ground level.

# **‘Rubbing the magic lamp’\***

## Heterotopian strategies in London’s eastern City fringe

*Maureen Heyns*

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Spitalfields is one of the first suburbs of the City of London, a place on the edge, immediately adjacent to the City, yet outside its eastern boundary and hence historically partly free of the oppressive authority of church and state. It originated in the seventeenth century as a reception zone for the functions and persons that were not – no longer or not yet – welcome in the City, but were nevertheless necessary for its life and growth. To enable the City to focus its energies upon commercial speculations after the fire of London in 1666, its population was dispersed and various trades and occupations were cast out of its gates. Several of the market traders who had previously gathered outside St Paul’s cathedral moved their businesses to Spitalfields. Around 1683, when a royal charter was granted to sell ‘flesh, fowl and roots’ in this new suburb, Spitalfields market came into being to continue for over three centuries. Throughout this period Spitalfields has constituted a point of entry into London for political refugees and economic immigrants, not only due to its reputation of hosting nonconformity and its accessible yet highly competitive economy of (street) markets and small-scale workshops, but also because of its proximity to the Pool of London – the point of immigrant disembarkation – its cheap, speculative housing and its mixed, densely built fabric.

A multifaceted urban area on the edge of the City, Spitalfields is not so much an ‘other space’, but rather a ‘liminal space’, an ambivalent space of shifting boundaries and contested identities, balancing in between margin and centre, exclusion and inclusion, deprivation and regeneration. It is both a ‘self-created ghetto’ and a ‘springboard towards settlement and integration’ (Kershen 2004a: 51). At the same time, this permanent ‘zone in transition’ (Burgess 1925: 54–6) has always been a place where newcomers, both in the sense of external immigrants and internal pioneers, have been rubbing their magic lamps, conjuring up heterotopias as levers of regeneration. The immigrant communities, for instance, reconstructed a home in this ‘elsewhere’ by carving out religious spaces in an as yet unfamiliar landscape. These spaces were heterotopian because they not only provided a permanent place for the ritual time, but also alternating spaces, time capsules





Spitalfields as 'Little Jerusalem', 1899. A place of immigrant settlement on the edge of the City.

transporting the time-spaces of the land of origin, or rather of an imaginary homeland, to the place of exile. A striking example of such a heterotopian space is the religious building on the corner of Brick Lane and Fournier Street. Constructed in 1743 by Huguenot immigrants as the 'Neuve Eglise', it was successively reused by each of the immigrant communities settling in Spitalfields. First, it became a Methodist chapel. In the nineteenth century the Ashkenazi Jews transformed it into a synagogue. Subsequently, in the 1970s, the Bangladeshi community converted it into a mosque. So, synchronous with the mutation of Spitalfields from Petty France into Little Jerusalem and Banglatown, the religious consecration of the Neuve Eglise changed, demonstrating Foucault's second principle of heterotopia (Foucault 1984).

In the late nineteenth century the discovery of the East End as the City of Dreadful Night and the confrontation with its emergent mass of proletarians led to a new consciousness of both guilt and fear among the urban elites (Stedman-Jones 1984: 285). The developing reform movement played an important part in preparing the ground for the later welfare state with its new division of roles between state, market and civil society and its shifting class relations. These reformers did not only intervene in the political and academic field, but also set up various semi-public amenities



The 'Neuve Eglise' on Brick Lane, built in 1743 by Huguenot immigrants, later remodelled as a Methodist chapel, in the nineteenth century transformed into a synagogue, and finally in the 1970s converted into a mosque for the Bangladeshi community (photograph, 1953).

and societies in working-class areas. Within the mythical territory of the East End, Spitalfields functioned as a breeding ground where several reformist experiments ripened to become permanent socio-cultural provisions with distinctive heterotopian characteristics. These newly conceived spaces, such as the Whitechapel Gallery and Library and the settlement house of Toynbee Hall, were a kind of cultural 'sanctuaries' – sheltered, conditioned environments where promising young middle-class men converged and 'the best' of fine arts, science and stored wisdom was made available to 'the



Spitalfields today: the layered, both diverse and fragmented urban space in between the City and the East End. The morphology of the area bears the traces of the many experiments in urban renewal, visible in the partial transformation of the closed block pattern into the open configurations of slabs.

most' of the urban poor. Even though the new buildings did not interrupt the fine grain of Spitalfields' fabric, they did clearly mark a formal and symbolic threshold between the ordinary streetscape with its noise, bustle and wheeler-dealing and the extraordinary cultural sphere with its 'uplifting' experiences and 'refining' class encounters.

These reformist heterotopian and 'heterosocial' spaces (Gidley 2000: 9), which represented a changing bourgeois culture and modernizing society, breached the boundary between the City and its eastern fringe. Neither coinciding with one world nor immersed into the other, they were strategically located on the main thoroughfares bordering or crossing Spitalfields and underlined the more heterogeneous, layered spatial patterns that materialized in the course of the nineteenth century. Most of the new rail and road infrastructures, which acted as an integrating force on the city scale, hardened the boundaries of Spitalfields and accentuated its identity as an immigrant colony. Conversely, the cutting of Commercial Street straight through Spitalfields inserted the area into the larger networks of the industrial city and improved the accessibility of Spitalfields market. This new thoroughfare reduced the old parallel commercial artery of Brick Lane

to a position of secondary centrality, which in turn facilitated the recycling of its shops by Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs.

In contrast to the exogenous heterotopias of the social reformers, the endogenous heterotopian spaces of the Jewish community, such as 'chevras', Yiddish theatres and bath houses, were inserted into these secondary spaces of Spitalfields, often in or behind existing buildings, like the synagogue in Brick Lane's Neuve Eglise. In this way a spatial gradient emerged between the 'scena' of Spitalfields – the mixed, albeit predominantly working-class public spaces of its main thoroughfares, and the area's 'retroscena' or its secondary streets and passages – places that were more densely inscribed with alien practices (Lanzani 1998: 33). The 'liminal' condition of Spitalfields, however, implied that the boundaries between this 'scena' and 'retroscena' were not static. The street markets, for example, temporarily transformed the backspaces of the Ghetto into a central marketplace or, vice versa, enabled the immigrant traders to play a role on the front stage of Whitechapel Road, the arterial road on the southern edge of Spitalfields.

Specific heterotopian interventions also challenged the predominant spatial patterns. The Anglo-Jewish establishment set up highly visible and carefully designed cultural projects in the heart of the Ghetto to anglicize both this marginal space and its population. Over a long period of time, however, the integration of Spitalfields' immigrant communities brought to the fore a second generation. In the interbellum, Jewish youngsters increasingly questioned the strict moral values of their community, such as the tradition of arranged marriages. Whitechapel Road became their favourite meeting place and parade ground. However, this standing out of the so-called second generation can also be accompanied with a revival of religion. In recent years the reworking of a global Islamic 'umma' has appealed to many Bangladeshi youngsters and Islamic Bangladeshi activists have created new, highly visible religious spaces along Whitechapel Road.

### **Heterotopian levers of regeneration in post-industrial Spitalfields**

During the eve of the welfare state a myriad of heterotopian projects emerged in Spitalfields. Similarly, from the 1980s onwards, when the welfare state mutated into a late-capitalist regime of development, various heterotopian levers of regeneration have popped up in Spitalfields' landscape. In contrast to the cultural and religious nineteenth-century flagships, this post-industrial burgeoning of heterotopian spaces embodies a drastic blurring of previously more autonomously defined categories, such as public and private interest, real and imaginary spaces, the 'secular' world of commerce and the 'sacred' world of culture (Zukin 1991; Dovey 1999). This blurring process does not only include the de-differentiation of hieratic spaces, as in the commodification of cultural facilities, but also the heterotopianization of the political



Overview of the various 'heterotopian' interventions: 1. Spitalfields market's redevelopment, 2. New Georgian Spitalfields, 3. Banglatown, 4. Rich Mix, 5. London Muslim Centre, 6. Idea Store.

and economic spheres, as is manifest in the cultural theming of commercial spaces (De Caeter and Dehaene 2006). Even though the direction of these intrusions often remains unclear, the recent heterotopian projects in Spitalfields can be clustered around these two groups of mutating 'pur sang' heterotopias and heterotopianized spaces.

***'Heterotopianized spaces': the landmark redevelopment of Spitalfields market, New Georgian Spitalfields and Banglatown***

In 1989 the Spitalfields Development Group won the tender put out by the Corporation of London to relocate Spitalfields wholesale market and redevelop the former market site with a large-scale mixed property development project. Obviously, this extensive undertaking was not only inspired by the demands of an efficient wholesale market, but mainly by the needs of a thriving, competitive City. Once more the uses that could no longer be comfortably integrated in the heart of the City had to be accommodated by the fringe. However, the fact that this project facilitated the location of the new core businesses of the City in the fringe distinguished it from the

previous expulsions of still necessary, but no longer central activities. Moreover, the operation would erase the physical and psychological buffer constituted by the peculiar world of the wholesale market, with its nightly rhythms, dirt, traffic congestion and its *filières* of Cockney pubs, prostitution and homeless people, and expose Spitalfields to the development pressures of Central London.

Because of this high symbolic value the redevelopment of Spitalfields market was highly contested. To underpin their particular vision of the proper future of the market site, as well as more broadly to ground their territorial rights to Spitalfields, various local interest groups conjured up alternative versions of Spitalfields' past. According to the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust, for instance, a non-profit organization set up in 1977 by a number of eminent citizens with an interest in conservation, the authentic Spitalfields was not at all embodied by Spitalfields market, with its successive industrial scale-ups, but by the surrounding coherent estates of eighteenth-century housing. Hence, for the Trust the prospect of redevelopment constituted an opportunity to mend the remaining patches of Georgian housing back together and reconstruct the Liberty of Norton Folgate, the discrete, self-governing urban entity around Spital Square that had once formed the heart of the Huguenot silk-weaving community. In fact, during the previous decade, the Trust had already revived this mythical past of a well-balanced, coherent and civilized Georgian Spitalfields by stimulating appropriate buyers, both fellow members of the gentry and self-defined bohemians, to purchase and meticulously restore the Georgian properties. These showcase, time-warp houses either evoked an apparently authentic version of the golden years or imaginatively combined various historic space-times, but all shared an 'inescapable element of artifice' (Samuel 1989: 162). If the historical Liberty of Norton Folgate did at the time constitute a 'heterotopia of compensation' regulated by its no(ta)ble residents, New Georgian Spitalfields, in turn, was full of 'heterotopias of illusion'. By spectacularly refurbishing the previously dilapidated, affordable houses, the pioneers assembled by the Trust had effectively constructed a new exclusive urban enclave, at odds with the suggested myth of natural cohabitation with the Bangladeshi community. Even though the Trust had made the initial choice to rehouse the rag traders rather than replacing them, they packaged the built heritage of Spitalfields for upmarket private and visitor consumption and exposed the area to progressive gentrification (Jacobs 1996).

The Spitalfields Development Group (SDG), the developer of Spitalfields market, initially promoted an even more illusionary version of Georgian Spitalfields. To provide their essentially large-scale commercial development with an acceptable façade, SDG tried to recuperate the New Georgian aesthetics put forward by the Trust. However, this opportunist vision of Spitalfields' built heritage proved too superficial to sustain a durable

coalition with the Trust. After the resignation of Richard MacCormac, a renowned locally resident architect, the initial rapprochement with the Trust turned into antagonism. To raise local support for their successive schemes, promoting an exciting landmark office development project, SDG no longer evoked a pseudo-historical place, but mobilized the imagery of an attractive public space as well as a broad package of off-site planning gains. More specifically, by focusing on the public uses of the privately owned site of Spitalfields market, SDG tried to revive the positive reception of its temporary reconversion project. This project, which had been implemented by Urban Space Management to prevent the vacated market site from regeneration blight during the delays caused by the combined effects of community protests and slumps in the property market, consisted of a mixture of thematic stall markets with independent traders selling books, fashion, organic foods and bric-a-brac, a theatre and sports accommodation. Paradoxically, for the various interest groups active in Spitalfields, who used to advance different visions of the future of the market site, this temporary project incarnated a possible, shared alternative project for the market. A newly formed coalition of local activists, called 'Spitalfields Market Under Threat' (SMUT), promoted the preservation of this 'brightfield site', a heterotopian social space 'that provides colour, character and relief from other forms of city life' ([www.smut.org.uk](http://www.smut.org.uk)). They exposed the developer's proposal of new public spaces with 'outstanding landscaping, public art and performances' as a pseudo-public realm that would reduce the varied encounters of the 'brightfield site' to a predominant commercial logic and to private surveillance.

In 2002 the planning authorities did in the end approve SDG's latest scheme for 'London's exciting new financial quarter', a series of glittering office buildings designed by Norman Foster. They legitimized their decision by emphasizing the revalorized built environment, the necessity of growth for redistribution and the generation of so-called trickle-down effects. The adopted strategy is reminiscent of a Thatcherite reliance on large-scale property development as a lever of regeneration. However, through the delivered planning gains, the project has also contributed to parallel regeneration programmes in Spitalfields, which in turn promoted a kind of entrepreneurial neighbourhood development. For instance, SDG has contributed to Cityside Regeneration, a multi-actor, non-profit partnership set up by Tower Hamlets Council in 1996 to coordinate regeneration initiatives in the west of the borough. In contrast to Spitalfields market's redevelopment, which displaced and hardened the boundary between the City and Spitalfields, Cityside Regeneration aimed at bridging this unstable urban fault-line by capitalizing on the growth of the City and the post-industrial mutations of Central London, to provide local economic, social and cultural benefits. As such Cityside was an opportunist mediator between two faces of the global city: the city of international capital and tourism



Rendering of the office development project for Spitalfields market (Foster and Partners, Project 2002, completed 2005).

and the city of immigration. Cityside did not primarily function as a generator of new projects, but rather as a catalyst of already existing proposals, mostly initiated by community actors.

The city marketing project to rebrand the area around Brick Lane as Banglatown is such a slumbering project that was opportunistically reawakened and fully developed by Cityside. It is important to note that the initial Banglatown concept had been launched by the Community Development Group (CDG), a local Bengali business think-tank set up as part of Prince Charles's 'Business in the Community' programme. CDG's proposal consisted of developing a kind of bazaar area with ethnic foods and crafts, both to serve the local community and to attract prospective place-consumers. So, CDG was the first to 'strategically package local economic aspirations in a racialised construct tuned to multicultural consumerism' (Jacobs 1996: 100). At that time the local Left rejected Banglatown by arguing that it embodied a revival of an inherited past. However, a more crucial factor was probably that Banglatown, with its focus on city marketing and consumerism, shattered the Left's nostalgic illusion of a pre-modern, self-sufficient immigrant community that needed to be protected against the harsh economic and individualistic logic of the post-industrial metropolis. Ten years later, however, the idea of creating a themed space wherein ethnic identity becomes a product that is packaged and consumed had become less controversial. Cityside presented Banglatown as a pragmatic business development strategy to create new market opportunities for the Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and not as a statement about the Bengali identity of Spitalfields.



The name Banglatown was not the only new marker linked to the site of Brick Lane intent upon developing the Bengali ethnic character of the area for a visitor and tourist market. The heterotopianization of the public spaces of the Brick Lane area also included the insertion of physical-symbolic 'markers' in the urban landscape, such as oriental gateways and lamp-posts, as well as the organization of festivals and events, such as the Baishaki Mela and the Brick Lane Festival. While the first festival revived the tradition of Bengali New Year, the second evoked the distinctive mix of influences that has shaped Spitalfields' history. Likewise, the reconversion project of Aldgate Subways, a web of pedestrian tunnels that forms one of the gateways of Banglatown, not only contains oriental elements, such as the canopies covering the subway entrances, but also poetry and graphic work referring to Spitalfields' tradition of immigration and political dissent. Notwithstanding this broader set-up, Banglatown succeeded in the first place as a centre for exotic cuisine that appealed to 'the nation's passion for eating the other' (Kershen 2004b: 172). Especially after the central part of Brick Lane had been designated as a 'restaurant zone' in 1999, the number of Bangladeshi balti houses rose spectacularly. This boom in the restaurant sector provided employment opportunities for the local population – albeit mostly low-paid service jobs – but it also drove up rental levels, displaced several shops and changed the everyday rhythm of the street. This evolution illustrates the inherent paradox of a city-marketing strategy that signposts difference, but ultimately tends to produce 'an anodyne and relatively homogeneous culture of consumption, disconnected from the social life of the population' (Shaw 2004: 1997).

### ***Mutating 'pur sang' heterotopias: Rich Mix, the London Muslim Centre and the Whitechapel Idea Store***

In addition to the heterotopianized spaces of Spitalfields market, New Georgian Spitalfields and Banglatown, the recent multiplication of regeneration projects in Spitalfields also includes various mutating 'pur sang' heterotopias, which can be considered as the post-industrial inheritors of the cultural and religious flagships that emerged at the eve of the welfare state. Rich Mix, the London Muslim Centre and the Idea Store belong to this second category of levers of regeneration.

Rich Mix is a cultural diversity flagship supported by Cityside Regeneration as a complement of its Banglatown strategy. It is strategically located on Bethnal Green Road at the northern edge of Spitalfields. Just as in the Banglatown case, the concept of Rich Mix originally emerged from civil society. More specifically, in 1992 Vision for London, a think-tank of urban practitioners who tried to revive the urban debate after the abolishment of the Greater London Council, launched the idea of a project that would celebrate the creative developments brought about by the interaction of

London's diverse cultures, communities and individuals. From the beginning the East End, and more specifically the, by then, rediscovered area of Spitalfields, was favoured as the most appropriate location for this heterotopian space because there the interaction of different groups of migrants, with each other and with the already established populations, had produced a unique commingling of cultural and artistic flavours (Rich Mix 2002). This imagery of Spitalfields as a 'multicultural receptor' replaced the older external representations of the area as a space 'devoid of culture' that had inspired



Banglatown and the London Muslim Centre (photograph: Maureen Heyns). Identity politics as theming and theming as identity politics.

the historic predecessors of Rich Mix. Similarly, Rich Mix did not aim at creating a conditioned environment for class encounters, but at generating a sheltered space for multicultural exchanges. Likewise, Rich Mix reversed the 'conveyor belt' of the nineteenth-century cultural flagships, which imported the bourgeois culture of the social reformers in the East End (Gidley 2000: 10), by providing a resource and podium to the under-represented cultures and communities of East London. However, with the upgrade of the project to Mayoral status and the specific aim of bringing in regeneration funding, Rich Mix was also promoted as a symbolic attraction servicing London's leisure and visitor economy. Likewise, in line with the predominant economic regeneration agenda, Rich Mix would not only be a cultural venue for experiencing or 'consuming' cultural 'products', but also an arts factory, a place of creation or 'production' with affordable workspaces, studios and rehearsal spaces for creative industries.

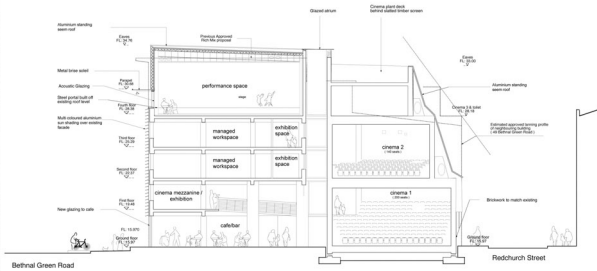
In contrast with Rich Mix, which promotes a dynamic, hybridizing multicultural urban community, the London Muslim Centre promotes a specific religious community and focuses on its particular qualities. This bottom-up project originated in 2000 as a counter-project against the impending commercial redevelopment of the derelict site in between the East London Mosque and an old people's home for Bangladeshi men. This Muslim Centre reinvents the tradition of the religious spaces carved out in Spitalfields by the successive immigrant groups. Programmatically, the Centre resembles the nineteenth-century Jewish 'chevras'. These religious associations based around a synagogue combined the functions of a benefit office, an education facility and a social club. The London Muslim Centre, similarly, complements the place of worship of the mosque with a range of community services, such as youth, welfare, health and religious education services, childcare facilities and sports accommodation. In addition, the Muslim Centre also houses ICT facilities, workspaces for small enterprises and even retail units. However, the chevras and the London Muslim Centre present contrasting spatial organizations. While the chevras and their small house-based synagogues were spread out all over Spitalfields' fabric and more or less re-established the pattern of the various localities of origin of the Jewish immigrants, the London Muslim Centre reinforces a cluster of relatively new Islamic buildings on Whitechapel Road to promote a 'glocal' strategy of religious concentration or centralization. It is conceived as a collector that bundles the energies of various organizations, groups and individuals by appealing to their common Muslim identity, beyond contrasting local or regional constituencies, and, in the opposite direction, as a 'glocal' flagship project advancing the presence and role of the Muslim community in East London and the revival of a global Islamic 'umma'.

Notwithstanding the swift montage of the London Muslim Centre, which opened in 2004, there was no consensus about the project within the Bangladeshi community. The Muslim flagship project was part and parcel

of the conflicting, 'glocal' politics of identity and place of Islamic and secular Bangladeshi activists (Eade and Garbin 2002). Not unlike the contrasting regeneration efforts of the orthodox Yiddish newcomers, the Anglo-Jewish establishment and the socialist Jews, these two groups became embroiled in a process of competition to appropriate and transform urban spaces in order to regenerate their community and reconstruct its identity. While the Islamists prioritized a strong religious commitment, the secularists promoted an engagement with the syncretic Bengali cultural identity. In fact, the previously discussed project of Banglatown included various elements that were inspired by the secular activists' ambition to affirm Brick Lane as the cultural heartland of a 'glocal' Bengali community, such as the refurbishment of a Bengali cultural centre and the revival of the tradition of the Bengali New Year. Banglatown is more than a brand.

The Whitechapel Idea Store, which is the third example of a new 'hieratic space' popping up in the surroundings of Spitalfields, has a direct link with a philanthropic intervention of the turn of the century, more specifically with the Whitechapel Library. Unlike the club-like spaces of Rich Mix and the London Muslim Centre, the Idea Store did not emerge from civil society, but was conceived by Tower Hamlets Council to answer the sharp decrease in library use. The Whitechapel Idea Store does not reflect the heterotopization of commerce like Banglatown, but the commercialization of heterotopia, albeit in a strategic way. The Whitechapel Idea Store was part of a larger programme that transformed the existing network of public libraries and learning centres of Tower Hamlets into a chain of Idea Stores, rethinking the library for a consumerist age. The name 'Idea Store' refers to a store that provides the goods to sustain the mind (Enwezor 2006: 11). To attract as many customers as possible to experience the world of ideas, the Council proposed to update the offer, services and opening hours of the borough's libraries and learning centres. More drastically, all facilities were combined and rehoused in specifically designed, landmark buildings in the heart of the commercial centres of the borough, promoting the combination of daily shopping with a visit to the library, an ICT session or a learning activity. The Whitechapel Idea Store, for example, transferred the Whitechapel Library from the rather stately Victorian building near Aldgate to a bright new complex centrally located in between the street market of Whitechapel Road and the parking space of a supermarket. Beyond these commercially inspired elements, the notion 'store' also refers to the traditional role of the library as a place of storage, a heterotopian/heterochronic space where things are accumulated and preserved (Foucault 1984; Enwezor 2006: 11).

Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp have described how 'heterotopias' can contribute to the creation of a new public domain. The public domain, they argue, is not so much a permanent attribute of a place, and certainly not the exclusive achievement of traditional public spaces, but rather an



The Rich Mix project (Penoyre and Prasad, 2002) (photograph: Morley von Sternberg). An array of cultural spaces built around an urban foyer.

experience consisting of a changing perspective, an interaction with other groups and their cultural expressions or a confrontation with otherness (2001: 130). Within the contemporary ‘archipelago of urban enclaves’, the probability of such a ‘public domain experience’ is not only connected to the specific internal logic of an urban space, but depends upon the position of this space in the urban landscape and its relations with other urban fragments. More specifically, the autonomous, yet accessible spaces of heterotopias, which import an extraordinary condition into space or ‘organize a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them’ (Hetherington 1997: viii), can frame public domain experiences through their contrast with the surrounding spaces or their marked transition of one space into another. In fact, the heterotopian spaces of Rich Mix, the London Muslim Centre and the Idea Store all make claims to the micro-public potential of public domain experiences, be it in varying ways and with different outcomes.

As a flagship of cultural diversity, Rich Mix is explicitly concerned with multicultural engagement. By bundling and connecting socio-cultural worlds that only rarely or fleetingly interact in everyday life, Rich Mix goes beyond the normally segregated, relatively predictable experiences of the inhabitants of the urban field and breaks through the boundaries of their juxtaposed micro-worlds.

However, in addition to this aim of enabling cross-cultural exchanges, Rich Mix also provides a kind of niche where individuals, groups and communities get the time and space to explore a medium to express themselves. The workshops and studios of Community Music (CM) and Asian Dub Foundation Education (ADFED), for example, two smaller activist organizations with their home base at Rich Mix, are primarily concerned

with building musical skills but also deal with complex socio-cultural issues relating to ethnic minority youth cultures. CM and ADFED provide opportunities for the participants of these workshops to present their work and, thereby, represent themselves. As this particular activity demonstrates, Rich Mix's interpretation of cultural diversity is broader than just staging contrasting 'ethno-cultural' communities. It also includes the variety of cultural media present in the complex, including music, dance, film, plastic arts and IT, and refers to the various organizations and institutions with different backgrounds, scales and programmes that make up the core partnership of the project.

The spatial configuration of Rich Mix reflects the project's double intention of enabling both cultural exchanges and the relatively autonomous development of cultural activities. The architects Penoyre and Prasad used the typology of the foyer to deal with the crucial issue of separating and connecting the diverse facilities and their various publics. This foyer is not conceived as a decompressed circulation space that envelops and links the different clusters, but rather as a shared antechamber. The circulation spaces are arranged at the edges of this space. They function as a controllable interface between the freely accessible foyer and the semi-public cultural spaces. This layout is intended to facilitate the multiple use of the complex in a spatial as well as temporal sense. In contrast to this meticulous internal coupling of different spheres, external spatial relations to the public domain are under-explored. Even though the complex has been strategically located in an unstable boundary zone at the northern edge of Spitalfields, it does not really engage with this specific urban location in between a range of contrasting, dynamic urban fragments moving in different directions, such as the Bishopsgate Goodsyrd, the Boundary Estate, Banglatown, the creative district of Shoreditch and the council estates of Bethnal Green. Because of these neglected spatial relational opportunities, the maintenance of Rich Mix's ambivalent position, halfway between a spectacular multicultural flagship for the benefit of London's visitor economy and a cultural urban resource for the so-called under-represented, deprived communities of the East End, almost completely depends on the fragile, time-consuming task of forging social links with the everyday cultures and social networks composing this 'locus classicus of incompatible realities' (Rushdie 1988).

While Rich Mix claims to explore the renewing potential of cultural hybridization, the London Muslim Centre constitutes the parochial domain of a specific, in this case, religious community. Nevertheless, the initiators of the London Muslim Centre also underlined the project's involvement with the relation of London's diverse communities and faith groups. Moreover, the support of the project by the regeneration programmes of various government agencies was based upon this specific combination of a bottom-up project that demonstrated the auto-regenerative potential of a community – the project site, for example, was purchased with gifts from the Muslim

community – but that would also contribute to mutual recognition within the larger community of communities. These two aims are not necessarily contradictory. Some of the strongest experiences in the public domain are typically brought about by entering the parochial domain of another group and by being confronted with its otherness (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001: 88). However, in the case of the Muslim Centre the outsider only gets access to selected aspects of this parochial domain, for example through exhibitions. In addition, collaborators of the London Muslim Centre suggested the direction of particular amenities, which answered widespread local needs or problems, towards the larger collective regardless of religious or cultural affiliations. With this proposal the potential of public domain shifts from Hajer and Reijndorp's 'heterotopias' to Ash Amin's 'sites of banal transgression and habitual engagement'. Amin's (2002) anthropological research in deprived, multicultural urban areas has shown that difference is not so much mediated in so-called public spaces nor in spectacular flagship spaces, but rather in the everyday context of childcare facilities, youth projects, community gardens, sports centres and regenerated derelict spaces. The Muslim Centre provides these kinds of facilities but it predominantly focuses on representing the Muslim community, preserving its moral high ground and promoting its political advance. Hence, it is doubtful whether parts of it can evade its strong politics of identity and place.

The Whitechapel Idea Store cannot be reduced to a commercialized or commodified heterotopia. In fact, it is exactly by deploying, or perhaps misusing, commercial strategies and architectural elements, such as billboards, display windows and an escalator, that the Idea Store tries to deinstitutionalize the library and to stimulate public domain experiences in the sense of discovering new perspectives in the pluriform world of ideas and new media. However, in contrast to Rich Mix and the London Muslim Centre, buildings that superficially mark the transition between the surrounding spaces and their interior world by orienting a landmark façade to the main road – the one highlighting diversity through multicoloured louvres, the other underlining the Muslim presence by means of so-called Islamic style elements – the Idea Store couples these external and internal spheres. Through its engagement with the different surrounding urban fragments, such as the Whitechapel street market, the parking space of a large supermarket, a sports centre, several patches of council housing and a large-scale hospital complex, the Idea Store produces a point of gravity and captures and intensifies the urban location's potential to create a new public domain. David Adjaye, the architect of the Idea Store, considers public space as something that is always in the making (Enwezor 2006: 9). Even though public domain can never be the *fait accompli* of a built space, it can be activated through the specific position and articulation of a building in its urban context. The vertical atrium or canopy of the Idea Store, for

example, subtly conjoins the library with the bustling street life of the sidewalk, its passing movements and the daily trading, momentary transactions and interactions of the street market. In a similar way, the spaces of the Idea Store are coupled with the busy passage to the supermarket. It is not only this spatial composition, but also the precise, complex and sensory walls of the Idea Store that play an important role in this activation of public space (Sassen 2006). They are not so much what divides the inside from the outside, but rather a 'borderland' that engages the passers-by or users of the building. It is exactly through this distinctiveness and not through a putative neutrality, evoked to guarantee the so-called inclusion of a maximum of groups, that the Idea Store acquires a potential of new public domain (Sassen 2006: 15).

## Conclusion

In the last decade, various heterotopian regeneration projects have been established in Spitalfields, transforming the area into a mosaic of divergent micro-worlds etched upon a layered historical landscape. Notwithstanding this post-industrial burgeoning of heterotopian projects, Spitalfields has resisted both their commercial gentrifying theming and their cultural or religious identity politics. It is not a heterotopian quarter, not yet, but it retains some liminal qualities. These characteristics are primarily supported by the long-standing liminal spaces of Spitalfields, such as the street markets. Paradoxically, however, some of the new heterotopian spaces also seem to have a potential for renewing the liminality of Spitalfields, albeit a very fragile and easily recuperable one. The temporary 'brightfield site' of Spitalfields market, for example, was partly replaced by a landmark office development and partly transformed into a franchised shopping environment. Rich Mix can easily be converted into yet another island for the cosmopolitan creative class that 'celebrates difference without making a difference' (Hall 2000). Similarly, the London Muslim Centre threatens to be narrowed down to an exclusive enclave for the Muslim Community in a religious as well as political sense. Only the Idea Store seems to succeed in complementing the extraordinary condition and distinctiveness of the heterotopia with the activation of a 'new public domain'. For all the other heterotopias it remains completely undecidable whether these new urban figures are disciplinary or emancipatory, whether they bring plurality or normalization.

## Note

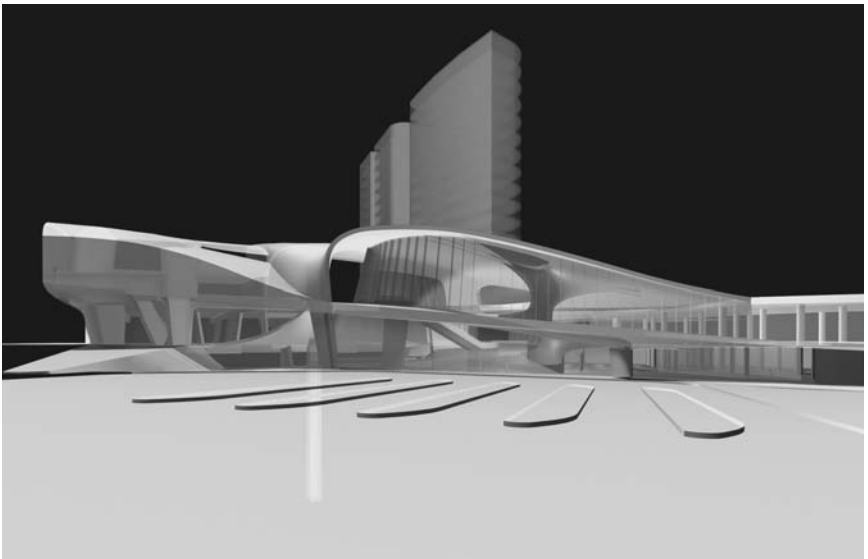
- \* This metaphor is borrowed from William Taylor's 'travel book in one place' about Spitalfields (Taylor 2001: 307–12).



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Arnhem Central interchange, Netherlands, 1996–2008 (© UN Studio). Fold architecture expressing the tidal wave of mobility in the hubs of the space of flows.

# Flow Urbanism

## The heterotopia of flows

Lee Stickells

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A concern with embodying the postmodern city's flux and mutability has emerged as a strategy for generating structure and form in recent urban architecture. Works by firms such as UN Studio, Foreign Office Architects, MVRDV and OMA, among others, have engaged with the architectural potentials of 'datascape'. That interest in pursuing formal strategies related to the dynamics of the city has also engendered the projection of socially integrative spaces: conceptual *heterotopias of flows*. The Yokohama Port Terminal designed by Foreign Office Architects (FOA) (completed in 2002) and the Arnhem Central interchange by UN Studio in collaboration with Cecil Balmond of Arup (due for completion in 2007) are examples of that interest. They explore what one could call an *urbanism of flows*, or *Flow Urbanism* – both are framed by their designers as 'smooth spaces' of urban mobility that generate new forms of public space.

The Yokohama Port Terminal has a hybrid programme: it provides facilities for berthing international and domestic cruise ships, with the ability to accommodate up to four ships at one time, as well as a public park and other civic facilities. In its design FOA pursued the concept of a transport interchange 'that could operate less as a gate, as a limit, and more as a field of movements' (2002: 11). Arnhem Central is a complex transport interchange that integrates railway stations, bus terminals, car parking, office and residential development as well as pedestrian and cycle movement. Similar to the concept at Yokohama, UN Studio's proposal was for a 'single, continuous landscape' bringing the different transport systems and facilities together (1999: 24–5).

Those formal objectives also contained projections of equally continuous social spaces – fluidly accommodating plural and heterogeneous urban actors. The projects can be read as heterotopias that attempt to refocus the public life of the city (normally associated with the square, the piazza, the static place) within spaces of intense movement. The ambitious descriptions of the formal and affective attributes of the projects prompts the exploration of their positioning as integrative urban gestures – Flow Urbanism – as well as some of the inherent tensions and potentials involved in their

relationship with the existing structures of the city. Three key concepts provide lenses for examining the projects: mobility, intensity and infrastructure.

### **Heterotopia of flows: mobility**

The idea of mobility is particularly important to the discussion of the recent *heterotopias of flows*. Although the projects discussed here are clearly not utopian, they cast spaces of unimpeded flow as liberating and productive of new ways of experiencing the city – associations strongly reminiscent of Constant's New Babylon, with its nomadic dwellers and 'spatial continuum' (Constant 1959). Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio more recently outlined a concept of 'liquid architecture' that also resonates with the projects of Flow Urbanism (Stickells 2005). de Sola-Morales Rubio argued that: 'an architecture that engages human flows in traffic connections, airports, terminals and railway stations cannot be concerned with appearance or image. Becoming flow means to manipulate the contingency of events, establishing strategies for the distribution of individuals, goods or information' (de Sola-Morales Rubio 1996).

At Yokohama, FOA's explorations were strongly guided by the idea that 'circulation can literally shape space' (2002: 11). Conceptualizing the various interactions and flows of different users through the terminal complex – using what they termed a 'no-return diagram' – FOA sought to create a 'field of movements with no structural orientation' (2002: 11). The process was concerned with creating a building that would break the linear movement that was associated with the traditional pier structure – providing for endless circulating loops and fusing it with the flow space of the terminal. To this end the structure and circulation of the project were conceived as a complex whole, integrated through the development of a single surface. It would be a building without stairs and columns, the warped, bifurcated surface allowing a seamless interaction between levels and even programmatic elements (2002: 15). Thus, in that non-representational structure, FOA sought an architecture of indeterminate form – a Flow Urbanism. Their approach repositioned the city's spaces of flow as key contemporary public spaces, superseding the static, representational space of the town square. The Yokohama Port Terminal proposed the space of travel, of mobility, as the new locus of public life.

In a similar manner to FOA, UN Studio used circulation as a primary element in the formal articulation of the Arnhem Central interchange (1999: 24). Intensive studies were made of the flows of different traffic modes: statistics on pedestrian flows between trains, country and city buses, bicycles, parked cars, taxis and the pedestrian routes to the centre of the city were filtered and interpreted through networks. Formally, the concept of the Klein bottle – a closed, continuous curve of self-intersection – was used to develop an undulating single-surface landscape to structure the flows described above:



Yokohama International Port Terminal, Japan (Foreign Office Architects, 1995–2002) (photograph: Lee Stickells).

‘to realize the spatial integration of the area into a one terminal concept’ (van Berkel and Bos 2002: 37). Aside from its function as a device to integrate the various traffic flows, the concept was also seen as a means to develop a form for the interchange that would not register as a single object. Instead, the continuous surface of the building/ground was intended to flow from exterior to interior, connecting the various functions in a seamless manner (2002: 25). Thus, Arnhem Central was projected as a synthesis of infrastructure, architecture and programme that could smoothly integrate the flow of users – the scale of their movements ranging from ‘fast’ (transport of travellers, connections and ‘run shopping’) to ‘slow’ (waiting, ‘fun shopping’, offices and housing). The analysis and development process used to achieve that space of integration, labelled by UN Studio as ‘Deep Planning’, was dominated by a concern for maximizing mobility and the perception of unimpeded space. The social potential of the project was consistently conditioned and measured by flows, temporal and spatial, with all activities and interactions defined by their speed (UN Studio 1999: 23–4).

Both Yokohama and Arnhem are linked by a concern for flows and their attempts at the formation of urban public spaces predicated on movement and flux, rather than embodying and signifying static modes of occupation.

In defining their practice, FOA argued that ‘where static [*sic*], enclosure and gates determined in the past the qualities of building in cities, dynamics, flow, connections and bifurcations have become the core of the contemporary urban phenomenology’ (2003: 190). As heterotopias of flow, the projects conjure environments where the possibilities of that urban phenomenology might be played out: the thrill of momentum and flux (as well as perhaps the alienation or fatigue of perpetual drifting). The point of entry to the heterotopian environment is not so much physical as experiential; coming at what UN Studio termed a ‘kaleidoscopic moment’ – the point at which the subject feels the sense of propulsion, the pull of the programmatic forces, that are condensed in the projects. Supposedly reifying the conditions of the contemporary city, these projects are speculative insertions that suggest an intermixing and encounter with difference through flow and flux. However, there also seems the possibility for tensions regarding occupation of those spaces – the bodily and social positioning of users – to emerge through use. Are the supposedly seamless landscapes of Flow Urbanism, exploited for the thrill of mobility and speed, consequently spaces without the means for considered tactile or social engagement?

## **Intensity**

As well as mobility, the heterotopian spaces of Flow Urbanism posit reconsiderations of intensity and flexibility of use. A constant and continual reordering – in opposition to fixed, determined use – was proposed by the architects at Yokohama and Arnhem as a mechanism for establishing more dynamic programmatic relationships. Both projects were underpinned by concerns with the intensity, diversity and fluctuation of use within their sites and their relation to wider networks of activity. Both projects attempted a reconsideration of the occupation and appropriation of public space.

FOA cited scenarios such as the weekly occupation of Harajuku’s streets in Tokyo, and the caravan encampments of Western settlers in North America, as compelling models for the programmatic flexibility of the Yokohama terminal (2002: 251). A continual relocation of programme as well as flexibility to accommodate changing intensities and conditions was considered vital to the design process (2002: 17). The drawings and diagrams produced by FOA emphasized those qualities of intensity and flexibility. Particularly in their competition submission, there was a clear formal pursuit of those aspects: the building was described as a landscape of ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ spaces where the programme and users of the port terminal would be ‘deployed on the surface as a kind of “confetti”’ (2002: 252). The ideas were portrayed through a series of panels, where the building was differently configured for various festivals and events – its spaces transformed by appropriation and even featuring additional structures ‘plugged’ into it (2002: 256–63). The proposal conjured an urbanism of events, where

mobility and intensity were combined in the interactions of spontaneous, swarming crowds.

Similarly, the Arnhem Central interchange was envisaged as supporting a 24-hour programme in a continuous landscape. Charted and modelled through the use of diagrams, shops, offices, housing and terminals were all to be distributed according to the registering of potential flows. It was asserted by UN Studio that: ‘the most important thing . . . is relational information, is looking at the complexity of the levels of information’, and by doing so it becomes possible ‘to combine the different levels of information into single, highly proliferating gestures’ (van Berkel and Bos 2002). Echoing the ‘intensive space’ of FOA, UN Studio offered up a structure with the potential to serve multiple design and programmatic functions simultaneously. As critic Hans van Dijk described it:

The programme was given a network-bound rather than site-bound reading. Rather than being dissected and divided up to suit static demands for spaces, it was filtered along a spectrum ranging from fast to slow functions in relation to the ‘transport machine’ that is the terminal.

(van Dijk 2000: 18)

At both Yokohama and Arnhem there was an aspiration for the flexible occupation of public space. The projects articulated scenarios of flux – sites of continual reordering. These were set in opposition to traditional modes of envisaging architecture’s public role as locating fixed, determined uses. UN Studio argued that: ‘This means for instance moving away from the categorization of function groups and the positioning of institutions to concentrate on the mapping of on-site movements, but also the articulation of relational parameters rather than the optimization of individual data’ (van Berkel and Bos 2002: 70–1).

The strategies of flow outlined in those projects are concerned with networking movement and event. The role of urban spaces is projected as the integration of hybrid programmes and the intensification of occupation. They offer up new urban forms for engaging with unfamiliar modes of interaction and speculative communal activity: heterotopias of flow that integrate events. However, the precise relationships between form and intensity within Flow Urbanism remain unfocused. Rather than architectural forms being committed to determining a kind of social affect, the impact of the formal strategies and spatial dynamics remains ambivalent: much depends on the process of programming and the possibilities for disruptive, heterogeneous occupation of sites. Despite the progressive social projections of the architects (best demonstrated in FOA’s competition drawings with their descriptions of a dense mixture of communal, cultural activities) the affective qualities of Flow Urbanism seem more uncertain.



## Infrastructure

The formal incorporation of mobility and intensity within Flow Urbanism coincides with a reconsideration of architecture's formal attributes. The possibility of an architecture of weak form – dissolved into infrastructure – was another important aspect in the development of the Yokohama and Arnhem complexes. FOA and UN Studio both sought a transgressive formal approach that fitted their concern with flows: 'Architecture is no longer a question of sheltering, nor is the articulation of form its most significant or interesting issue; in those senses architecture has exhausted itself' (van Berkel and Bos 2002: 70). Both projects dismissed overt formal, architectural exploration, attempting to replace it with a process of spatial optimization driven by diverse performance criteria.

The spaces of the Yokohama Port Terminal were proposed as an architecture where perceptual qualities fluctuated – avoiding overdetermined form in favour of a flexible 'ground' to the 'figure' of event and happening. FOA's approach deliberately avoided articulate forms, for example minimizing the formal distinction between garden spaces and waiting areas of the terminal (2003: 293). Directly echoing Paul Virilio they suggested: 'the city no longer needs a wall and a gate' (2003: 191). Instead, there was a focus on the performance of the building as an infrastructural element. The spatial and formal articulation of the building was considered important for its effects on usage and flow, not semantic qualities. Space was seen as an element that could guide the occupation and appropriation of the building. FOA described this attitude in relation to directional signage:

Our preference would be not to have to place signage in a building, but to let the space index the uses and explain its organisation; let the space contain and explain its internal codes rather than indexing it. Or either make the space so neutral that inscription is absolutely necessary in order to use the space, and it becomes part of the material, like in a ship or in a plane, like in a highway.

(FOA 2002: 49)

That attitude to form – seeing the architecture as public infrastructural construction rather than symbolic, figurative object – was also present in UN Studio's approach to the Arnhem Central project. The complex was envisaged not as a singular architectural object but as a roofed-over, climate-controlled plaza to interconnect and give access to trains, taxis, buses, bikes, parking, office spaces, shops, housing and the town centre – an integrative environment. Thus the articulation of the project as architecture could not be separated from its role as infrastructure: it was rooted in the flow of programme and movement patterns. The central 'dome column' was crucial to that approach. According to Ben van Berkel, it brought together 'all the surrounding forces, construction-wise but also spatially. The thing itself is

not so important as how it separates the space. It orients you, guides you into the different parts of the transfer location of the site' (van Berkel and Bos 2002).

That infrastructural approach is another important aspect of the heterotopian quality of the projects. The critique of building objectification, and the increased attention paid to temporal flows of circulation and communication within the design process, led to projects conceived, for UN Studio, as 'a public landscape in which public and private, surface and volume, circulation and construction are integrated and continuous in one system'. In a formal sense, it was conceived that 'architecture crosses over into infrastructure' (van Berkel and Bos 2002: 71).

The determined pragmatism and supposed formal ingenuousness projected an architecture that could smoothly integrate disparate programming and provide a guileless affectivity. Thus, the promise of the approach taken in an urbanism of flows is that it endows architecture with a key organizational role in the new networked city. As infrastructure, it supposedly augments the flux of the city while making it spatially legible. However, there is a tension here in the ambivalence of the projects towards programme. The suggestion of a direct, linear relationship between flows and form suggests another type of overdetermination, the connection of programme, flows and affective form opening up questions about the plurality accommodated by the project. Without a critical approach to programming itself, Flow Urbanism would seem to be less a means of supporting heterogeneity than of normalizing the potential of the interstitial: the dynamics of the nomadic and unprogrammed become the smooth non-place of the commuter.

## City of flows

The interest in flows described above can be positioned within a wider discussion regarding the nature of the contemporary city and the emerging tensions between its fragmenting physical fabric and multiplying electronic socio-economic networks. A brief consideration of key design issues that develop from that context will help frame the concepts of a new urbanism and architecture of flows.

One critical concern for these projects is the apparently declining relevance and power of figurative, symbolic urban architecture. Exploring the troubled role of urban form in the postmodern city, the hyperbolic theorizing of Paul Virilio (1997) has provided an extreme reading of the ongoing dematerialization of architecture. Virilio has argued that architecture's materiality is subverted by the rise of technologies that offer an increasing connectivity (global communications, the screen, electronic surveillance and info-graphic mediums) and enable people to interact with remote locations in 'real time' and with increasing sensorial sophistication (1993, 1995). He suggests that: 'The old agglomeration disappears in the intense acceleration of

telecommunications, in order to give rise to a new type of concentration: the concentration of domiciliation without domiciles, in which property boundaries, walls and fences no longer signify the permanent physical obstacle' (Virilio 1997: 385).

At a city or regional scale these tendencies are often associated with various conceptions of urban sprawl, the formal oppositions of city/country and centre/periphery having broken down (Fishman 1987; Castells 1989; Garreau 1991). Virilio's evocative descriptions of some of the spatial and perceptual consequences are part of a wider attention being given to such phenomena. Manuel Castells (1996) has provided the well-known description, 'the space of flows', for the key conditions driving such development – referring to the integrated global networks comprising connected elements such as the internet, financial networks and company intranets.

Such informational systems are seen to produce alternative geographies of spatial organization that no longer relate to existing zonal concepts of centre and periphery (although they may be inscribed over the existing forms). Points of intensity appear in new urban nodes such as the modern airport typology described by Deyan Sudjic: 'an extraordinary mixture of the planned and the unplanned. Built in the scale of the largest new towns, and representing a massive investment, it is free of the usual zoning constraints. You find hotels cheek by jowl with engineering plants' (1993: 168). Much urban theorizing around such conditions suggests that the contemporary city can no longer be defined by the spatial distinctions of city quarters, walls and gates, public squares and the ritual processions that fill them: the limits of the historic city have been erased along with the singular 'heart'. The logic of the space of flows has superseded that of the space of places.

Thus, coupled to an engagement with the possibilities of non-figurative form is an interest in that space of flows. Increasingly, urban space has been envisioned as a realm of plural nodes and complex flowing networks; a new city of artificial grounds that relate to unstable, shifting figures. Commerce, recreation and other social activities now spread across a diffuse landscape where interaction is no longer bound by a hierarchical and centripetal public realm. Rem Koolhaas has labelled this urban milieu the 'Generic City'. His descriptions of the phenomenon demonstrate an obvious fascination for the processes at work, and the particular 'pleasures' they can provide:

The Generic City is . . . a place of weak and distended sensations, few and far between emotions, discreet and mysterious like a large space lit by a bed lamp. Compared to the classical city, the Generic City is *sedated*, usually perceived from a sedentary position . . . The urban plane now only accommodates necessary movement, fundamentally the car; highways are a superior version of boulevards and plazas, taking more and more space; their design, seemingly aiming for automotive

efficiency, is in fact surprisingly sensual, a utilitarian pretence entering the domain of *smooth* space.

(Koolhaas 1995: 1250–1)

Aspects of these urban conceptions are evoked in the propositions of new urban forms as complex organizational infrastructures that instrumentalize the flux of the city. They suggest an imagined condition very much akin to the idea of ‘smooth space’ outlined by Deleuze and Guattari (2000). The concept of smooth space describes a spatial ordering defined by traversal and encounter rather than objectification – the desert space of the nomad rather than the Cartesian (or striated) space of the engineer. If the rigid, compartmentalized nature of the modernist city’s fabric can be seen as striated space, the pursuit of Flow Urbanism might be cast as the attempt to insinuate an experience of smooth space, where ‘the smooth is the continuous variation, continuous development of form’ and ‘the points are subordinated to the trajectory’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 478).

Thus, the urbanism of flows, in its approach to the production of the public realm, conjures a model of fluid, interconnected space that unsettles established ideals of public urban place-making. Seeking an architectural approach to reconcile the characteristics of the splintering metropolis described above, it suggests an alternate spatial ordering for urban places based on qualities of fluidity, changing programmatic intensity, rhythms of use and their aesthetic possibilities. In this way it posits heterotopian spaces that become tools for imagining other modes of public occupation and encounter.

## Conclusion

In the projects described above, that envisioning of a new form of public space emerges alongside an alternative social ordering of public space; one based on the formal incorporation of the city’s temporal, programmatic and population flows. Their spatial modelling can be seen as a nascent attempt to provide a synaesthesia of the fluid qualities of postmodern city life. Moreover, they catalyse a rethinking of the urban landscape. They form heterotopias of urban flow.

However, the implicit relationships between the social structuring and architecture of those flows generate a number of tensions or concerns. These relate particularly to the role of Flow Urbanism’s spaces as suggestive of unfettered mobility, as integrating urban gestures, and as affective form. In relation to mobility, the images conjured by Flow Urbanism of the city’s travellers – commuters, business people, holiday makers – make connections between their augmented mobility and an emancipation of the public spaces they move through. The complex circuits of the postmodern city, when stimulated by Flow Urbanism, are projected as sites of plurality, of

intensified social interaction. However, the bodily and social experiences of these spaces of mobility remain ambiguous; the interaction between fluid spaces of urban movement and corporeal encounter are little seen in the data of flows.

There is a further ambivalence in the projection of Flow Urbanism as spatial means of integration. The ability for the projects to function as social condensers is dependent on a relationship between space and programming that, again, remains vague in the formulation of the projects. The examples discussed above build on the positioning of transport interchanges as knots in the urban fabric that integrate multiple programmatic concerns. There is a potential, directly suggested by early plans for the Yokohama Port Terminal, for that characteristic to provide a landscape supporting both old and new practices of urban public life. However, the ability of Flow Urbanism to impact on wider discussions of accessibility and social heterogeneity in the public realm relies on a more critical engagement with the programming and occupation of the spaces. The potentials of programmatic interstices, for example the opportunities for unprogrammed space, provide one example. Ultimately, it is important that the flows – the parameters and programming of these projects – are interrogated alongside the architectural form.

Finally, the assertion of these projects as urban infrastructure – superseding traditional architectural form – poses similar problems: the supposedly direct, pragmatic affect of the projects suggesting an analogous spatial overdetermination. The smooth spaces and mobile landscapes that seem to provide the grounding for formal gestures (fluid, engineered, complex) are most provocative in the gaps or interstices – the spaces for alternative occupation and *détournement*. An urbanism of flows risks the normalization of such qualities. This issue is acknowledged when UN Studio note: ‘these numbers tell us too little about the motives triggering all these patterns, or about the effects of these structures and constellations’ (van Berkel and Boss 2002: 110).

Ultimately, Flow Urbanism still provides useful tools for exploring new typologies of public space. The speculation regarding density of encounter, individual versus mass movement, spatial intimacy and expansion, is presented through new public ground surfaces that aspire to intensify a sense of urbanity. As heterotopian spaces that are neither street nor plaza, they also represent a way of giving primacy to movement networks and, thus, demonstrate a potential to contribute to wider discussions of urban sustainability. This is particularly relevant considering the increasingly privatized development scenarios of the city. Infrastructural projects, given their large-scale and long-term implications for economic and social networks, become vital opportunities for architecture to maintain a progressive social role. In this context Flow Urbanism might become a name for critical experiments with a meaningful public role to play.

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Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain (Frank Gehry, 1996) (photograph: Michael Reeve).

# Heterotopias of illusion

## From Beaubourg to Bilbao and beyond

D. Grahame Shane

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### Three heterotopian systems

Urban actors create cities through negotiations that employ shared, symbolic intermediaries, creating a commons or shared space for activities. This commons may take the form of an enclave, an armature or a heterotopia. Cities are made up of shifting, recombinant relationships between these three elements. The enclave is predominant in the archaic, hierarchic (Asian, Islamic, medieval European) spatial order of localization. The armature is predominant in the spatial order of extension in the infrastructure or public spaces of the modern industrial city and the heterotopia predominates in the network space of the post-industrial city. These three organizational devices are fundamental to the activities of urban actors, who need shared, common, communicative, collective, conceptual models in order to create and operate the city successfully (Shane 2005: 176–227).

We can read the shifting function of heterotopian systems in the city in light of Foucault's history of space that corresponds to Kevin Lynch's three city models – the 'City of faith', the 'City as a machine' and the 'Organic city', aka Eco-City (Lynch 1981: 71–98). In this reading the three sorts of heterotopia Foucault distinguishes can be tied to his three spatial systems or stages in his 'history of space' (his lecture stopped short of doing so): the medieval hierarchic 'space of localisation' (sometimes translates as the 'space of relations'), where the 'heterotopia of crisis' is hidden, the modern 'space of extension', where new urban actors create the 'heterotopia of deviance' outside the city initiating an urban network, and finally the network as the 'space of emplacement', where urban actors enjoy 'heterotopias of illusion' that display shifting, mobile relationships within the network (Foucault 1967: 265; Shane 2005). We commonly call these three urban and informational systems the pre-industrial, the industrial and post-industrial city. The terms *Archi Citta*, *Cine Citta* and *Tele Citta* (IsoCaRP 2001) have the advantage that they emphasize the communication systems and symbolic intermediaries used by different generations of urban actors. Furthermore, they echo Jean Baudrillard's three informational 'Orders of Simulation', where the first order

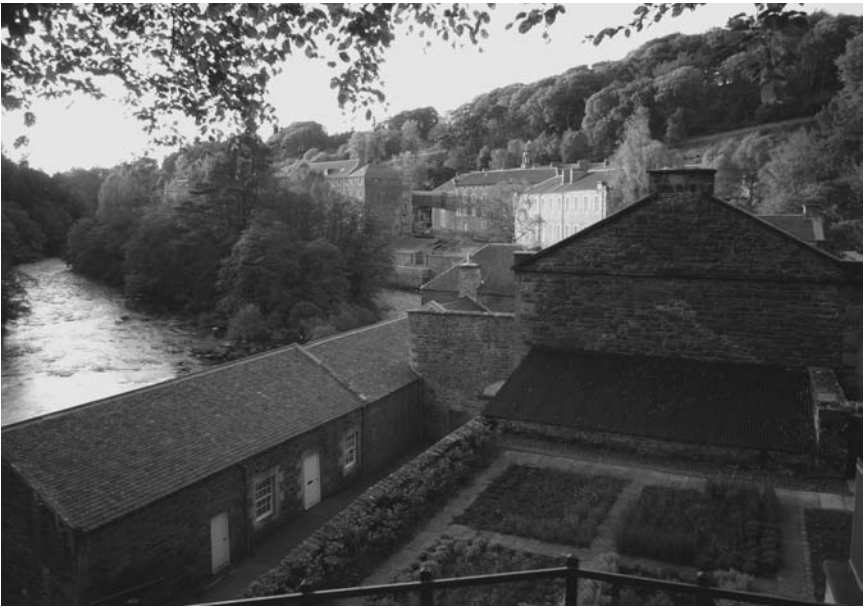


of simulation consists of hand-crafted originals, the second of mechanical reproductions and the third of simulacra and hyper-reality (Baudrillard 1983: 166–84). In the ‘Third Order of Simulation’ (*Tele Citta*) there is ‘no original and no copy’ and new originals (‘the real’) can be created ‘from miniature units, matrices, memory banks and control modules’ and ceaselessly circulate in the media and society in an ‘ecstasy of communication’ that he both welcomed and feared (Luke 1994: 216–19). Foucault investigated how the ‘heterotopia of deviance’ promoted the modern shift from *Archi Citta* to the *Cine Citta*, from the medieval to the industrial city with the rise of the mental asylum, the hospital and the prison (1978: 300). Fast-paced ‘Heterotopias of illusion’ now facilitate the shift to the ‘Third Order of Simulation’ in the *Tele Citta*.

In the elaboration of his ‘heterotopology’ Foucault spoke of the miniaturization involved in the creation of heterotopias, as well as their mobility moving between set points (his perfect heterotopia was the ship ‘moving from port to port, from brothel to brothel’) and their feedback capacity in terms of multiple, ‘mirroring’ codes. Heterotopias were always complex, ambiguous and multicellular structures, capable of containing exceptional activities and new urban immigrants because of their flexible codes and their unusual, multiple compartments. The codes of heterotopias mirrored and inverted their host societies, discipline and illusion being balanced in the ‘heterotopia of crisis’, discipline dominating in the ‘heterotopia of deviance’ and illusion dominating in the ‘heterotopia of illusion’ (Shane 2005: 246, 251, 259).



Beguineage of Leuven, Belgium (photograph: D. Grahame Shane).



Robert Owen's New Lanark, Scotland (photograph: D. Grahame Shane). Robert Owen (1771–1858) transformed the mill complex into a heterotopia of discipline, a well run factory, highly profitable and a workers' utopia.

It is not hard to cite built examples of these three types of heterotopias. In the *Archi Citta*, the Oxford college or the Belgian *beguinage* are non-punitive sanctuaries inside the city block for people in crisis and transition provided by institutions as acts of communal charity. In the case of the medieval Oxford college the professors provided itinerant teenage students with rooms in houses on a staircase where they themselves lived and taught as tutors. Later the professors moved to a 'quad' (courtyard) to share facilities such as a chapel, dining room, library, infirmary and guard in the gatehouse. Wealthy medieval Leuven provided a similar miniature city of small houses with gardens for pious women within its own walled enclave, with its own church, common rooms and hospital inside the city. The inhabitants were free to go in and out, but knew they would be safe at night within its walls (it is now a student hostel and, like most *beguinages* of the low lands, a UNESCO World Heritage site).

In the *Cine Citta*, hospitals, clinics, asylums, cemeteries, prisons, schools, universities and military barracks (as well as colonies and ships) correspond to Foucault's category of 'heterotopias of deviance' that urban actors moved outside their host cities. Foucault's prime example was Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, where rigid, 'scientific' disciplinary codes (invented by specialized professionals) shaped the living arrangements and built environment

to compensate for the criminals' failure to honour the codes of a modern, just and egalitarian society (Evans 1971: 58–69; Foucault 1978: 95–228). Later scholars added other examples of highly regulated places of 'alternative social ordering', including factories, warehouses, docks and port facilities (Hetherington 1997: 109–38). Robert Owen's New Lanark, Scotland, is exemplary of this expansion of the 'heterotopia of deviance' to include a small industrial town with its many 'philanthropic' regulations, company store, schools, hospital, chapel, owner's house and workers' housing blocks (Bentham was an investor in this project; it is now also a UNESCO World Heritage site).

Foucault gave as examples of the 'heterotopia of illusion': gardens, theatres, cinemas, world's fairs, stock exchanges, bordellos, casinos and museums, where space and time could be collaged at will and codes of behaviour and fashion could change very rapidly. The French Crown, for instance, considered theatres to be a threat to public order, subjecting them to censorship and restricting them to peripheral locations, such as the Théâtre de l'Odéon (1770s) near the Palais de Luxembourg. The privileged aristocratic enclave of the Palais Royal, in the centre of the city beside the Louvre, provides an excellent, early example of a 'heterotopia of illusion'



Palais Royal, Paris (photograph: D. Grahame Shane). In the late eighteenth century, the Duc d'Orléans transformed the garden of his palace into a commercial cum heterotopian pleasure garden, including shops, cafés and the first (wooden) arcade. This 'Galerie de Bois' is the origin not only of the famous arcades but also of the Parisian stock exchange.

that included many heterotopian activities (such as theatre, gambling, prostitution). The Duc d'Orléans, owner of the Palais, convinced the King, his cousin, to allow commercial activities on the site, which was already exempt from the rules of the city of Paris as it was royal land (Geist 1983: 445–60, 522–9).

The resulting 'heterotopia of illusion' at the Palais Royal was a handsome courtyard of apartments above clean, long shopping arcades of expensive shops, banks, money exchanges, book stores, galleries, high fashion stores and excellent restaurants. The first French stock market was located here. At night the theatre, an underground circus, shadow puppet shows, cafés, gambling and prostitution set the tone in the well-lit arcades. Private police and private street cleaners provided the disciplinary and hygienic components. The world's first, wooden, glass-covered shopping arcade, the 'Galerie de Bois', appeared here (1786–88) behind the Duke's palace, leading to the side of the newly constructed theatre, the Palais Royal. It was in this spectacular, heterotopian enclave that the revolutionary pamphleteers established themselves beyond the reach of the Paris police and here that incendiary speeches in the courtyard led to a group of women revolutionaries bringing the royal family back from Versailles (to be imprisoned in the Temple, another extra-legal enclave within Paris belonging to the Knights Templar from the Crusades; Geist (1983: 59–64)).

### **Heterotopias of illusion: *Cine Citta*, Beaubourg and modern urbanism**

Foucault pointed to fairgrounds, markets, arcades, department stores and world's fairs, the showplaces of capitalism and global production, as 'heterotopias of illusion'. Walter Benjamin saw these places as supporting the urban dream world of the bourgeoisie, his 'Phantasmagoria', fed by advertising and marketing promotions, creating a frenzy of consumption and commercial fetishism about objects of desire. Advertisers attempted to brand a preference for their products on the collective unconscious of consumers to influence their purchases in the spectacular showplaces of global production and luxury (Benjamin 1937: 147–62).

Both heterotopias of deviance and those of illusion depended on networks. The project of the modern city presumed that engineers would provide networks of clean drinking water, proper sanitation, good paved roads, efficient railways, electricity, telegraph and telephone services everywhere. The services that we now take for granted in the industrialized north began as local networks and then expanded to form national and international networks. Every nation-state sought to bundle together modern urban services and to provide them as a package with near universal coverage. Sometimes the state itself would intervene to achieve economies of scale, as when the UK government underwrote the construction of a National



Passage des Panoramas, Paris (1800) (photograph: D. Grahame Shane). As the name indicates, this arcade included a panorama. Many arcades housed theatres, print and book shops, cafés and brothels. They were, in other words, heterotopian armatures assembling an array of heterotopias.

Grid for the distribution of electricity. The US government similarly encouraged the creation of large private communication monopolies, such as the Bell telephone system or national television networks, to service the new, sprawling suburban growth (Graham and Marvin 2001: 44–89).

In post-war America, Walt Disney demonstrated the essential mechanisms of the 'heterotopia of illusion' in the TV age when he built Disneyland in the orange groves of Anaheim on the edge of Los Angeles in 1954. Disney added several new features to the traditional 'heterotopia of illusion', such as the world's fair. In the first place, TV media coverage was essential to success. Disney struck a deal with the NBC television network to show his cartoons to the children in the fast-expanding suburbs of America (40 million people

moved to the suburbs in 15 years) in exchange for financial help in building his theme park. Second, control of the image of the park was crucial, both in terms of its record of safety and security, and in terms of its compensatory, nostalgic themes. The new suburban frontier might inspire cowboy themes, such as Frontier Land and Future Land, but Disney was savvy enough to make the entrance through the Main Street armature of Disneyland at two-thirds scale. Children felt empowered and parents felt like giants. The simulacra street, with its hidden underground realm containing the 'City as a machine', compensated for the newness of suburbia as its historic façades symbolized a lost community. This 'heterotopia of illusion' attracted 12 million visitors in its first year of operation (Marling 1997: 86–139).

American developers, confronted with the emptying city cores, were slow to learn Disney's lesson. In their view the centre of the city stood for blight and decay. While Guy Debord was busy collaging together his 'Naked City' map (1956), cutting out the fragmentary 'atmospheres' of central Paris and connecting them with red arrows of desire, in the US downtown the 'festival mall' only slowly caught on after the initial success of Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco, followed by James Rouse's heavily subsidized Quincy Market, Boston, which, like Disneyland, attracted 12 million people a year. European planners were quicker to rediscover the potential of historic cores, as Copenhagen began the long process of pedestrianizing its central area in 1962 (Gehl and Gemzoe 1996: 59). In London protesters fought against the demolition of the Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market and won in 1973, allowing the GLC to develop the area as 'Festival Mall' (1980). French groups protested the demolition of Baltard's steel and glass structures at Les Halles markets, but lost to an underground mall, resulting in the promise of a new art centre in central Paris. In the same period artists transformed Soho in New York into a new arts quarter, after the defeat of Robert Moses' highway plans (1968). Each New York artist studio acted as heterotopian cell inside the decaying, cast-iron factory buildings that had been slated for demolition. In an unusual case of bottom-up, cell-by-cell transformation of the city from the inside (reminiscent of the 'heterotopia of crisis' when change was hidden inside the city), artists hid their existence in the lofts behind blacked-out windows at night until they were legally recognized as occupants (Zukin 1982: 2–17).

The 1971 competition organizers for the Pompidou Art Centre presumed that arts-led development would transform the surrounding Le Marais district. Renzo Piano and Richards Rogers' winning design looked like a modern factory inserted into central Paris to contain art collections in a giant, flexible, loft-like art palace. A gridded fragment of the modern *Cine Citta* machine stood in deliberate and stark contrast to the historic district, a 'social condenser' descended from the Russian Constructivists' theory of inserting a new social facility to reverse the code of the feudal *Archi Citta*. This new building was intended as a newly wired, electronically connected

commons, with its associated shopping plaza. It promised to plug the impoverished inner-city neighbourhood into the universal, global city network of the *Tele Citta*. The project attracted over five million visitors in 1977, its first year, beating the Louvre into second place as a tourist attraction (the ride up the escalators to the spectacular view from the roof-top terraces was a treat in itself – until the 1997–9 renovations; Sudjic (1995: 55–65)).

Beaubourg, as the Pompidou Centre was renamed by the Parisians after the quarter it had partly replaced and transformed so drastically, helped re-centre Paris and renewed the tradition of the ‘heterotopia of illusion’ in a city that had forgotten the role of its arcades, its theatres, world’s fairs and art galleries. Learning lessons from the 1960s’ avant-garde theories of Cedric Price and Archigram in London, the Pompidou Centre appeared to be a miniature fragment from an advanced, hypermodern, network city. The designers deliberately exposed its giant trusses, exterior escalators and elevators on the façade, as well as the gigantic service pipes on the rear. The winning competition drawings included huge video screens and ticker-tape displays on the façade serving ‘the society of the spectacle’ (Debord 1967: 35–40), with movable platforms suspended in the large, long-span, unobstructed interior galleries. The designers topped off the entire confection, a perfect ‘heterotopia of illusion’, with a large, prominently displayed satellite dish acting as a high-tech symbol on the roof (Sudjic 1995: 22).



Centre Pompidou, Paris (Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, 1977) (photograph: D. Grahame Shane).

In his 'Beaubourg-effect' (1982) Baudrillard condemned the new museum as a 'monument to disconnection', which brought the 'hyper-reality of Disneyland' to central Paris and killed the art that it displayed. He argued that the museum was a mechanical dinosaur and monument to mechanical flows that attempted to freeze the city's artistic production and circulation. The museum was dangerous because it represented 'the model of all future forms of controlled "socialization"; the re-totalization of all the dispersed functions of the body and of social life (work, leisure, media culture) within a single homogeneous space-time' (Baudrillard 1982). In his view the single space-time of this reintegration destroyed the freedom of artistic creativity and replaced it with the frozen domain of the hyper-real simulacra.

### **Heterotopias of illusion in global networks: Bilbao and beyond**

Heterotopias of illusion, as Baudrillard feared, proved potent engines for urban development of simulacra in *Tele Citta*, the post-industrial city, whether in the Disney theme-park version or the European cultural-heritage version. In Florence, the Uffizi Gallery, the biggest cultural attraction in Europe (12 million visitors) expelled the tourist buses and parked cars from its street armature and the Piazza della Signoria (repaved in 1980), leading to the pedestrianization of all of downtown Florence as an enclave (which became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1982). In the USA, work on Disney World, Florida, built on 25,000 acres of swampland, began in 1967. Disney opened this 'Magic Kingdom' replica of Disneyland in 1971 and in 1982 followed it with the Experimental Planned Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT). Here Disney demonstrated his belief in the global power of communication systems and branding name places. The Atlantic Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) Pavilion in a vast Buckminster Fuller dome on axis at the entry commanded the circular pond beyond, around which Disney placed at intervals small urban quarters representing cities, such as Paris with the Eiffel Tower, Venice with the Piazza San Marco, and Tokyo with a wooden temple. The global system telecommunications tied the world of urban fragments together, connecting individuals together. Everyone was still connected equally by a state-regulated, global, corporate service provider, represented here by the now defunct AT&T global system (Marling 1997: 140–89).

This vast 'heterotopia of illusion', Disney World, is now the largest single employer in the USA, with 58,000 'cast members' hosting 42 million 'guests'. After the Magic Kingdom, Disney established a global brand, starting with EuroDisney outside Paris (1975), which attracted 12 million visitors a year by the late 1990s. Tokyo Disneyland (1983) followed to become the world's most visited theme park (until 2003). In 1993 Disney invested in the New Amsterdam Theater at Times Square on Manhattan's 42nd Street, guaranteeing the rebirth of that street armature as a spectacular tourist attraction



(42 million tourists visited New York in 2005). Hong Kong Disneyland (2005) expects 10 million people a year on completion of its second themed enclave.

Thomas Krens, who became the Director of the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1988, fulfilled Baudrillard's worst fears, transferring the corporate branding concept of the Disney global network to the art world, merging it with the national Beaubourg model, to propose the Guggenheim as a 'global brand' of art museums. In Italy, Peggy Guggenheim's palazzo on the Grand Canal (opened to the public in 1979) represented an accidental, initial outpost of this empire. Before his appointment, Krens had proposed the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Arts (Mass MOCA) in an enormous abandoned factory in North Adams, MA (it opened with state funding in 1996). Based on a similar public-private hybrid model, Krens built a global chain, from the Berlin Guggenheim (1997) to the Las Vegas Guggenheim in the Venetian Casino (by Rem Koolhaas, 2001-closed 2003). Krens proposed branches in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (by Jean Nouvel, 2002) and Guadalajara, Mexico (by Enrique Norten, 2005). In addition Krens dreamt of an Asian branch in Hong Kong (designed by Foster) or Taiwan (designed by Zaha Hadid), but in 2005 Peter B. Lewis, the Chairman of the Board and largest donor in the museum's history (\$50 million), resigned. Lewis opposed the global brand strategy, saying he wished the museum would 'concentrate more on New York and less on being scattered all over the world'. The original NYC building was in a state of bad disrepair. The following year Krens announced an Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates Guggenheim to be designed by Frank Gehry (Krens 1999: 106-7).

Krens was not alone in this effort, as state museum directors also sought to establish mini-brands and networks. The French state planned 'mediathèques' as smaller heterotopian versions of Beaubourg in provincial cities, such as Norman Foster's Carré d'Art (1984-93) beside the Roman temple in Nîmes. In England the Tate Gallery under the leadership of Sir Nicholas Serota established a national brand, converting old industrial buildings to art gallery use. The British Tate Gallery (built on the site of the former, panoptic Millbank Prison) established branches in the Liverpool Docks (1988), the St Ives Old Gasworks (Cornwall, 1993), the Baltic Warehouse, Gateshead (2002) and, most successfully, in the old Bankside power station on the South Bank, London - the by now famous 'Tate Modern' (2000), which drew 5.2 million visitors in its first year.

Gehry's hybrid recombination of models from the Beaubourg and Frank Lloyd Wright created a striking global attractor for the Guggenheim in Bilbao (1997), establishing the brand and a positive 'Bilbao Effect' for the city (1.3 million visitors in 2005). Krens realized that the Keynesian global monopoly system was breaking apart in the 1970s and a two-tiered system was emerging in the Thatcherite, neo-conservative model of private utility service corporations that operated for a profit in place of the 'public good'

monopolies. Using the Pop icons of the 1960s and 1970s as a cover, Krens pitched his Guggenheim brand at the emerging, global middle class. In this period the World Bank and other global institutions also shifted their paradigm of development away from Keynesian state-run monopolies to multiple private or private–public partnerships, often creating state-supported oligopolies. In terms of global service provision the utopian, universal formulation of Disney broke down into a system of ‘bypasses’, where private service providers left out poor areas that could not afford the more profitable, high-premium services (Graham and Marvin 2001: 138–77). Disney World implicitly incorporated a two-tiered system of global tourists from the ‘First World’ (global North) and invisible inhabitants of other strange lands in the ‘Third World’ (global South), later exploited as attractors in theme parks like Safari Village (1998–2000).

The Bilbao Guggenheim represented a new hybrid. The museum represented both Krens’s global ambitions and those of the Basque province to reassert its presence on the world stage after years of repression by General Franco (Guernica, the subject of Picasso’s painting, is close to Bilbao). In contrast to the original New York Guggenheim and Beaubourg, this museum was located on the edge of downtown, in a river flood plain where it formed part of a plan for apartments and a new commercial district to connect to a pre-existing, regional theatre. Gehry articulated the building in two parts: an upper tower and atrium-like structure with small interior balconies reminiscent of Wright’s spiral ramps, and a long, low shed beneath this, reminiscent of Beaubourg in its scale and column-free interior. One part addressed the reaction against the machine aesthetic represented by Wright’s Organic theory and emphasis on the individual. The other part gloried in the mass-scaled machine aesthetic of Beaubourg, pushing it to its new, CAD-powered, fragmented conclusion as a flexible, single-storey factory shed diminishing the individual below its huge roof. Hiding the junction between these two parts and scaling the building to its position in the tight valley section, the multifaceted titanium skin created a shimmering, signature profile, wrapping around the elegant bridge that crossed the river.

## **Heterotopias and new hybrids in the urban future**

The emerging two-tiered system was facilitated, in the same decades in which Krens tried to build his empire of ‘heterotopias of illusion’, by a global communication revolution that empowered individuals within some American, European and Asian cities, creating conditions similar to those envisioned by Foucault in 1967 in his ‘system of relations’ (with mobile, interconnected urban actors whose interactions form temporary ‘sites’). Beginning with *The Well*, a Silicon Valley subscription bulletin board in San Francisco in the late 1980s, the virtual social network movement on the internet grew enormously in the 1990s and by 2005 extended to voice,

text and video images on mobile devices such as cell phones. Edge Cities, rural–urban *Citta Diffusa* and megalopolitan Network Cities of the global North all depend for their efficient operation on such systems that include person-to-person communication, enabling swarming and clustering of individuals in groups, forming ‘sites’. In the privileged realm of the Network City a tiny minority of the world’s population has an unprecedented connectivity that forms a complex, responsive urban feedback system, where citizens can influence each other’s choices through self-organization and the media. Citizens can meet each other, arrange assignments and make dates, trade and communicate, all through a virtual network that intimately shapes their image of and movement through their city.

The second tier of this global system emerged in the same past 15 years in which the largest migration to cities in human history took place in South America, Africa, India and China. The result was that the UN estimates that this year, for the first time in human history, half of the world’s three billion population now lives in cities, with one third of the urban population (half a billion) living in poverty in ‘slums’. The UN expects the world population to double in the next 15 years in yet another urban explosion, with the number in slums going as high as two billion. Meanwhile every shanty town sprouts with antennas or satellite dishes and a third of the world’s population is estimated to have cell phones, even as people carry water into their houses (UN Habitat 2003: xxv–55).

Like Disney in the 1970s, Krens in the 1990s depended on communication networks and the growth of global tourism, promoting leisure and pleasure activities centred in specialized ‘heterotopias of illusion’. Disney has been proven right that communication media, images and the television networks can support enormous ‘heterotopias of illusion’ at a new global scale, despite AIDS, poverty and disease. Four of the five largest malls in the world are now in Asia, the largest three times the size of the one million-square-foot Mall of America (Barboza 2005). Dubai will soon host the largest mall in the world and the Emirates a Guggenheim. Such ‘heterotopias of illusion’ will play a role in the future modernization of Asian cities, in India and China, as well as in cities in the Islamic world. These heterotopias have always drawn people to the city in search of a better life and contact with strangers. As in Europe, the USA and Japan, ‘heterotopias of illusion’ and their supporting networks will play a role in the development of new, local, modern hybrids that facilitate the shift towards a more performing, flexible and mobile urbanism of ‘sites’.

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Part 7

# Heterotopia after the *polis*

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Suharto portrayed as the 'Father of Development' on a political billboard (photograph: Kal Muller).

# The heterotopian divide in Jakarta

## Constructing discourse, constructing space

*Robert Cowherd*

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The space of the city is both a manifestation of social dualisms and an instrument through which they are maintained and reproduced. For several millennia, the Southeast Asian archipelago has been the site of some of the world's most diverse urban juxtapositions of ethnicity and culture. While the bifurcation implied in the use of the term 'social dualism' may serve to characterize situations where the dominant set of social distinctions occur according to a single factor, the social conditions found in the history of Southeast Asia require a characterization that captures the non-linear, non-homogeneous operation of multiple overlapping factors. A finely grained hierarchy of social distinctions has historically been mapped according to complex combinations of class, religion, ethnicity, language and occupation. Since the first centuries of the Common Era, trade has brought different populations together and towns have formed as a spatial mosaic of distinct ethno-linguistic cultures operating in explicitly segregated urban spaces. These often sharply defined enclaves offer a rich demonstration over time of ways in which social norms are negotiated, imposed, managed and reproduced in relation to specific physical forms of the built environment – a situation that might be usefully identified as exhibiting characteristics of heterotopia.

This chapter looks briefly to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century apartheid system established by the Dutch East India Company as an echo of the late twentieth-century neo-liberal restructuring of Jakarta, which has left the region as one of the world's most notorious examples of uneven development. More specifically, this chapter examines the means by which a ruling elite has constructed the new conditions of heterotopia in the Jakarta metropolitan area and finds that the skilful control of the public discourse has enabled this elite to turn the legal and policy tools of post-colonial reforms and a nascent civil society into a powerful means of further accumulations of power and wealth. A central theme demonstrated by the following examples is that the very conditions policy measures were designed to mitigate have instead been exacerbated in the context of a new rhetorical climate engineered by the ruling elite. Heterotopian already in its colonial formation, the restructuring of post-independence Jakarta reproduces the





Ethnographic illustration typical of the period. Under the 1754 Batavian Sumptuary Code, wealthy Chinese merchants were granted the privileges of being transported on sedan chairs.

prior spatial dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, connection and segregation, supporting the maintenance and extension of asymmetrical power relations.

### **Discourse management**

Regardless of whether the Dutch invented apartheid or learned it from the indigenous societies they subjugated (Nightingale 2006), one of the most extreme demonstrations of how urban space can be wielded as an instrument of control is provided by the elaborate spatial segregation of Batavia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Dutch East India Company founded Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1619 on the ashes of a decimated indigenous port town as the company's headquarters for overseas trade. For more than a century, the Dutch company banned indigenous residents from inside Batavia's walls, even as slaves, to guard against rebellion. Instead, the Dutch East India Company populated Batavia with slave and non-slave workers from distant homelands, reflecting the geographic reach of the company's far-flung trade network and the direct result of a policy by which a small group of Dutch sailors could maintain control over a cacophony of many other, similarly small population groups. This divide-and-rule method was also found in another Dutch colony that centuries later evolved into the infamous 'Grand Apartheid' system of South Africa. Instead of race identity cards, as found in Grand Apartheid's pass laws, Batavian apartheid required dress codes for each categorical group, formalized in

the 1754 Sumptuary Code. The largest non-slave population, for example, was that of mixed-blood Portuguese-speaking 'Mardijkers', freed from slavery with their Christian baptisms. Because they shared a common faith with the Europeans, under the Sumptuary Code they had the right to wear shoes. The same rules dictated what material their shoe buckles should be according to their ranking within Mardijker society. Not only were articles of dress restricted by law, but also the means of conveyance through the streets of Batavia. Wealthy Chinese merchants were granted the privileges of being transported on sedan chairs. Even within the ranks of the Batavian elite, the Sumptuary Code dictated the number of horses permitted to pull a carriage. On this matter Abeyasekere (1987: 36) presents the Sumptuary Code as being a response necessitated by the 'Asian obsession' with status and the rampant inflation of ostentatious display. However, it is telling that the Dutch East India Company was dependent enough on this system of signs that it was compelled to curb the trends that might confuse its system of categorical distinctions. Similarly, Raben (2000) cautions that there would almost certainly be a great deal of spatial mixing, particularly outside the walls of Batavia where company controls were harder to enforce. But, for the Dutch company, the categories served their purpose even in cases where it contradicted actual ethnic realities.

As elsewhere in recent decades, the introduction of neo-liberal economic policies facilitated the rapid restructuring of Jakarta's urban core and the ex-urban periphery, establishing vast exclusionary zones of luxury. 'Global standard' housing, shops, offices, recreation facilities, infrastructure, urban services and amenities were 'bundled' together and marketed as package deals invoking the fantastical imagery of hyper-real 'global lifestyles' of the developed West. While corporate-controlled media advertised the new achievements of consumer choice and governments celebrated these transformations as evidence of 'development', a less well-publicized series of spatial displacements of social communities and public space were inflicted on a growing segment of Indonesian society: residents of the informal settlements (*kampung*) were forcibly removed in transmigration programmes to outer islands or simply burned out; agricultural villages on the former ex-urban fringes of Jakarta were compelled to sell their lands below market rates in the name of 'national development'; the public realm of the street was commandeered for the increased flow of private automobiles; restricted access toll roads replaced the mixed traffic of the boulevards; the widening of surface streets and the insertion of additional parking areas displaced street vendors to paved-over parks; and bicycle taxis were confiscated and thrown into the sea in a modern day purification ritual televised for national consumption. The fact of urban segregation remains a consistent theme emerging in different spatial forms through different mechanisms of power throughout the region's history. As such, the present examination touches on both the constancy of social segregations as a recurring arrangement of power and the novelty of its newest spatial conditions, many of which originated as formal borrowings from the developed West.

The case of Jakarta's recent transformations provides a dramatic demonstration of how the political-business elite has wielded the tools of regulation, the rhetoric of governance and the discourses of popular aspirations, effectively redeploying them in pursuit of specific outcomes. In the process, the New Order regime succeeded in diverting or even reversing the original intentions of those tools, rhetoric and discourses. The history of how these transformations were conceived, coordinated and implemented offers a portrait of the ways in which the mechanisms of governance and the expanding tools of an emerging civil society can be moulded to the purposes of the politically powerful. At the centre of the transformation of Jakarta during the last decades of the twentieth century was the second president of Indonesia, Suharto (1966–98). Although Suharto's presidency was born through the suppression of a brutal coup and the national bloodletting of an anti-Communist purge, Suharto gradually transformed his public persona from a feared military dictator to the benevolent 'father of development' (Heryanto 1988; Vatikiotis 1993). Similar alliances of political and financial power for the transformation of a city-region have been analysed elsewhere using the concepts of a 'growth coalition' (Logan and Molotch 1987) or an 'urban regime' (Stone 1989; Lauria 1997). Arguably, the alliance of political and financial power behind the restructuring of Jakarta was part of a larger enterprise, encompassing an entire nation, by the explicit employment of cultural means to achieve its goals. Suharto surrounded himself with a close circle of wealthy business partners and family members who together occupied the top of a vast pyramid of corruption that came to entangle every business enterprise of note in the sprawling archipelago nation, parallel to and surpassing in power the operation of the formal government itself. Though extensive and largely unchallenged, Suharto's direct control over the course of the nation through the military-legislative-judicial-fiduciary machinery of governance and the corporate-financial networks of corruption falls short of accounting for the extent of his influence over events. As developed elsewhere (Cowherd 2002; Cowherd and Heikkila 2002), a fuller accounting for actual outcomes requires an understanding of the role played by cultural and spatial factors. The focus here is on Suharto's capacity for guiding public discourse, showing a close alliance between discursive strategies and spatial tactics. The more urban reality would come to resemble the archipelago-like structure of Indonesia's national territory, the more the unity of a national project could be sustained within the parallel web of grand narratives and 'imagined communities'. Within this split reality, heterotopia, it seems, provides the point of connection between a discrete reality and a discursive fabric upholding the semblance of a common cause.

With his *Tropics of Discourse*, Hayden White identified the capacity for ideology to alter the meaning of language by so transforming the context of its interpretation that seemingly self-evident statements can come to mean their opposite (White 1985). Foucault (1980) identified the operations of ideology in the 'production of truth' that is the province of disciplinary knowledge and its capacity to render specific outcomes of human agency

as 'natural'. A vast and sometimes problematic literature has grown up around the operations of ideology upon and through the institutions of human societies. This examination is anchored by analyses that identify the operations of discourse construction as the key, if not always first, act of power. Foucault earns his post-structuralist/structuralist dual citizenship by acknowledging the power of discourse to structure knowledge even as it stops far short of determining historical outcomes. Instead, as celebrated by Deleuze, Foucault emphasizes that: 'In brief, power is not homogeneous but can be defined only by the particular points through which it passes' (Deleuze 1988: 25). That power passes through different points in space differently is a key characteristic of the geography of heterotopia. This diffuse, non-homogeneous power defined only by the points of its passage operates according to a 'micro-physics of power' (Bové 1988: xxx). This resort to analogical association with the physical sciences is ultimately less useful than the more direct association between the operations of power and the complex dynamics of cultural production offered by Bourdieu ('cultural practice', 1993), Jameson ('cultural logic', 1985) and the literature of the so-called 'cultural turn' (Jameson 1998; Bonnell and Hunt 1999; and others).

Methodologies that acknowledge a specifically cultural means of power propagation are doubly appropriate in the case of Suharto's New Order restructuring of Jakarta, for the explicit enlistment of national institutions in the collective project of inventing appropriately unifying expressions of an 'Indonesian Culture' in a space formerly dominated by expressions of Javanese, Balinese, Sundanese, Diak, Minangkabau and hundreds of other similarly distinct sub-national cultures. In this quest, the word 'development' played a unifying role similar to the one played by 'modernization' in earlier colonial and post-colonial projects and became the common denominator and unifying vision for the nation. A 'culture of development' formed as an ideological juggernaut with the capacity to justify almost any indiscretion by Suharto or his cronies. Not satisfied with control of both the machinations of governance and the arrangements of commercial enterprise, Suharto also made skilful use of the print and broadcast media, recreational opportunities, educational and cultural institutions, and through these channels, the very terms of public discourse itself. It is useful here to qualify such assertions that will continue to arise in this chapter, by emphasizing that Suharto's rule was, as ultimately proven in May 1998, conditional on maintaining the appearance that he alone was best capable of delivering on the promise of 'development' and a better life. The examples examined here are selected for their capacity to demonstrate the ways in which the tools of post-independence reforms and the relatively limited means of a nascent civil society were commandeered by the political-business elite for their own purposes. In several cases, the control of language and the terms of reference supplied for popular discourse provided the key for the effective redeployment of these tools, yielding results in direct contradiction to their originally intended outcomes.

## Redeployment of reform tools

The seed of Suharto's remarkable influence on the public discourse of Indonesia can be found in his first act as president, even prior to being officially sworn into office. Skilfully distinguishing his role in the restoration of order after foiling a coup against his predecessor, General Suharto identified his post-coup regime as the 'New Order', implicitly in direct contrast to the 'chaos' born of President Sukarno's radical ideas and predilection for 'constant revolution'. In 1983, Suharto donned the title 'Father of Development', lending an all-encompassing identity to his remarkable successes in establishing programmes for spreading the benefits of modernization more generally throughout the sprawling and unlikely archipelago nation. His programmes for rural electrification, road building, rice production and family planning were particularly extensive and beneficial to the Indonesian people. Following up this investment, Suharto paired the development of a state-sponsored television with a programme to place a television in every village to ensure that his story of national development would be told every evening on every channel in every village in the nation (Wardhana 1997; Wahyuni 2000).

Though seen as a man of the people and a pious Muslim, Suharto's accomplishments in spreading the benefits of 'development' were accompanied by the open secret that he occupied the pinnacle of what became one of the world's most notorious regimes of corruption. The remarkable and sustained expansion of the Indonesian economy through neo-liberal policy reforms and greater exploitation of Indonesia's mythic natural resources permitted the diversion of vast fortunes to the Suharto family members and their business partners known collectively as the Cendana-Cukong inner circle – a name derived from the Jakarta neighbourhood where they preferred to live. The extraordinary latitude enjoyed by the key actors executing New Order programmes can only be accounted for by considering the enormous iconic power of Suharto's banner of 'development'. The mere utterance of the term proved sufficient to justify even the most venal usurpation of property or human rights. As the following examples illustrate, the Suharto regime demonstrated skilful management of the discursive context of Indonesian thought and language. By altering the social, legislative and judicial discourse within which it was interpreted, Suharto's New Order regime was able to reverse the outcomes of some of the most progressive legislation to emerge as corrections to colonial era injustices.

With Indonesian independence, the Sukarno government faced the challenge of how to return the plantation, factory and mining lands accumulated under Dutch colonial rule to local indigenous communities. The 1945 constitution and the 1960 Agrarian Act invoked the well-established role of land exchanges in ritualized life passages (dowry, inheritance, *haji*, solidifying extended family ties, etc.) required by local traditions under the general principle of the 'social function of land'. The imperatives of cultural practices provided the rationale for governmental expropriation of large land holdings from corporations and (Dutch) foreigners for return to local

village or *kampung* communities. The insecurity of corporate or foreign land ownership posed a barrier to exploiting the exchange value of land. It was not until Suharto froze land reform regulations in 1966 that the first prerequisite for a larger-scale capitalist land market was satisfied. Regulatory changes in the 1970s made investment capital available for large-scale speculative real estate development, but a more daunting problem remained: how to consolidate the impossibly fragmented and largely undocumented land rights of indigenous populations. The solution was provided by the very regulations that had been implemented to redistribute lands to smallholders after independence. Exploiting the abstract looseness of the term 'social', the discursive context of 1970s New Order 'development' made real estate development an undisputable 'social good', serving the goals of national economic expansion. Thus a new 'social function of land' was established in the form of private real estate development. In the rhetorical context of the imperatives of national development, the New Order government provided the justification for forced acquisitions of land, below market compensation rates, using the legal tools originally established to redistribute lands from private corporations to village communities. The role of local officials originally assigned the task of protecting small landholder rights against large speculators and local loan sharks was reversed under the New Order. They became routinely employed by developers to explain to villagers 'that they should be willing to use their land to contribute to national development under Indonesian tradition and practice' (Ferguson and Hoffman 1993).

The most visible tool designed to ease fears of land speculation was a Location Permit, which gave developers one year to secure loans, purchase lands and begin improvements. Location Permit rights could be extended for a second year if the developer purchased at least half of the land, at the end of which time all Location Permit rights on un-purchased land were to expire. But, under the gravitational pull of Indonesia's 'development' imperative, there was little resistance to interpreting the 'one-time one-year' extension as an annual renewal. This arrangement, eventually made legal, provided government officials with a steady (mostly unofficial) income, and allowed speculators to obtain unsecured no-strings-attached loans and most of the rights of land ownership without ever purchasing the land. The original intention of preventing long-term land speculation and ensuring compliance with land-use planning provisions was turned on its head by the rhetorical acrobatics of the New Order. By removing time limits, Location Permits facilitated the accumulation of a developer-controlled land bank within and beyond the boundaries of Jakarta almost twice the size of Jakarta itself (*Properti Indonesia* 1997).

The original justification for unleashing market forces in housing provision was that government programmes such as the national housing corporation, though impressive in scale, could do little more than scratch the surface of the national housing needs. The demand for luxury housing was thus chained to the provision of affordable housing 'within the same development area'

at a ratio of three 'simple' and six 'very simple' houses for each luxury house built. The infrastructure demanded by the luxury housing market would thus be made available to all residents by proximity, regardless of income level. This extraordinarily progressive requirement proved incompatible with the typical marketing goal of creating enclaves projecting an air of exclusivity. Direct opposition to the 'one:three:six' regulation as being at odds with the provision of luxury housing would have exposed the true intentions of New Order largesse. Instead, the forced mixing of income groups was decried as a social crime, as if the juxtaposition of the rich and poor was an immoral act of 'rubbing their noses in it', generating avoidable feelings of 'social jealousy'. Without ever altering the regulation, local jurisdictions offered the option of making 'financial donations in lieu of construction' to private 'foundations'. These foundations, managed by high officials or their immediate family members, built only a handful of houses in distant corners of West Java on sites considered more suitable for low-cost housing.

These examples serve to illustrate the ubiquitous quality of the discursive shift negotiated through the New Order's command of the media and the very language of popular political culture. The explosion of new physical development in and around Jakarta during the boom years of the 1980s and 1990s also provided the setting for a series of more spectacular localized episodes of overt corruption and abuses of power largely excused by the general public as the necessary means of achieving national development goals. The precedents for these projects by and large come out of examples found in the USA in general and Southern California specifically – the menu of development options, it would seem, is taken from a restaurant serving LA-style cooking. In 1975, Suharto's wife christened Taman Mini 'Indonesia Indah' ('Beautiful Indonesia'-in-Miniature Park), Indonesia's first national theme park, four years after conceiving the project during a visit to California's Disneyland. The project displaced hundreds of people from the 100 hectares needed for the project (Pemberton 1994: 152–61). A similar moment of inspiration came years later when, during a trip to Irvine Ranch, the largest private real estate development in the world just south of Los Angeles, Suharto's eldest son vowed to replicate Irvine Ranch southeast of Jakarta. He hired the land-use transportation planners from Irvine Ranch without permitting them to see the land for themselves. The land was available for development because it had been included in a nature preserve designated to safeguard the water supply for the growing needs of Jakarta. To ensure a market for the new development, Suharto gave preliminary approval to relocate the capital city of Indonesia from Jakarta to the new town. The most significant obstacle to development of the project was that Suharto's youngest son controlled the land rights for the only viable road access to the project and demanded a controlling interest in the project. Not to be outdone, Suharto's daughter became the dominant figure in public-private toll road construction at about the same time that the Dutch-inspired rail-based transportation plan was scrapped in favour of the American-

based interstate highway approach to providing for Indonesia's transportation future. The policy environment of rapid deregulation and the new role played by public-private partnerships employed in these projects not coincidentally opened the floodgates for new diversions of public funds and corrupt lending practices. The vast fortunes in unsecured property development loans diverted into other endeavours, including overseas accounts, was ultimately to blame for the speed and depth of the 1997 monetary crisis, which in a matter of months rolled back the economic gains of the previous two decades of economic growth (MacIntyre 2000). A new hollowness rang through the rhetoric of 'development', bringing the close bond between the management of discursive strategies and the deployment of spatial tactics to a breaking point. The majority of Indonesians could no longer forgive the thievery of the Cendana-Cukong inner circle of the New Order power brokers. In the face of violent demonstrations and international pressure, Suharto stepped down in May 1998.

### **New spaces of heterotopia**

Despite proposals by each of the four post-Suharto administrations to dismantle the New Order infrastructure of empire, impacts on the Cendana-Cukong political and economic pyramid scheme have been more a matter of adjustment than displacement. The rhetoric of development has made a strong comeback even as the value of the Indonesian currency has not. The violence of the May 1998 protests that toppled Suharto lent a new urgency to the impulse to impose a heavier hand on the control of public space. Noting that student demonstrators rarely arrive by car, the already meagre pedestrian entrances through the walls and fences that typically surround Jakarta's urban parcels were blocked off with new fences and barbed wire. Freedom Square, the symbolic centre of Jakarta devoted to the commemoration of the war for independence against the Dutch, was fenced off to keep it from being used as the site of future demonstrations. Similarly, the fountain surrounding the Welcome Monument at one of the key economic crossroads of Jakarta was also fenced off. The symbolic landscape that had served so effectively to reify the spirit of newly won independence was thus transformed. The 'freedom' of Freedom Square was now conditional and the universal embrace of the Welcome Monument was now 'by invitation only'.

At the boundaries separating the chilled and dried air of global consumption from the heavy dripping heat of tropical Jakarta, shopping mall guards exercise a new assertiveness in denying access to those failing to meet the requirements of what is, in effect, a twenty-first-century Sumptuary Code. In place of the seventeenth-century sedan chairs reserved for the most successful Chinese merchants, the wealthiest 5 per cent of Jakartans now parade their success by moving through (or idling in) the public space of the street in their own stereophonic, air-conditioned, privatized space wrapped in curvaceous steel and tinted glass. Even a small fraction of 17 million Jakartans each demanding their 10 cubic metres of public space





The sharply defined boundary conditions of adjacent heterotopian zones are transforming the 'sea of kampung' into isolated islands (photograph: Robert Cowherd).

yields epic traffic congestion that characterizes the spatial geometry of mobile heterotopia. Given the relatively timid public discourse valuing a more equitable distribution of benefits, the recent unprecedented expansion of the bus system at the expense of private automobiles has inspired as much confusion as it has support. The depth and inertia of New Order ideology is such that even those without cars see the removal of small-scale merchants, bicycle taxis and pedestrian space as signals of progress. The post-Suharto discursive revival of 'development' now fuels the further dispossession and displacement of the majority of Jakartans who live in informal settlements and/or work in the informal sector of the economy. The notion of heterotopian spatial differentiation is useful in reconciling recent journalistic declarations of global urban convergence with the more careful examinations that demonstrate the many ways in which the deeper character of socio-spatial conditions remain remarkably unchanged.

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Model of 'The Palm', Dubai (photograph: Armin Linke).

# Dubai offshore urbanism

*Alessandro Petti*

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Economic liberalism, stringent social controls and unrestrained urban development make Dubai a laboratory for a kind of urbanism that places the very notion of city and public space in a critical position. The birth of this new way of conceiving urbanism has its roots back in legend. Historically, Dubai has always enjoyed a certain liberalism, even when it was a simple fishing port with a market frequented by different populations. Today, the inhabitants of Dubai are 85 per cent foreigners, mostly Asians, Arab expatriates and Europeans. During the last 20 years, thanks to heavy investment in services and tourism and to a courageous economic policy to attract foreign capital, Dubai has developed from a small city of regional importance into an important international centre.

The story goes that, in the midst of full economic expansion during the 1990s, the ruling Al Maktoum family – demonstrating the open and tolerant character of the city – proposed to build a casino. At this provocation, Saudi Arabia, historic rival of the small emirates, declared: ‘Never a casino in the sacred land of Islam.’ In order to avoid a political and religious confrontation with the Saudi, the small emirate of Dubai created what can be considered a heterotopian place, an artificial island built by man, a counter-site in which the laws of Islam were suspended.

## **The making of an offshore paradise**

The first artificial offshore island in Dubai was built in 1997; it did not stop at just housing a casino, however, but went for something much more ambitious: the most luxurious hotel in the world, the *Burj al Arab*. Its night-time lights and unrestrained luxury are the sublimation of the idea of the casino itself: a 321 metre-high skyscraper of glass and steel, a mirage surrounded by the ocean. Cold and technological on the outside, warm and shamelessly opulent on the inside, the hotel is an incubator of activity and situations that, like Foucault’s heterotopia, ‘invert, contest or represent real places’, such as the underwater restaurant, which is reached by a

simulated three-minute submarine journey, or the space-ship restaurant suspended over the sea. In this artificial island-world, any kind of event can be realized – even a tennis match on the hotel heliport between André Agassi and Roger Federer.

The construction of the island of Burj Al Arab expresses better than anything else the conciliatory and pragmatic attitude of the emirate, in which Islam and radical capitalism coexist. This small artificial island, which is only a few hundred metres away from the mainland and can only be accessed via a sinuous bridge – a kind of umbilical cord between this new urban creature and the motherland – marks a departure from the world of traditional urban planning. The island-state of Burj Al Arab was the first test to verify the potential of *offshore urbanism*: a territory with its own sovereignty, its own laws, in which architecture is a performance. However, to be able to unleash all its urban and social potential, offshore urbanism had to remove the final restriction, which was imposed by the state on the possession of property.

Despite the fact that Dubai was one of the most important offshore business centres in the world, it still retained a number of regulations that prohibited foreign companies and individuals from owning land and property. In 2002, the emirate annulled this restriction, allowing special concessions for the ownership of property in a number of areas of the city (all the free zones and new expansion projects). This law created the legislative context and economic thrust that offshore urbanism needed. All that had to be done then was to complete a number of architectural interventions.

The opportunity came with the project for the *Jumeira Islands*. The idea came about by crossing the model of the *gated community* with the prototype of the island-state of Burj Al Arab. Gated communities, spread more or less all over the world, are fortified residential islands with controlled access, fences and systems of electronic surveillance, inhabited by homogeneous communities. Such characteristics and services were applied to the urban prototype of Burj Al Arab, giving rise to the Jumeira Islands, a residential complex consisting of an archipelago of 50 artificial islands surrounded by water in the middle of the desert – almost literally a mirage. Each island contains a cluster of villas, with only one access to the complex, which is guarded. In this system of artificial islands, the characteristics of gated communities – enclosures, isolation and surveillance – find their best spatial configuration. In the Jumeira Islands highly invasive devices, such as perimeter walls, are transformed into formal landscape devices, such as waterways. Their function of enclosure is retained, but also used to improve the landscape.

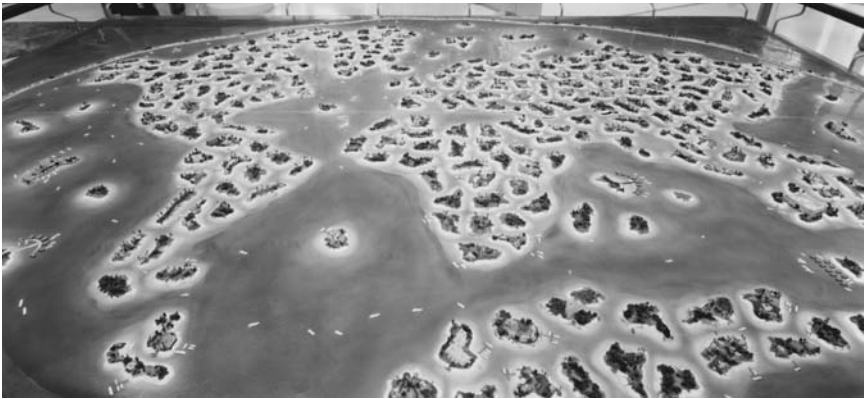
This residential project unconsciously developed the ideas conceived by building the artificial island of Burj Al Arab, but it did it in the wrong



Model of 'The World', Dubai (photograph: Armin Linke).

place, on the mainland. After building the Jumeira Islands, the designers at Nakheel, the estate agent that created them, realized that the sea and not the mainland was the context in which the potential of offshore urbanism could be fully developed. The designs for *The Palm* can be considered products of this urban strategy, perfected through three different design experiences, up until its latest culmination in a project called *The World*.

The Palm Jumeirah, begun in 2001, is built on the sea, following the formal layout of a stylized palm. The settlement is accessed via a single entrance bridge that connects the city to the first island, the trunk of the palm tree, where apartments, shops, hotels and a tourist port are located. Connected to the first island via a single road are eight tongues of artificial land, which represent the fronds of the palm tree residence, where the villas are situated. A barrier protects the top of The Palm, where the hotels are situated, from the waves. Artificial reefs simulate the topography of the finest seabeds in the world, such as the Red Sea, and those of Bali and the Maldives. The Palm, as one of Nakheel's slogans puts it, is the place for those who want to escape from the real world. At The Palm, the designers have come up with not just villas, marinas and hotels but also a kind of community. The design group was made up not just of architects, urban designers, traffic and construction engineers, but also of specialists in leisure time who deal with the design of gatherings and events – forms of community. It is not just architecture that is on sale, but a way of life in opposition to the normal life in the city. Inside the island-world everything is planned. Spatial design meets social design. One can choose an Italian, Thai or Chinese villa and at the same time choose how to spend one's free time from the range offered by the



'The Palm', Dubai, aerial view (photograph: Armin Linke).

agency. Offshore urbanism constructs its own idea of the city and the lifestyle of its inhabitants. Or at least it tries to. The Palm is a place in which the tenant is also a guest and is involved totally in the rituals of a new style of island life. These breakthroughs in spatial and social design were then refined in two more palm projects.

The second, *The Palm Jebel Ali*, built on the border with the emirate of Abu Dhabi, is double the size of the first. Its formal layout is enhanced by a quay (built in the shape of a piece of an Arabic sentence taken from a poem by the Sheik of Dubai) for docking small boats. It seems as if the social programme has been inscribed directly in the space, an urban *lapsus linguae*. The third palm, *The Palm Deira*, the last act in the saga, is the biggest of the three palms, 14 km long and 8.5 km wide. Judging by the sales, offshore urbanism has been a great success. It is this success that led to the building of The World, the latest and most developed act of offshore urbanism. These 300 islands built 4 km from the coast, each of which represents a state in the world, are the culmination of the notion of the residential island – a private island-state. The final aim seems to be the reproduction of the totality of the world.

From the hotel-island of Burj Al Arab, via the interventions of the Jumeirah Islands on the mainland and the social explorations of The Palm, one arrives at the literal realization of an archipelago of island-states that represent the totality of the world; a kind of heterotopia 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces that are in themselves incompatible, a sort of microcosm' (Foucault 1984). The island-states that form The World embody the principals of offshore urbanism:

- 1 Security-isolation: The World has a security system that includes 24-hour patrol of the coasts and a system of closed-circuit cameras in all 'public' areas. The islands can only be accessed by boat. 'A system of opening and closing that both isolates and makes it penetrable. Not freely accessible like a public space. To get in one must have a certain permission' (Foucault 1984).
- 2 Extraterritoriality: built 4 km from the coast, they are real private city-states. The owner of the island enjoys 'immunity' from state laws.
- 3 Island-worlds: the dream of reproducing the world finds its literal application. Each island represents a part of the world, a microcosm of city-worlds, a self-sufficient universe.
- 4 Social programming: the tourist and businessman blend into a new social figure, who has no need to move from The World.

The heterotopian islands described constitute the city archipelago. Each island is connected via a system of major infrastructures to places of work and leisure, as themed islands: Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media City, Dubai International Financial Centre, Dubai Gold and Jewellery Park, Dubai Marina. The islands are counter-sites, a kind of effectively 'enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (Foucault 1984). In Dubai the figure of the archipelago is not only a metaphor, it is truly a construction of a concept for a new geopolitical organization.

### **Empire as paradigm versus camp as paradigm**

The modern spatial order emerged during the twentieth century and was conceived of as a juxtaposition of homogeneous territorial states. Today it has collapsed into fragmented and discontinuous islands. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) claim that, in parallel to the decline of the international state system, one unique configuration is allowed to dominate the contemporary spatial order: the configuration of the Empire – a space without borders, without an outside, without centre and without periphery. According to Hardt and Negri, the imperial spatial order is characterized above all by the absence of borders – a space without an outside: smooth, uniform and continuous. Referring to Deleuze's opposition between the 'striated space' (of states) and the 'smooth space' (of the nomads), they argue that the dialectic between an outside and inside belonged to the 'striated space' of modernity, whereas the imperial space is free of borders created by modernity; it is a uniform and continuous space created by fractured lines. However, how are fractured lines, which by definition produce discontinuity and heterogeneity, able to create a continuous and uniform space? On this



point the two scholars are not clear; even though they cannot avoid underlining that, in the society of control, there are devices for the perpetration of spatial separation and for the management of social difference. In their view, the fortification of contemporary spaces is like an erosion of public space, and not perceived as a symptom of a more radical spatial transformation of contemporary spatial order in an emerging postcivil society.

My hypothesis is that these fortified spaces and fractured lines are at the same time constituted by some 'old border lines' belonging to modernity, and some 'new border lines' constituted by a new form of power. Therefore, the constitution of an imperial smooth space, a space of flows, is evident but needs to be integrated by a kind of space where new forms of inclusion–exclusion come back to work. In order to understand the nature of this mechanism of inclusion–exclusion inside a space of flows, we need to introduce the analysis developed by Giorgio Agamben in the *Homo sacer* series (1995, 1996, 2003).

Agamben suggests that the camp, which is now settled inside the city, is the new biopolitical *nomos* of the planet. The fractures and segmented lines described marginally in Hardt and Negri's *Empire* have become in his research the centre – spaces where the sovereign power, through the state of exception, found power. The camp is in fact a spatial materialization of the state of exception. Agamben suggests we concentrate our attention on how the system of inclusion–exclusion in the camp works. Its territory is outside the juridical order, but it cannot be considered to be an outside space. The camp is indeed excluded from its surroundings through the inclusion of its space as a space of exception. It is the structure where the state of exception is realized. In the light of this definition, the smooth and borderless space of *Empire* becomes a territory strewn with voids where the juridical order is suspended and where the inclusion–exclusion system again works as a place of permanent exception. This creates a territorial system in which the figure of the *archipelago* and the figure of the *enclave* exist alongside one another. An elite, which manages the space of the flows, lives in an archipelago, perceived as a unity, without an outside. What remains in the shadows is in reality a system of enclaves in which the rules of the archipelago are suspended in legal and economic voids. Such enclaves are the labour camps in Dubai. They are not shown on the map, they are not part of the official city, even though the people who live there – Pakistani, Indians, Bangladeshi – have built the official city of Dubai and its offshore heterotopias. The construction companies bought them and allocated them to walled enclaves on the border of the desert. These enclaves of labour are neither inside nor outside the city; they form a third space in permanent suspension confined and detached from the political space. The presence of the workers is only revealed in the official city by the yellow buses that



The labour camps of Dubai (photograph: Armin Linke).

transport them from the labour camps to the construction site and back. For them, the islands of the archipelagos are accessible only until their realization. The archipelago is a system of connected islands, enclaves are just isolated, disconnected islands in a spatial limbo, as they exist *de facto*, not *de jure*. The archipelago can accommodate paths of flow within it, while the enclaves have no kind of connection; they are isolated by a power that can be inside or outside them.

### **Citizenship in the society of control**

The archipelago–enclave model is based on systems of inequality, establishing who is in and who is out, who is subject to a system of rights and laws and who is outside them. This model has placed in a critical position the concept of citizenship that, since the ancient world, has denoted the political relationship of an individual with the government of a city. In the context of globalization, the concept of citizenship is no longer a factor of inclusion and equality, able to sweep aside inequalities founded on religious and racial belonging. On the contrary, we have to admit that today it has become a factor of exclusion and discrimination. Today citizenship is the device with which an elite is able to control the global flow of people, which is in complete contradiction to the acclaimed universality and equality of fundamental rights, in particular against freedom of movement and residence. The workers in Dubai often have their passports taken away from them, so they can't get out; in reality they are prisoners or slaves.

For many years people have cultivated the idea of a world without borders, in which it would be possible to realize spaces of freedom. Today these spaces are occupied by another kind of power. Foucault (1977–8) had already picked up on this transformation. The society of control is a kind of society in which the mechanisms for command become increasingly ‘democratic’. It is an intensification and generalization of the normalizing devices of the discipline that act within our common daily practices. As opposed to disciplinary societies, however, this control extends well beyond the structural places of social institutions, via a flexible and fluctuating network (Deleuze 1990). In the society of control everyone is monitored, we are all potentially criminals. In the Panopticon prison Foucault (1975) saw the matrix of the spatial model of disciplinary society, where deviant behaviour was brought back to normality. In the society of control, power, besides invading the body via biopolitics – just think of fingerprinting or DNA analysis – does not limit itself to producing normalizing institutions, but invades the whole territory. Airports, streets, piazzas, stations, houses, offices, holiday homes, sports centres – all are increasingly subjected to meticulous and widespread control, making as such the passage from specific to generalized surveillance.

## Conclusion

The systems of inclusion–exclusion are instruments with which the city is built and continues to be built. In Dubai such spatial devices have created a territory in which the model of the archipelago, global interconnected elites, and that of the enclave, enforced isolation, live alongside one another. Enclosures, control systems, check points, armed guards – these are some of the marks of Dubai offshore urbanism; they are the signs that reveal the passage from the system of archipelagos to the system of enclaves. The themed island and the labour camp mirror one another. The former is a machine of exclusion and the latter is a machine of reclusion: the fortress versus the camp, entertainment versus control, connection versus disconnection (De Cauter 2004). This mirroring opposition reveals the matrix of the contemporary spatial order (Petti 2007).

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Girl resting on a tomb in the cemetery of Kintambo, Kinshasa, Congo (photograph: Marie Françoise Plissart). The little sticks she is holding are her makeshift toothbrush. The tomb as bed and bathroom.

# **‘Dead society’ in a ‘cemetery city’**

## **The transformation of burial rites in Kinshasa**

*Filip De Boeck*

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In recent decades, the meaning of death seems to have changed in profound ways in Kinshasa and indeed in the whole of Congo. The changing practices surrounding the place of death in the city will be analysed as specific, sometimes surprising and even shocking, ways by means of which young Kinoin urbanites not only contest the realm of official politics and dominant religious discourses and practices, but also use the instance of death to rethink and reposition themselves in the light of a broader crisis of society and the implosion of the state.

Using the example of the cemetery, Foucault (1986) had already indicated that heterotopias are not fixed once and for all, but that the very nature of their functioning can change over time in any given society. It is precisely the changing place of the cemetery and of death itself in society that this contribution will address.<sup>1</sup> Funerals and burial rituals have not only become moments for youngsters to contest and rethink the political order and authority, and thereby express their longing for new political futures, but they have also become, in their very form, moments to dissociate oneself from the religious time-frame of the church (of Catholic, Protestant and, above all, Pentecostal signature) that currently defines the city’s temporality and moral geography. The new place of death within the contemporary Congolese urban environment, and the new rituals and practices of burial and social mourning that are emerging along with them, not only give form to new collective attitudes employed by urban youngsters to deal with the continuing political and socio-economic crisis in which they live, but they also express emerging social imaginaries that deal more broadly with notions of the sacred, ancestry and existing structures of authority and gerontocracy. In doing so, urban youths, paradoxically, seem to revive more ‘traditional’ forms of ‘rituals of rebellion’ and to tap into moral matrixes with much older roots, thereby inventing a future for traditions that are themselves already reinvented in the urban context.

## **‘Cemetery city’: Congo’s political crisis, death and the religious imagination**

For decades now, Congo has been in the grip of a profound crisis that makes itself felt in every field and on every level of Congolese society: politically, economically, socially and culturally (Trefon 2004). In fact, the crisis is experienced to be so multiform and omnipresent that there hardly seems to be a way out of the harsh living conditions it has created. ‘We live like animals’ (Lingala: *tokomi kovivre lokola banyama*) is a remark often heard in Kinshasa’s streets. One of the only available answers to face the hardships imposed by this widespread crisis is provided by religion. Over the past two decades, as elsewhere in Congo and indeed Africa, Kinshasa has witnessed the rapid spread of Christian fundamentalist churches. Replacing to an important extent the ‘traditional’ Catholic and Protestant religious practices that were introduced during colonial times, Pentecostalism, churches of awakening, charismatic renewal churches and other millenarian movements have deeply penetrated the lives of city dwellers. It is this Christian fundamentalism that has imposed its logic and its temporality onto the city. This temporality is of a very specific eschatological kind and takes its point of departure in the Bible, and more particularly in the Book of Revelation, which has become the omnipresent point of reference in Kinshasa’s collective imagination. The lived-in time of daily life in Kinshasa is constantly projected against the canvas of the completion of everything, a completion that will be brought about by God. As such, Kinshasa is captured in ‘the apocalyptic interlude’ (De Boeck 2005a), a moment that has also profoundly changed the meaning and the emplacement of death in the religious realm.

Christian fundamentalism not only outlines the city’s geographies of hope and despair, but it has also drastically redefined and constructed the public urban realm. One major field of Congolese life seems to escape, at least to some extent, the hegemony and control of the churches of awakening. That field is death or, rather, the specific ways in which death is managed in Kinshasa today. More than anything else, death, as omnipresent as the churches themselves, has reshaped the city’s (increasingly overlapping) political and religious arenas. In a general way, in Congo, death has become a model for collective social, political and religious action.

On 9 March 2000, in eastern Congo, the women of the occupied Kivu province declared a four-day ‘mourning’ period to protest against the daily realities of violence and poverty in which they had to live, after rebels buried an unknown number of women alive. On the first day the women stayed at home, weeping, lamenting and refusing to eat. The next three days they dressed in black and covered their heads, a sign of sorrow. A month later, on 6 April 2000, thousands of kilometres to the west in Kinshasa, Etienne Tshisekedi’s UDPS opposition party announced, for the nth time, a ‘dead city day’ (*journée ville morte*) to protest against the continuing warfare in Congo.

The funeral processions that accompany the deceased to his or her last resting place in the cemetery have turned into moments of political contestation as well. When the coffin with the corpse is carried through the streets, young people flock around it to sing songs that often have an outspoken political character: *Mobutu Mobutu tango okenda loso na loso* ('Mobutu ever since you left, we only eat rice [we are hungry]'), or *Bana na diplome bakei koteka mayi, bana na diplome bakeyi koteka boudin. Pays riche lokumu ezali wapi?* ('Children with a diploma sell water, children with a diploma sell sausages. A rich country, but where is dignity?')

In this country where, for many years now, political action has been translated into the creation of a 'dead city', and where funerals and mourning ceremonies (*matanga*) have become the motor of social and political criticism, especially for youngsters, Kinshasa has sometimes been described in the local press as a necropolis. Playwright Nzey Van Musala has called it a *cit  cimeti re* – a 'cemetery city'. Kinshasa is the capital of the 'thanatocracy' that Congo has become. Its citizens are more dead than alive, while its cemeteries are overcrowded and corpses are simply abandoned anonymously at the entrances of mortuaries. Not only has death thus become a metaphor with which to speak of certain areas of daily life in Kinshasa, but the country in its totality has become zombified, 'a place and a time of *half-death*, or, if one prefers, *half-life*' (Mbembe 2001: 197; see also Vangu Ngimbi 1997; Yamb 1997; Biaya 1998; De Boeck 1998; and Grootaers 1998).

## Youth and the politics of death in the urban public realm

The presence of death has deeply penetrated and reconfigured the city's public space. For one, the dead are brought into the street. For lack of space within the *parcelles*, the body of the deceased is often placed upon a bier in the middle of the street, under a funeral chapel, and people gather around the body to mourn and hold nocturnal wakes. Streets are blocked and palm leaves placed at their entrance. As such, the dead, also because they are so numerous, have taken possession of public space and have reconfigured its meaning. Some decades ago, placing the body of a deceased person in the middle of the street would have been unthinkable in Kinshasa. In the 1960s and 1970s mourning rituals took place inside the compounds. Children and youngsters were barred from any contact with death itself. If a funeral procession passed through the street, mothers would call their children indoors, for children were not supposed to come into contact with death, since they represent the beginning of life and should not be contaminated by its end.

The *matanga*, the mourning rituals accompanying the death of a parent, a beloved one or a neighbour, have always been extremely important to



maintain and regenerate the social network. *Matanga* are moments of encounter. They are organized by the deceased's relatives. Usually, the maternal uncles of the deceased are the ones in charge of the funeral. They decide upon the time and place of burial, raise the necessary money, hire chairs, an orchestra and/or choir, contact the authorities, take care of the formalities for burial, meet the cemetery authorities, supervise the unfolding of the mourning period until the burial, assemble the deceased's family (the mother's and father's side, and often also his or her allies), conduct the palavers surrounding heritage, and, above all, they establish the cause that led to the death of the person in question.

Today, in Kinshasa, suspicions about witchcraft are quick to surge to the surface (*balei ye, babomi ye*: 'they ate him, they killed him') when someone 'has gone' (*akei na ye*) or 'has been called by God' (*Nzambe abengisi ye*). Usually, such suspicions lead to a major dispute in the families concerned. In recent years, suspicions of a witchcraft-related death have tended to drastically change the course of the funeral itself. In such a case, and especially if the deceased was a young person, control over the mourning and funeral proceedings is taken, often in rather drastic and violent ways, by the family's youngsters, but often also by groups of other young people who are no relatives of the deceased.

In fact, death itself has become embedded in drastically altered structures of solidarity, of kinship and of relations of gerontocracy. This is illustrated by the changing position of the *noko*, the maternal uncle, whose authority has greatly diminished in the urban context, and most notably in matters related to death (De Boeck 2005a). Whereas burials and funeral wakes have always played a tremendously important role in strengthening the social network, they no longer seem to be able to fulfil that role completely. Much as the role and position of the uncle are questioned during these occasions, the role of the preacher is not assured either. In particular cases his presence is strongly contested, especially by youngsters. The most drastic change that has occurred in recent years is that the management of death is increasingly in the hands of children and youngsters themselves. Whereas before they were physically barred and protected from contact with death by their parents and elders, they now seem to have developed the most intimate connection with death and dying.

Not only is death no longer the prerogative of elders, they are also no longer the only ones to die. Death increasingly touches children and youngsters in Kinshasa. Simultaneously, in the collective urban imagination, they have also become the ones to administer and inflict death on their elders and on adults, as is attested by the widespread phenomenon of *bana bandoki* – 'child-witches'. In Kinshasa today, children are commonly blamed for every form of illness and death that occurs in their family (De Boeck 2004, 2005b). What these beliefs illustrate, in fact, is that children are increasingly seen as the ones who have appropriated adult discourses of 'eating', that is

of power. In the public realm, which is increasingly shaped by the realities of the occult 'second world', they are now able to speak and act as elders before their turn.

### Youth and the commerce of death

Death and youth are no longer mutually exclusive, and Kinshasa's children and youngsters have developed an intimate relationship with death itself. Let me illustrate this with a description of life in the cemetery of Kintambo, where the cohabitation of the living and the dead is no longer a source of surprise to most Kinois. The cemetery of Kintambo is located between two of Kinshasa's more popular, populous and poor neighbourhoods: Camp Luka, a neighbourhood in the commune of Ngaliema, and Jamaik, part of Kintambo, one of Kinshasa's oldest communes. Over the past two decades the urban authorities of Kinshasa officially closed this cemetery at least three times because Kintambo's burial ground, not unlike the city itself, is more than saturated. Yet people continue to bury their dead there, even today.

One dust road leads straight through the cemetery and forms the main access to Camp Luka. The cemetery itself consists of a labyrinth of graves, chaotically placed next to and often on top of each other, without an apparent ground plan or structure. During the rainy season grass grows man-high in the cemetery, turning this city of the dead into a forest, hiding all the activities that take place in it. These activities become much more visible during the dry season, when the grass has not yet started to grow. Everywhere in the cemetery little groups of very young children and older boys and girls are walking along the graves, playing cards, drinking beer or smoking marijuana, or dancing and singing. Some have turned the cemetery into their home, sleeping, eating and making love on the tombstones. The resemblance between these children and the dead that lie buried there is striking: both have been abandoned by society.

In this way, various groups of street children, who are referred to by the Kinois as a 'dead society' (*société morte*), share their living space in close proximity to the dead. More generally, the living and the dead live in constant competition over land, a scarce resource in this overpopulated city. In some cemeteries, such as Kinsuka and Kintambo, people have started to destroy graves in order to become squatters and even erect houses, with cement bricks and corrugated iron roofs, located in the middle of the cemetery. So far the city officials have not put an end to this.

For many children the presence of the dead also provides a livelihood. In fact, through an informal commoditization of death, the cemetery has become a market, a place to satisfy one's 'thirst for money' (*lokoso*). Also, in very real terms, cemetery and market have mixed: along the road leading through the cemetery of Kintambo into Camp Luka, women use the tombstones as counters for the goods they sell (cigarettes, biscuits, soap,

toilet paper, pencils). Bottles of palm wine are sold and drunk on the spot, using the tombstones as chairs and tables.

Referring to themselves as *bana état* ('children of the state' – imposing their own rules in their state, the cemetery), youngsters offer their services to the family members of the deceased or to the official gravediggers. The official gravediggers are organized into an *écurie*, or 'stable', and the informal groups often adopt the same designation.<sup>2</sup> The children help to locate empty spots where a grave may be dug; they sell cement crosses, help to construct tombstones, unearth corpses or offer their services for clandestine burials. Very often, people cannot afford to finance a burial,<sup>3</sup> and are therefore forced to bury their dead in a secret and non-official way. This happens more frequently when the deceased is a young child. Along the dust road that cuts through the cemetery and forms the access to the neighbourhood of Camp Luka, a small group of male adolescents, members of the *Ecurie Tshico*, are waiting to be contacted by parents who want to bury their child without registering through a *coop* or *likwala* – by bypassing the authorities and the regular formalities. They will carry out the burial at nightfall, but very often in complicity with the cemetery authorities who will be paid a small percentage of the boys' payment for the illegal burial. Other groups of youngsters spend their days waiting by the cemetery to be hired as singers and drummers during funerals. Still more await nightfall to dig up and steal the coffins of those who were buried during the day. These coffins are subsequently resold (see De Boeck and Plissart 2004: 136). Finally, some youngsters await the night to pillage the graves in the hope of laying their hands on clothes and jewellery.

Death, in other words, has become the motor of a vast informal economy that pervades life in the city in profound ways. Another practice that has started to emerge is the 'confiscation of the tombstone'. Upon the death of a grandfather or grandmother, his or her grandchildren will 'steal' the tombstone during the *matanga* and the other family members will have to pay a sum of money (usually ranging from 50 to 100 US dollars) before the tombstone is returned and the burial can take place. Other practices as well point to the commercialization surrounding death and its management. In that respect one can mention the 'pillaging of death' in the recent emergence of funerary practices such as *ekobo* ('adultery') in Kinshasa's streets:

Ekobo was originally conceived as a means to preserve and protect persons exposed to the attacks of returning dead from evil, as well as a means to finance the burial payments within the family. Ekobo has become, however, the practice of delinquents who stop innocent people in the street to extort money from them, which they say will be used for buying coffee, sugar and firewood during the funeral wake

... In case one refuses to pay up, these youngsters throw dirt at one, or physically harm one.

(*Elima* newspaper, 21–22 September 91,  
quoted in De Villers 1992: 192–4)

## Youth, ancestry, ritual authority and death

Compared to the elaborate funeral rituals and mortuary prescriptions that existed in the rural hinterland surrounding Kinshasa until recently (see Devisch 1979), death has become a banal reality in the urban context. Youngsters will no longer use the Lingala word *-kufa*, to die, but will speak instead of *dayé* (from the English dying), which connotes indifference and disdain. This banalization and, according to many older Kinois, even desecration of death, expresses itself in various ways: not only in the language youngsters use to denote death, but also in the general attitude towards the dead who no longer inspire fear, awe and respect, or in the mere fact that the dividing line between the living and the dead has become so difficult to trace. As Kinois say: 'We (the living and the dead) are all the same' (*biso nionso bato moko*). Many of my informants pointed out that the general attitude towards the dead also changed drastically with the events in 1996, when many people suspected to be Mobutist collaborators were publicly lynched and necklaced, and again in 1998, when the same fate befell the Rwandan rebels who attacked Kinshasa. In general it is felt that the soil of the cemetery no longer holds 'power'. For most youngsters, and in spite of the influence of Pentecostalism, death signifies the end. There is nothing beyond death, one just disappears. This attitude sharply contrasts with former autochthonous beliefs in ancestry. Today, it seems as if the production of ancestors, at least in the mind of these youngsters, has ground to a standstill.

Not surprisingly, therefore, a drastic transformation of existing structures of authority and gerontocracy is operated through these new forms of managing death. No longer the prerogative of elders, the management of death is used by the young to contest the authority of adults: 'If you do not watch out', they threaten their elders, 'we will make you eat the shovel' (*okoliya mpau*), meaning: we will bury you. 'How can we still respect the elders?' youngsters told me. 'They are the ones who should uphold tradition, who tell us about the important place of the ancestors, but when you see how they cope with the dead who will become the ancestors, when you observe how their corpses are put in the street, how they are buried hastily, how can you continue to believe this? Our elders have turned the process of dying into a *fait-divers*, and they have started to treat the dead with disrespect. So why should we still respect the elders?' Funerals have not only become a means for political contestation, but in a much broader sense death has become an occasion for youngsters to criticize the role of

parents and elders who have *démissionés*, who have given up, who no longer seem to be able to fulfil the role expected of them by society. The dead, it is said, have become the responsibility of the youngsters of the neighbourhood (*bibembe ekoma ya bana quartier*). The dead have become their ‘toy’ (*eloko ya jeu*), and the coffin, so these urban youths claim, has become like a football that one tosses up and plays around with. Youngsters, in short, have become ‘the directors’ (*bazali kodiriger*) and have taken over the control of the dead, while elders ‘have become little children’ (*bakomi bana mike*).

This aspect of contestation of the elders’ authority is most poignantly expressed when a young person dies and his or her death is suspected to be related to witchcraft. In that case, the *matanga* almost invariably ‘turns into disorder’ (*matanga ekomi désordre, pito-pale*) and becomes an intergenerational battlefield. When that happens, the deceased’s friends, his or her classmates, or just any youngster living in the same neighbourhood are likely to take over the control of the funeral rites. These groups of youngsters, the ‘people of disorder’ (*bato ya désordre*), sometimes in collaboration with the *bato ya makassi*, the ‘strong people’, the *yanke* (from ‘yankee’) or leaders of local youth gangs or sport clubs that exist in every neighbourhood (Pype 2006), will start throwing stones at all who are present at the site of mourning. They will attack the deceased’s parental home (frequently destroying it or burning it down in the process), and they will also chase away the parents, uncles, aunts and preachers who are gathered to mourn the deceased. The general atmosphere quickly turns into a chaotic and often violent mood, further enhanced by the youngsters’ singing and dancing (in ways inspired by South-African toy-toying), and the lavish use of marijuana and locally brewed alcohol (*lungwula, chichampa* or *lotoko*). Invading the scene of mourning they sing out loudly: *Toyei, toyei matanga, toboyi baconseillers, soki olingi koteya, teya bandimi na yo. Soki olingi koteya teya bana na yo. Soki olingi koteya teya na ndako na yo* (‘We go, we go to the mourning ritual. We refuse the councillors – the elders’ authority. If you want to preach, preach for your believers. If you want to preach, preach for your own children. If you want to preach, preach in your own house’). The parents of the deceased will inevitably be accused of having ‘eaten’ or killed the latter by means of witchcraft (*kindoki*), and sometimes the crowd will attack, physically hurt and even kill them. They will single out certain elders while singing: *Tango mosusu ndoki ye yo ye yo* (‘Maybe the witch is this one or that one’). The youngsters will then confiscate the abandoned dead body, and will block the street and erect a ‘frontier’ (*barrière*), establishing their rule, the order of disorder. They force passers-by to make a monetary contribution before they are allowed to continue on their way – or otherwise risk, at the very least, to be dirtied with a mixture of burned rubber and palm oil. The money collected in this way will be used to buy more alcohol and marijuana, though sometimes

some money is also spent on the burial itself. Clearly, at that point, the deceased's family members no longer control the funeral. Frequently, it is only after completion of the burial that the responsibility for the dead person is handed over again to his or her family, and not without long negotiations over whom the *muziku*, the money raised by the *matanga*'s participants, should go to. Sometimes the family of the deceased tries to mobilize the police to regain control over the corpse during the funeral procedures, but as often as not the policemen refuse to get involved.

Under these circumstances, the funeral itself inevitably turns into a highly chaotic event. Minibuses and cars are routinely confiscated in the street by youths. Sitting on the cars' rooftops or hanging out of the windows while singing and shouting, they use these hijacked vehicles to drive to the cemetery at high speed. Sometimes the corpse is paraded through the streets, surrounded by dancing boys and girls, who address bystanders with crude songs, full of sexual licence, while revealing certain body parts and making obscene gestures: *Lelo libola etuli, lelo libola ekei kopola* ('Today the vagina no longer works, today, the vagina will rot away'). Other songs include: *Awa ezali hotel. Oyei, osali, ya premier coup ezalaka direct* ('Here [the cemetery] it is a hotel. You come, you make love, and from the very first shot it is goal!') or *Mayi! Mayi! Mayi mibali, mayi mayi mikongo, mayi mayi! Soki nakangi yo nakocha yo etsubeli, etsubeli, etsubeli! Nakosiba yo!* ('Water, men's water, water from the backbone [sperm], water, water! When I catch you, I will put my penis inside you, the penis, the penis, I will introduce it!').

The same atmosphere characterizes the burial itself. Here youngsters often start to dance on the graves, sometimes totally naked (*mutakala, nzoto libanda*, 'the body outside'). This aspect of total abandon is even more pronounced when the deceased is a military person and is buried by his fellow soldiers.

### **Conclusion: sacrificing the sacred? Youth and the morality of disorder**

The repositioning of death enables youngsters in Kinshasa to break away from older models and to redraw the social and moral landscapes of urban public life. First, funerals offer the possibility to reject current official political and religious order (all the more surprising given the thorough grasp of the millennial churches on all other aspects of public life in Congo today). Second, funerals form key moments to contest the role of the elders, who are perceived to have abandoned their responsibilities and to have failed to live up to the expectations of the young they are supposed to guide and protect. Mourning rituals and funerals thus bear witness to the profound crisis of intergenerational transmission and of existing structures of family and kinship. Funerals, in their guise of ritualized moments of rebellion

against the established order, allow youngsters to design an alternative political and also moral landscape. By replacing the state, the church, the ancestor and the elder with their own rule, which is characterized by 'disorder', young Kinois reshape the city's outlook, drawing an alternative cartography of the urban public sphere. They abandon older prescriptions, taboos, norms and forms surrounding death and mourning and are thus perceived by the generations of their parents and grandparents as sacrificers of the sacred, as desecrators of the dead, and therefore as highly immoral actors in an urban universe that is otherwise characterized by the high moral discourses of Pentecostalism.

Paradoxically, though, the same young urban actors reintroduce other aspects of much older, pre-urban ritual dynamics. The lewd songs, the insults, the exposure of body parts, the act of lovemaking on the graves, as forms of ritual reversal, are very 'heterotopian', a Turnerian anti-structural moment quite common in a number of Central African rituals (see Turner 1969; De Boeck 1991). In this way, Kinois youngsters shape a future for more traditional ritual forms of which they often do not even have firsthand knowledge, but which they nonetheless reinvent single-handedly in the urban context. Against the order of the state and the church, with their promotion of what essentially remains a very colonialist modernity, urban youth introduces its own moralities, while rejecting the moral codes of church and state and the modernity it promotes. In using the body of the dead as an alternative political platform to speak out, they introduce their own bodies as tools for self-making and for exercising their critique against older forms of authority. Rather than being strictly political or social, their criticism is essentially a moral criticism of the world they live in. Against the omnipresence of death, and the constant threat of disappearing, of being annihilated and forgotten, the corporeal dimension of these juvenile vocabularies of self-realization celebrates vitality and life, and forcefully posits the city in the immediate time-frame of the moment, the now. Juvenile bodies, with their specific temporality, here appear as lucid but also subversive sites and frontiers of re-territorialization of official cultural and political programmes. It allows these youngsters to move beyond the standard frames, restrictions, rules and norms of colonial and post-colonial models, for these have failed to fulfil their promises and are perceived to have lost all authority, all explanatory power and all mobilizing force. The graveyard as heterotopia has taken on new meanings. It has given urban youth a space to express the crisis, to find forms to *embody* the disintegration of their state, their city, their society and its culture.

## Notes

- 1 My ethnography builds on several years of field research in the city of Kinshasa (see De Boeck and Plissart 2004). Research in Congo was made possible by a

number of grants from the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research (FWO-Vlaanderen) as well as by a grant from the Flemish Community to develop an exhibition project entitled 'Kinshasa, the imaginary city'. This exhibition, selected among several projects by the Flemish Architecture Institute (VAI), was the official Belgian contribution to the 9th International Architecture Biennial in Venice, September 2004, where it was awarded a Golden Lion for best national pavilion.

- 2 In the cemetery of Kintambo the main 'stable' is called *Shamukwale*, the name of a village near the Angolan border where people cross in a clandestine way to access the informal diamond mines of Lunda Norte in order to dig and dive for diamonds. Gravedigging is here compared, not without irony, to diamond digging. The members of the *Ecurie Shamukwale*, youngsters from the surrounding neighbourhoods, are often solicited by the cemetery officials who reside under the city governor's authority. The latter are supposed to register the dead and collect taxes. Other youngsters who offer informal services in and around the cemetery are often also organized into similar *écurie* structures, such as the *Ecurie Bana cimetière*, *Ecurie Etat-Major* or *Camp Kawele*, *Ecurie Camp PM* (Military Police), *Ecurie Camp Police*, etc. These various groups at the cemetery of Kintambo offer specific services (digging graves, fabricating crosses, maintaining the tombs and so forth) and sometimes also collaborate with each other. To my knowledge, the members of these 'stables' working at the cemetery are always boys and men.
- 3 A coffin for a child up to the age of 5 costs 7,000 Congolese francs (FC) (the equivalent of 10 to 12 US dollars). A coffin for a child between the age of 5 and 10 is 10,000 FC, whereas the coffin for an adult can cost up to 28,000 FC. To hire a funeral chapel ranges from 10 to 20 dollars, and the plastic chairs to seat the people who will assist at the mourning have to be hired as well. To fulfil the formalities for burial with the cemetery authorities usually costs between 6,000 and 6,500 FC (prices as of September 2005).

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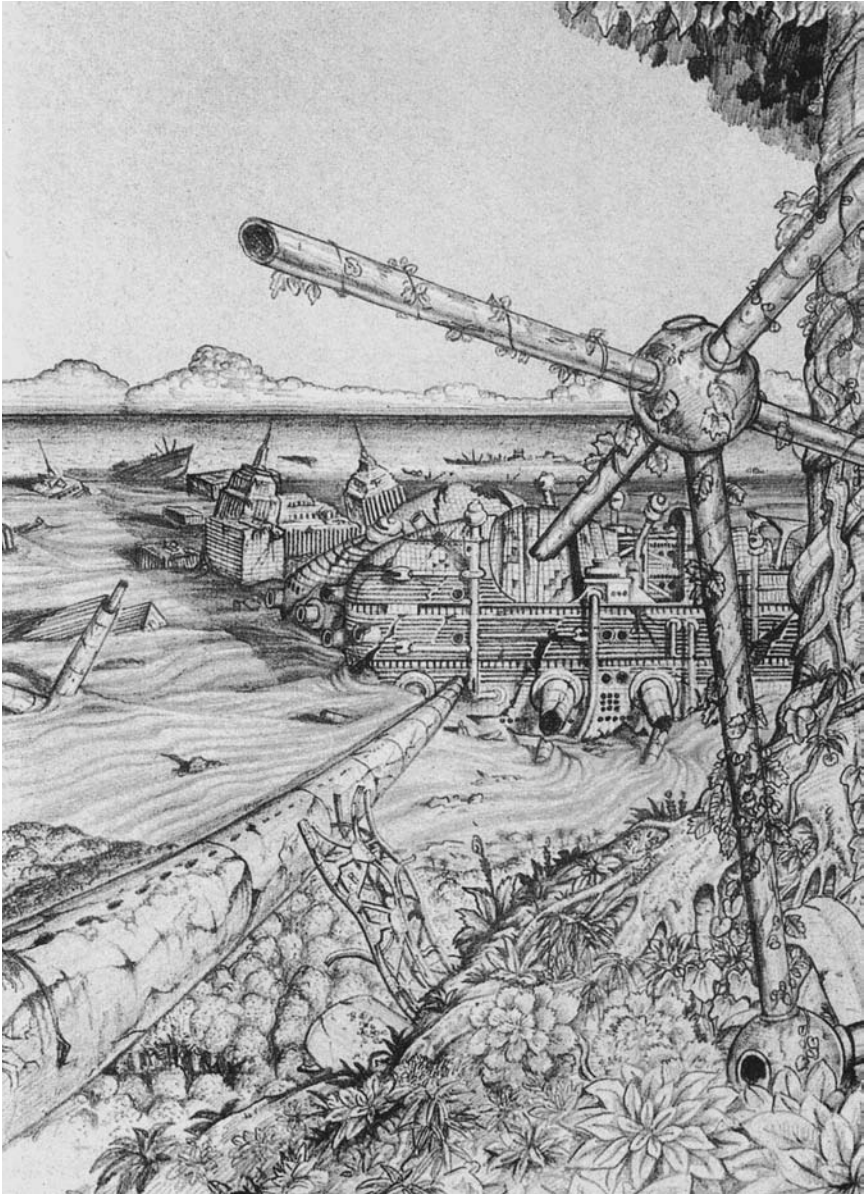
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# Afterthoughts

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*Il Pianeta come festival (The Planet as Festival)* (Ettore Sottsass, 1972). On the beach: stranded 'Walking City' and vanishing Empire State Building. In the foreground: a futuristic (geodesic?) structure swallowed by the jungle.

# Heterotopia unfolded?

*Hilde Heynen*

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One is tempted to conclude, after reading all the contributions to this book, that heterotopia is too slippery a term to be of any fundamental significance in the discourse on space and culture. Indeed the range of different interpretations of the term is astonishing. Some authors – James Faubion, Heidi Sohn and Christine Boyer specifically – aim at a genuinely ‘Foucauldian’ reading of the term, by positioning the concept of heterotopia within Foucault’s own discourse and that of his contemporaries. Some others – Marco Cenzatti, Yael Allweil, Peter Lang, Robert Cowherd, Lee Stickells, Filip De Boeck – reread the term through the work of subsequent theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Pierre Bourdieu or Edward Soja and use it as a tool to understand newly developing spatial-cultural constellations. The editors themselves – Lieven De Cauter and Michiel Dehaene – mount a more ambitious systematization of the concept of heterotopia by relating it to a reflection on the categorizations of space in the ancient Greek city, following a similar inspiration to the one that led Hannah Arendt to the formulation of her theory of political action. Still others – D. Grahame Shane, Alessandro Petti, Xavier Guillot – adopt the term heterotopia to qualify a special category of space, namely a kind of enclave, with its own system of openings and closings, inclusions and exclusions. And lastly there are those who use the term heterotopia somewhat loosely as they pursue a direct connection with the topic of their study – be it malls (Douglas and Jessica Muzzio), newly built urban centres (Clément Orillard), themed or gated communities (Hugh Bartling, Setha Low), theme park streets (Kathleen Kern), or zones of marginality (Gil Doron).

Interestingly enough, all these different uses seem to make sense in their own right. They offer rich and productive readings of different spatial and cultural constellations, and this in itself justifies the continuing use of the term heterotopia – slippery as it may be. It cannot be the purpose of a book like this one to fixate, once and for all, the meaning of heterotopia. Rather, it should open up different layers, different contexts and different adumbrations of the term, in order to explore its full potential as a thought-provoking concept that stimulates further investigations into the relationship

between space and culture. One could even argue that the wide range of interpretations developed in this book is symptomatic of the undecidability of the notion 'heterotopia' and that this undecidability is crucial and productive in probing our current urban condition. It is not obvious at all to establish where we are headed and how we should begin to understand the ongoing transformations of urban and social life, of the city and public space, of the relation between the local and the global. Pursuing the idea of heterotopia offers a productive strategy to investigate these conditions, because it introduces a third term in situations where strict dichotomies – such as public/private; urban/rural or local/global – no longer provide viable frameworks for analysis.

Key questions regarding the interrelation of social and spatial phenomena have become more complex and stratified due to the combined influences of capitalist globalization, geopolitical transitions and heightened cultural consciousness. Looking back at the contributions in this book, it becomes clear that the different positions taken by the authors are indicative of important conceptual tensions and disagreements at work in their efforts to think the spatial and the social together. The book can thus be read as the subtle mapping of different ways of understanding the interaction between space, society and culture. The diverging interpretations of the meaning of heterotopia contain important clues to decipher the underlying positions. These divergences relate to three crucial dimensions: the role of space, politics and human agency.

### **The role of space**

There is, first of all, a difference of opinion among the contributors about the question whether heterotopia is a recognizable *spatial* entity. Many architects and urban designers among the authors stress the spatial characteristics of heterotopias. In his book *Recombinant Urbanism*, D. Graham Shane gives the following description:

Heterotopias *house* all exceptions to the dominant city model. A heterotopia is a *place* that mixes the stasis of the enclave with the flow of an armature, and in which the balance between these two systems is constantly changing. Its function is to help maintain the city's stability as a self-organizing system. In a linear, logical, scientific urban system it helps maintain the dynamic, overall balance between the binary poles that define that system (e.g. production and consumption) by handling exceptions; in nonlinear systems, it facilitates dynamic imbalance and rapid shifts between urban paradigms. In service of these functions, the *form* of the heterotopia itself is vividly diverse and constantly in flux.

(Shane 2005: 231; emphasis mine)

In the present book, Shane adheres to this description in his discussion of the way in which recent heterotopias of illusion (themed environments, art centres, malls) facilitate the shift towards a more performative, flexible and mobile urbanism of 'sites'. In his analysis heterotopias are specific places, which work according to specific spatial mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and are thus able to accommodate specific social transformations. In identifying such places as heterotopias, Shane emphasizes the spatial logic, rather than elements of use or interpretation.

The Muzzios, Orillard, Kern and Guillot handle the idea of heterotopia in a more or less similar way. For Douglas and Jessica Muzzio, the 'real' mall (as opposed to the mall in the film) is a heterotopia, 'a real space of economic, social, cultural and political activity and conflict'. Its 'size, configuration, internal layout and external design [are] "signifiers", which through culturally determined systems of association reveal social relations and networks of power'. Orillard deals with 'Les Halles' as a heterotopic 'friendly monster' capable of transforming public life. Kern explains that separation, exclusion, control and cleanliness are determinants of the spatial logic of the heterotopia of the shopping mall. For Guillot the condominiums in Singapore are strong examples of heterotopic spaces of compensation and illusion, since they offer an alternative to the overly ordered, sanitized environment of Singapore's normal residential landscape. For these four authors, then, it seems that heterotopia is first and foremost a matter of spatial characteristics.

The analysis offered by Maureen Heyns follows to a certain extent the same reasoning. She discusses recent interventions in London's Spitalfields as examples of heterotopian projects, because they introduce exclusive urban enclaves that provide pockets of gentrification in the urban landscape. Her interpretation of the Spitalfields market project, however, brings another aspect of heterotopia to the fore. The market as a 'brightfield site', she contends, potentially provides a heterotopia that brings 'colour, character and relief' because it begins to intensify and diversify the use of public space.

The latter idea leaves Heyns closer to other authors, such as Bartling, Low, Cowherd and Allweil. They see heterotopias more as spatial-social constellations where the actual use and interpretation of specific spatial articulations is an important factor for determining their heterotopic qualities. Both Bartling and Low describe how newly developed spatial typologies (themed planned communities in Bartling's case, gated communities in Low's) rely heavily in their marketing strategy on illusionary reversions of the everyday. Both typologies, they state, present themselves as spaces of 'eternal holiday', where leisure facilities and security systems promise to ensure an undisturbed, relaxed and safe way of life. For Bartling and Low, it is evidently the combination of spatial *and* marketing strategies that qualifies these spaces as heterotopias. Likewise, for Cowherd heterotopias are enclaves

where ‘social norms are regulated, imposed, managed and reproduced in relation to specific physical forms of the built environment’. Allweil stresses that specific spatial patterns are not in themselves enough to create heterotopic spaces, since use and meaning are crucial ingredients. For Allweil, studying the beach zone of Tel Aviv, it is ‘the existence of the subversive performances of the gays and drummers in their physically defined sites’ that ‘makes these sites heterotopic’.

A similar position is taken by Cenzatti, for whom the ephemerality of heterotopias is key:

Heterotopias, as spaces of representation, are produced by the presence of a set of specific social relations and their space. As soon as the social relation and the appropriation of physical space end, both space of representation and heterotopia disappear.

(p. 81, this volume)

Cenzatti considers spatial articulations such as specific buildings more as traces of ‘the lived space that they contained, continue to contain, or will contain’. Since for him heterotopia is a quality of lived space, the spatial forms are not in themselves heterotopic, but rather can – temporarily – accommodate *moments* of heterotopia.

A second way to distinguish different positions has to do with how authors conceptualize the relationship between spatial and social-cultural patterns. Overall, one can state that the relationship between space and social processes is viewed in the literature according to three different models (for a more extensive discussion of these traditions see Heynen and Loekx (1998) and De Meulder and Heynen (2006)). In the first thought model, space is seen as a relatively neutral *receptor and reflector* of socio-economic or cultural processes. Within this model, the features of space itself are not seen as decisive, but emphasis is placed on the influence exerted by social or cultural mechanisms, such as capital movements, labour relationships, discriminatory practices, symbolic transformations, etc. These mechanisms produce many kinds of effects whose spatial repercussions can be registered. The second thought model regards spatial articulations as possible *instruments* in bringing about particular social processes. This model engages the built environment in a much more active way as the instigator of social or cultural change. Buildings or specific places function in this case as spatial tools for the regulation of behaviour, the disciplining of the body or the activation of social interaction. The third thought model envisages the built environment as a *stage* on which social processes are played out. In the same way as the staging is to a certain extent decisive in a theatre production, because it makes certain actions and interactions possible or impossible without this influence being decisive for the content of the play, this also applies to the spatial structure of buildings, neighbourhoods and towns. The built environment accommodates and frames social transformations.

As such it is both active and passive. It is active in that its physical form conditions the possibilities of spatial behaviour and thus intervenes in what is actually happening; it is passive in that this conditioning often has a rather limited impact and space serves as the mere background for transformations that follow a social rather than a spatial logic.

The authors in this book subscribe in different ways to these thought models. Cultural anthropologist De Boeck most clearly relies upon the model that sees space as a receptor or reflector of cultural processes. In the changing cultural practices that he describes concerning death in Kinshasa, the role of the spatial characteristics of the cemetery is not decisive. The traces of cultural transformations become visible in the cemetery – youngsters squatting in the cemetery, graves being pillaged – but the space as such is not seen as generating or activating the transformations that are going on. De Boeck describes these transformations as happening in the symbolic, cultural realm, albeit induced by economical and political changes. Transformations are acted out in newly shaped rituals, which ascribe a central role to juvenile bodies, and which happen to take place in the graveyard. The graveyard, De Boeck states, ‘has given urban youth a space to express the crisis, to find forms to *embody* the disintegration of their state, their city, their society and its culture’. The cemetery as a space thus reflects these cultural processes, it supports and accommodates them, but De Boeck’s interpretation does not stress the actual impact of its spatial qualities (e.g. hierarchy or symmetry in the layout of the graves, the rhythm of roads and paths, the presence of trees, etc.).

Heidi Sohn occupies a similar position, in that she also focuses on culture and society as determinants of heterotopias: ‘it is the different culturally and socially determined *meanings* of heterogeneity, and the strategies of a given society, culture or civilization to cope with it, that generate heterotopia in the first place’. For Sohn, heterotopias are not so much spaces or places, as they are structures, systems or arrangements. Heterotopias can be found in spatial-social-cultural constellations where the transformation of meaning is paramount and the role of space secondary.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that the conceptualization of space as an instrument of change is most visibly present in some authors who are close to the disciplines of urban design and planning. The conviction that *space matters* is after all part of the professional ethos of designers and planners. Shane, for example, describes heterotopias as ‘potent engines for urban development’ that ‘draw people to the city in search of a better life and contact with strangers’. For Petti, whose piece is more pessimistic in tone, the role of space is not necessarily benign but at least as crucial as it is for Shane. He describes ‘the systems of inclusion–exclusion’ as ‘spatial devices’ that are ‘instruments with which the city is built and continues to be built’. These spatial devices increasingly organize a generalized system of surveillance that invades the world.



The contribution of Lee Stickells criticizes the position that attributes a constitutive role to spatial formations. In discussing 'Flow Urbanism' he questions the direct relationship between urban forms and urban flows:

The determined pragmatism and supposed formal ingenuousness projected an architecture that could smoothly integrate disparate programming and provide a guileless affectivity. Thus, the promise of the approach taken in the urbanism of flows is that it endows architecture with a key organizational role in the new networked city. As infrastructure, it supposedly augments the flux of the city while making it spatially legible. However, there is a tension here in the ambivalence of the projects towards programme.

(p. 253, this volume)

Programming indeed is essential to provide real – social and cultural – heterogeneity and diversity, rather than just its spatial image. Stickells warns against an interpretation that would too easily buy into the promise of Flow Urbanism, since it should not take us by surprise if 'the dynamics of the nomadic and unprogrammed become the smooth non-place of the commuter'. Stickells is thus closer to the non-deterministic idea that space acts as a stage for social and cultural phenomena.

The same observation applies to the contributions of Marco Cenzatti, Peter Lang and Gil Doron. In stressing the ephemerality of heterotopias, Cenzatti focuses on the interplay between spatial and social conditions in which the spatial cannot take the upper hand. In his contribution on the urban activism of the group Stalker, Lang discusses the uncertain future of legal and illegal migrants and the interstitial, marginal spaces occupied by some of these groups. Far from seeing a direct and instrumental relation between these spaces and their tentative occupation, he talks about a 'heterotopian condition in the making', suggesting that any spatial determination, designation or even project would annihilate the potentials that are harboured there. He apparently considers the relationship between spatial articulations and the emergence of new social formations as extremely delicate and fragile, demanding the balancing act of 'acrobats' to be adequately recognized and respected, rather than forged.

Gil Doron focuses on 'dead zones', which he distinguishes from heterotopias, although their characteristics are remarkably parallel to what for Cenzatti and Lang are important features of heterotopias. 'Dead zones' are spaces that appear as 'voids' on maps, because they lack a clear definition, programme or function. For Doron the potential of these voids is considerable, since they accommodate informal activities and present a living history of ongoing transformations, providing room for transgression and excess. Again, as in Lang's chapter, the suggestion is strong that any 'architectural' intervention in such spaces can only imply a violence that would destroy

the richness of alternative social formations in the making. Nevertheless, for both authors the spatial conditioning of the phenomena they describe remains very strong: only spaces that are 'left alone' by hegemonic powers, spaces that are marginal, interstitial or 'dead', offer the spatial conditions of openness, lack of control and inclusiveness that allow these alternative formations to come into being.

## Politics

Heidi Sohn detects a telling paradox in the literature on heterotopia: whilst Foucault's initial formulations of heterotopia as quasi 'unrepresentable' match his later elaborations of heterotopology as an inconclusive arrangement, and heterotopias as restricted systems liable to permissions, exclusions and concealment, the postmodern perspectives tend to regard these spaces of otherness as alternative urban formations characterized by their inclusiveness, 'radical openness' and unlimited connectivity, something that renders them as sites of political and social relevance for the empowerment of minority groups and marginal sub-groups through the use of space.

This paradox resurfaces in this book. It echoes and doubles an ambiguity that is already there in Foucault's own text. Indeed, from a political point of view it is not clear whether Foucault's heterotopias should be seen as systems that support the societal status quo or as arrangements that subvert it. One could easily see that the 'heterotopias of deviance' that Foucault lists – rest homes, psychiatric clinics, prisons – are instruments of normalization that discipline the bodies of those that do not conform and insulate them in order to prevent them from harming the smooth continuation of hegemonic power relations. The 'heterotopias of illusion' on the other hand – cinemas, theatres, brothels – seem to be places of wish fulfilment that offer possibilities for subversion, heterogeneity and excess, the opposite of normalization. The authors in this book take up both strands of thought, some stressing heterotopias as instruments of normalization, others looking at heterotopias as possible sites of resistance.

It seems to me that Low, Bartling, Guillot and Petti develop the first strand. They all deal with heterotopias that, from a political point of view, are exclusive rather than inclusive. Low's gated communities, Bartling's themed planned communities, Guillot's condominiums and Petti's offshore urbanism all testify to the recent tendency to close off certain parts of urban space for the exclusive use of the well-to-do. These urban figures reinforce segregation, to the detriment of the cultural mix and diversity that lie at the heart of genuine urban life. They also reinforce existing power relations, in that they protect and safeguard the interests of higher and middle-income groups without taking into account the possibly negative impact on disenfranchised groups.

The contributions of the Muzzios, Orillard and Kern, dealing with malls, commercial centres and themed shopping streets, also refer to heterotopias as support systems for the dominance of an already hegemonic power structure. Also in their case studies, heterotopias appear as constellations that facilitate the increasing omnipresence of the capitalist logic of shopping as a binding social force – at least for those who can afford it.

Cowherd occupies a specific position in this respect, since he stresses the operation of imaginative reversal that is made possible through heterotopia. Post-independence Indonesia, he argues, reproduces the heterotopian aspects of its colonial formation, in that it relies upon the ‘spatial dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, connection and segregation’ in order to maintain and extend asymmetrical power relations. This is made possible because these spatial dialectics are paralleled by a discursive strategy – embodied in the figure of Suharto – that stressed the idea of national development, and that managed to convince victims of segregation that they contributed to the common good. ‘Within this split reality’, Cowherd states, heterotopia ‘provides the point of connection between a discrete reality and a discursive fabric upholding the semblance of a common cause’.

At the other end of the spectrum we find the papers of Allweil, Lang, Doron, Stickells and De Boeck, who rather discuss heterotopias as sites of subversion and resistance. They focus on sites that are not at the forefront of market-driven urban developments today, but that have been, for one reason or another, ignored as possible sites of formal planning and investment, thus leaving room for the emergence of alternative social phenomena. These alternative social phenomena include a diverging range of mainly ‘informal’ practices – Allweil describes homosexual cruising as well as drumming and dancing on the beach; Doron mentions rave parties, bonfires, fishing, sex and graffiti art; and Lang discusses tracking no man’s land, temporary occupations and squatting. For Stickells the heterotopias of Flow Urbanism envisage an alternative social ordering of public space, based on the formal incorporation of the city’s informal flows of rhythms, activities and people. De Boeck takes Kinshasha’s graveyards as the ultimate site at which the reversal of societal and cultural norms manifests a deepening crisis, which nevertheless does not turn into complete chaos and disaster.

Interestingly, the latter authors tend to stress the process character of the phenomena they describe, discussing alternative social formations *in the making*. This interpretation of heterotopias allows for a more complex, multilayered understanding of the interactions between space, culture and society. Rather than seeing society as a monolithic and hegemonic power structure that distributes the effects of capitalism and globalization uniformly over all local spaces, cultures and subcultures, it focuses on processes of transformation and change, questioning the directionality of influences. This interpretation is therefore close to that of Kevin Hetherington, who deals with heterotopias as revealing the process of social ordering, as in-between

spaces where ideas and practices that represent the good life are given a try-out, even though it is recognized that the intended ideal situation will never be completely realized (Hetherington 1997: ix). This interpretation is also close to the understanding of James Faubion, who describes Foucault's conception of heterotopia as

the dark divination of a conceptual cartography of the cardinal categorical site of a concrete anthropology and sociology of the embedded possibilities of an always already socially and culturally conditioned imagination . . . that threaten the quotidian as much as they bore the utopian.

(p. 39, this volume)

Heterotopias can be sites of hegemonic violence and oppression, but they might also harbour the potentials for resistance and subversion. This doubleness differentiates them from utopias, which are supposedly just benign and non-oppressive – and therefore non-real.

Christine Boyer further elaborates the idea of the double logic of heterotopias. According to her:

Foucault's theorization of space . . . operates a double logic: by their very imaginations and illusions heterotopias sustain the normality of everyday space and yet they negate these illusions, replacing them with other imaginary, but more static places . . . they are compensatory 'other' spaces and contesting counter-sites; real and illusory, they efface the body with illusions of purity and mark it with imaginary images.

(p. 54, this volume)

Since in Foucault's thought liberation and subjugation work as counter-forces against each other, one should not be surprised that for him heterotopias are places where indeed both forces operate. For Boyer, it is therefore obvious that heterotopias can act as spaces of normalization while co-existing with different spatialities that constitute counter-discourses and 'other' spaces. Both modes exist in parallel and react against each other. The lesson to be learnt from Foucault is that this double logic can only survive if we keep the many images, reflections and counter-discourses offered by heterotopias open to constant reinterpretations, inclusions and uncertainties. Sadly, dixit Boyer, this is a lesson not taken by most architects, who tend to reduce heterotopic spaces to autonomous fragments set in opposition to the compositional totalization of the city.

Lieven De Cauter and Michiel Dehaene open up the fields of interactions even wider. They do not limit themselves to discussing the interweaving of liberating and subjugating forces in economics (the market) and politics (power), but introduce a third term: the time-space that frees itself from

economical and political necessities, that is devoted to ‘the other’ – the sacred, the play – where the everyday is suspended and where possibilities for alternative social formations open up (heterotopias). For them the real danger of present-day economical and political developments has to do with the tendency of de-differentiating, which means that the different time-space constellations of economics, politics and heterotopias are getting blurred. This de-differentiation, marked by a proliferation and banalization of heterotopias, threatens to lead to an implosion of the *polis*:

The proliferation of heterotopias – all the variations on a theme park – are deeply ambiguous. Two burning political questions show this ambiguity . . . : can this disaster of the implosion of the *polis* be avoided, or at least mitigated, through the (re)construction of this old *sacrosanct* space of culture, i.e. the heterotopias of this world? If we think of the rise of the theme park, the themed gated communities and, most importantly, the disintegration of society into private clubs, however, we can rephrase the same question in a less hopeful, and inverse manner: has the realm of heterotopia become one of the symptoms and causes of the implosion of the *polis*?

(De Caeter and Dehaene 2006: 139)

## Human agency

The most troubling questions regarding Foucault’s heterotopias come forward when adding the perspective of human agency. One can wonder indeed whether the heterotopic space-time constellations that he describes do have the same meaning for all actors involved. If the bourgeois male visitor to the brothel has a liberating experience in which he can temporarily step out of his daily existence and momentarily see his own subjectivity as an illusory construction, should one assume that the prostitute who serves him shares a similar epiphany? Or is *his* heterotopia *her* constricted and normative everyday? Similar questions arise for the colony or the ship. Foucault refers to the Puritan colonies founded by the English in America, and to the Jesuit colonies set up in South America, as examples of heterotopias that provide oases of order amidst a chaotic and messy outside reality. These might well be places of ‘wonderful regulation’ and ‘human perfection’, but they were at the same time instrumental in a strategic policy of interference by which colonizers put their mark on a land that was previously the territory of native people. And one wonders whether the regulation of daily life ‘by the bell instead of the whistle’ makes the actual disciplining that goes on so much more attractive. Ships, which harbour, according to Foucault, the greatest reserve of imagination and adventure for our society, were also the tools that transported millions of slaves to the New World, establishing a history of racism and inequality that is still leaving its mark on the former colonies. For some, indeed, the dream was rather a nightmare.

These remarks of course echo some of the criticisms of Foucault formulated from a feminist point of view (Jenkins 2002). Feminists have criticized Foucault for his refusal to provide a framework of justification for his theories, which might provide a viable alternative or a normative basis for resisting oppression:

We may question, for example, whether Foucault's rhetoric really does the job of distinguishing better from worse regimes of social practice; whether it really does the job of identifying forms of domination (or whether it overlooks some and/or misrecognizes others); whether it really does the job of distinguishing fruitful from unfruitful, acceptable from unacceptable forms of resistance to domination; and finally, whether it really does the job of suggesting not simply that change is possible but also what sort of change is desirable.

(Fraser 1996: 25)

Others have argued that Foucault's theory, which claims that subjects cannot exist outside power relations, is detrimental to projects of emancipation, since such projects need to rely on individual agency as crucial for resistance to domination. Feminists such as Nancy Hartsock therefore have great problems with Foucault's questioning of the categories of subjectivity and agency, since this questioning might result in an obscuring of the actual structures and effects of domination (Hartsock 1990, quoted in Armstrong 2006; Hartsock 1996). Lastly, feminists have criticized Foucault's neglect of gender differences. Judith Butler, for example, argues that Foucault's focus on the mechanisms of regulation and control prevents him from understanding how exclusions and erasures operate in discursive formations. Since it is very often the feminine that is erased and excluded in these formations, it seems that Foucault's theory tends to overlook precisely the negation of the feminine (Butler 1996).

While these criticisms proceed from sometimes very different feminist positions, they nevertheless have something in common: the necessity to recognize that embodied subjectivities, decentred and de-totalized as they might be, provide the necessary starting point for a politics of anti-domination. Although Foucault sometimes seems to be very much aware of this necessity, especially in his later work (see references in Armstrong 2006), the text on heterotopia is not one in which this awareness prevails – and that is the reason for the uneasiness evoked by reading it. Indeed, Foucault's heterotopias – and the many derivatives described in this book – are spatio-temporal constellations that are marked by a fundamental ambiguity. They might harbour liberating practices, but one should question whether the liberation applies to everyone who is involved. They might provide places for transgression and excess, but it seems very well possible that what is transgression for one actor means oppression and domination

for another. Indeed heterotopias seem to be the spaces where the interplay between normative disciplining and liberating transgression manifests itself most clearly. They therefore seem to be able to flip from one side to the other. They can easily be presented as marginal spaces where social experimentations are going on, aiming at the empowerment and emancipation of oppressed and minority groups; they can as easily be presented as instruments that support the existing mechanisms of exclusion and domination, thus helping to foreclose any real possibility for change.

This ambiguity also relates to a fundamental ambivalence within modernity. As Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno elaborate in their *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, the formation of the self as a modern subject necessitates the adoption of a rational mode of behaviour that relies upon self-control and discipline. This disciplining of the self is only possible when one's inner, natural impulses are repressed – the result being an aporetic figure by which people can only fashion an identity for themselves as rational beings on the basis of a betrayal of their identity as natural beings (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). Emancipation therefore seems to begin as a disciplining of the self, whereas it might develop into resistance against a disciplining by others. This means that disciplining and liberating are part of a double bind, which cannot be easily undone.

Some feminists would contend that Horkheimer and Adorno's account of subject formation privileges the masculine subject, taking it to be the model for all subjectivities (they do model the subject, after all, on Odysseus rather than on Penelope). A more productive account can be found in Judith Butler (1999), who insists that gendered subjectivities are produced through repetitive enactments in response to discursive – disciplinary – forces. For her, possibilities for liberation can be found, not through negating or resisting these discursive forces, but rather through accepting and mimetically – critically – re-appropriating them.

Would it be too far-fetched to assume that heterotopias offer the conditions for doing just that? Taking up again the analysis of Christine Boyer, I would indeed argue that heterotopias are constellations of the in-between, where assumed realities – e.g. the assumed reality of one's gendered subjectivity – are being mirrored and doubled, thus exposing the traces of what is repressed. This repressed 'other', as Boyer states, has to do with relationships of power moulding the subject. By exposing its traces, I would suggest, heterotopias are discrete instances that urge liberation coming forth from gestures of playing and acting. Heterotopias' cultural practices and social formations-in-the-making can thus offer possibilities for displacing and subverting the naturalized logics of identity formation. Sadly enough, however, the fact that heterotopias *can* offer these possibilities does not imply that they always *will*. Heterotopia's doubleness therefore continues to resonate.

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## Page

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# Index

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Page references in italics indicate illustrations.

- abjection 35  
absence 65  
academia 91, 100, 217–18, 220, 261  
*acropolis* 90, 92, 94, 96  
action *see* *vita activa*  
Adjaye, David 226, 242  
Adorno, Theodor W. 141, 322  
aesthetic 38, 63, 94  
affective form 253, 255  
Africa *see* Democratic Republic of  
Congo; Tunisia  
Agamben, Giorgio 5, 94, 97, 292;  
*see also* bare life  
agency 320–2  
Aglietta, Michel 78  
agora 94, 97; ancient Greek 92;  
differences between shopping  
malls and 124–5; distinction  
between *oikos* and 87, 91, 93;  
in Hippodamus' plan for Milete  
89; shopping malls as 7; in  
Van Pelt's 'fivesquare city' 90  
Agora of Dronten, Netherlands 123,  
124, 125  
Agora of Evry, France 127–9, 128,  
129, 130, 132  
Agora of Lelystad, Netherlands  
123–4, 126  
AIDS 36, 270  
Ali, Mariam 187  
Allweil, Yael 8, 190–201, 190, 195,  
198, 311, 313, 314, 318  
alterity 4, 23, 44, 47, 192  
Amin, Ash 78, 242  
apartheid 275, 276; *see also*  
segregation  
apocalyptic interlude 298  
Arab: expatriates 287; rival 196;  
step-sister city 198  
Arab and Islamic city 287  
Ararat 222  
archaeological 59–60  
archipelagos 240, 292; Indonesia  
275, 278, 280; offshore urbanism  
in Dubai 8, 288, 290, 291, 293,  
294  
Architectural Association (AA) 65,  
71n6  
architecture: alternative  
approaches to 218, 220;  
dead zones and 207, 209,  
211, 212; discipline of 57;  
Flow Urbanism 247–53, 255–6,  
316, 318; as performance 214,  
288; power and 192–3; in  
Spitalfields 241, 242  
Arendt, Hannah 87–8, 91, 93, 94,  
95, 98, 311  
Aristophanes 93  
Aristotle 88, 91, 93, 96, 143  
armatures 259, 264, 265, 312  
Arnhem Central interchange,  
Netherlands 246, 247, 248–9,  
250, 251, 252–3  
art 88, 220  
art, works of 38, 53, 60–2, 64  
art institutions 8; Carré d'Art Nîmes  
268; Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain  
258, 268–9; Guggenheim museums  
258, 268–9, 270; Pompidou Art  
Centre, Beaubourg, Paris 265–7,  
266; Tate Gallery and Tate

- Modern, England 268; Uffizi Gallery, Florence 267  
 artists 265  
 Asia 259, 270; *see also individual countries by name*  
 asylum 32, 97  
 Attic Prison Riots 69–70  
 Augé, Marc 5  
 automobiles 186, 277, 283–4
- Backes, Nancy 139, 141, 146, 147  
 Banglatown 235–6, 237, 239, 241  
 bare life 5, 8, 94, 97; *see also biopolitics*  
 barracks 21, 37  
 bars 37  
 Bartling, Hugh 7, 164–77, 164, 169, 170, 172, 173, 311, 313, 317  
 Bataille, Georges 98, 209  
 Batavia 276–7, 276  
 baths and bathhouses 21, 36, 37, 45, 67, 231  
 Baudelaire, Charles 38  
 Baudrillard, Jean 8, 147, 259–60, 267, 268  
 Bauman, Zygmunt 205, 216  
 Baumgartner, M. P. 159  
 Bayard, Michael 107  
 Beaubourg (Pompidou Art Centre), Paris 265–7, 266  
 beds 16, 32, 53, 54, 95, 296  
 Bégin, François 56  
*beguinages*, Belgian 260, 261  
 Belgium *ii*, 207, 260, 261  
 Benjamin, Walter 14, 49n1, 263  
 Bentham, Jeremy 261–2  
 Berkel, Ben van 249, 251, 252–3, 256  
 Berkeley, California 36  
 Berlin Wall 65–6, 69  
 Bhabha, Homi K. 205, 206, 211  
 Bilbao, Spain 258, 268–9  
*Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (Herek) 136, 142, 143, 145, 148  
 biopolitical 292  
 biopolitics 294  
 Blakely, Edward J. 154  
 Blanchot, Maurice 38  
 Bloom, Harold 32, 33, 35  
 boats 22, 54, 86, 200, 320
- bodies: in Flow Urbanism 256; Foucault on 25n14, 54–5, 56; in Kinshasa 299, 306, 315; in sports 94; in Tel Aviv 195, 196–7, 199  
 Boeri, Stefano 208, 210  
 Bourdieu, Pierre 279, 311  
 Bové, Paul 279  
 Boyer, M. Christine 7, 53–73, 78, 311, 319, 322  
 'broken windows theory' 110, 111  
 brothels 21, 22, 32, 33, 35, 36, 54, 55, 320  
 Bryant Park, New York City 110  
 Burj Al Arab 287–8, 290  
 business improvement areas (BIAs) 110, 111  
 business improvement districts (BIDs) 110, 112  
 Butler, Judith 196, 321, 322  
 Byrne, David 143, 147
- California 162; Castro Street, San Francisco 36–7, 38; Disneyland 264–5, 282; Southern 154, 161, 282  
 camps 5, 8, 9n1, 97–8, 292–3, 293, 294  
 Canada, Vancouver 104, 108–9, 108, 109, 111–12, 113  
 Canal Grande 86, 178  
 capitalism 208, 312, 318; in Dubai 288; in Indonesia 281; planned communities and 165, 176; regulatory controls and 77, 78; shopping malls and 139, 141, 142–3; of space 56  
 Careri, Francesco 218–19, 220  
 carpets 20, 26n20, 46  
 casinos 262, 268, 287  
 Castells, Manuel 5, 23n3, 254  
 Castro Street, San Francisco 36–7, 38  
 cemeteries: absence of 171, 177; Foucault on 18–19, 20, 26n19, 46, 55, 297; in Kinshasa, Congo 8, 296, 297, 299, 300, 301–2, 303, 305, 307n2, 315, 318; as space of mediation 94; in Van Pelt's 'fivesquare city' 90  
 Cendana-Cukong 280, 283  
 Cenzatti, Marco 7, 74–85, 74, 311, 314, 316

- Cergy-Pontoise 126–7, 132  
 Certeau, Michel de 4, 7, 141, 144, 192, 210, 311  
 Chase, John 3, 4, 92, 192  
 children 157–8, 299, 300–2, 307n3;  
   *see also* young people  
 Chinese 276, 277  
 Choristoma 40, 42  
 Christianity 297, 298, 303, 306  
 Chudacoff, Howard P. 140  
 cinema, shopping malls in 136–9, 136, 142–6, 146, 147, 148  
 cinemas 19, 46; *see also* cinema, shopping malls in; theatres  
 citizenship 97, 212, 293  
 city of flows 253–5; *see also* flows  
 class 317; enclaves of resistance and 194; gated communities and 158, 162; in Indonesia 275, 276–7, 276, 278, 282, 283–4; middle class 148, 154, 156–7, 158, 162, 180, 186, 229, 269, 317; in Singapore 180, 186; in Spitalfields 229  
 club realm 154, 160  
 club spaces 99  
*Clueless* (Heckerling) 144  
 Cohen, Lizabeth 140  
 colonialism 205–6, 275–6, 276, 280, 306  
 colonies 21–2, 32, 33, 35, 46, 54, 205–6, 320; Batavia (Jakarta) 276–7, 276; Jesuit 21–2, 32, 320  
*communitas* 34–6, 37  
 community 153, 159–60, 162, 168, 176, 222, 289; *see also* gated communities; gay communities; immigrants and immigrant communities; retirement communities  
 community development districts (CDDs) 174–6, 177  
 community, Muslim *see* London Muslim Centre  
 condominiums 7, 178–88, 178, 181, 182, 183, 184, 313, 317  
 confrontation 84  
 Congo *see* Democratic Republic of Congo  
 consciousness, false 38  
 Constant (Constant Nieuwenhuys) 202, 208, 248  
 construction 282  
 contemplation *see* *vita contemplativa*  
 contemporary culture 217  
 Cornell University 33  
 cosmopolitanism 187  
 counter-emplacements 17, 25n15, 93  
 counter-hegemony 192–4, 195, 199, 200; *see also* resistance; subversion  
 counter-publics 83  
 counter-sites 55, 56, 61, 191, 291, 319  
 counter-spaces 53, 67, 95  
 counter-sublime 32, 35, 37  
 Cowherd, Robert 8, 274–85, 274, 276, 284, 311, 313–14, 318  
 Crawford, Margaret 49n1, 106, 112–13, 141  
 cultural conjuncture 57  
 cultural means of power propagation 278, 279  
 cultural sphere 91  
  
 daemonization 32, 33, 35  
 dandy 38  
 Davis, Mike 3, 106, 112–13, 192  
*Dawn of the Dead* (Romero) 137–8, 139, 142–3  
*Dawn of the Dead* (Snyder) 142  
 dead zones 8, 203–12, 211, 316–17; Ha'Yarkon Estuary, Tel Aviv 205, 206; the post-industrial zone 208–9; versus heterotopias 209–12, 211; the Zone on the outskirts of Paris 206–7; *see also* *terrains vagues*  
 death 18–19, 54–5, 296–308, 296, 315; commerce of 301–3; management of 298, 300, 303; meaning of 297; as metaphor for Kinshasa 299; politics of 299–301; *see also* cemeteries; *Dawn of the Dead* (Romero); *Dawn of the Dead* (Snyder)  
 De Boeck, Filip 8, 296–308, 296, 311, 315, 318  
 Debord, Guy 26n17, 98, 265, 266  
 De Cauter, Lieven 3–9, 71n7, 71n10, 98, 153, 199, 210, 232, 294, 311, 319, 320  
 Defert, Daniel 13, 51, 56, 59–60  
 Dehaene, Michiel 3–9, 152, 232, 311, 319, 320  
 Deleuze, Gilles 23n3, 24n11, 59, 255, 279, 291, 294

- democratic public spaces 112, 113  
 Democratic Republic of Congo 8,  
 296–308, 296, 315, 318  
 derelict land 204  
 design ambience 107  
 deviance 45, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 192,  
 193; exclusion of the deviant 46;  
 in Tel Aviv 197, 198–9; *see also*  
 heterotopias of deviance  
 diagnosis 58  
 difference(s) 44, 47, 48, 58, 83, 84,  
 192; deviance and 75, 77, 79; on  
 the translation of ‘Des espaces  
 autres’ 22–3  
 Dijk, Hans van 205, 206, 251  
 discourse 58, 275, 276–83; *see also*  
 language  
 Disneyland, California 264–5, 282  
 Disney World, Florida 267, 269  
 displacement 62  
 Dolphinarium, Tel Aviv 194–6, 195,  
 197, 198, 199, 200, 314, 318  
 domination 37, 64, 321–2  
 Doron, Gil 8, 202–13, 202, 211,  
 311, 316–17, 318  
 Dovey, Kim 231  
 downtowns 109–12, 113, 265  
 downward mobility 155, 158  
 Dreyfus, Hubert 38  
 Dronten, Netherlands 123, 124, 125  
 Dubai 8, 270, 286–95, 286, 289,  
 290, 293, 317  
 Dutch East India Company 275,  
 276, 277  
 dwellings *see* condominiums; gated  
 communities; home; informal  
 settlements (*kampung*); *oikos*;  
 planned communities; retirement  
 communities  
 East End, London 228–9, 230, 237,  
 238, 241  
 economy 78–9; clubs and 99, 160; of  
 Congo 298, 302, 315; of Dubai  
 287; economic exploitation 58;  
 gated communities and 155, 160;  
 of the gift 98, 100; of Indonesia  
 277, 280, 283; of Israel 196; of  
 London 227; The Villages and  
 171; work and 87, 88  
 Egyptian Temple of the Antwerp  
 Zoo *ii*  
 ekstasis 35  
 Empire 291, 292; *see also*  
 colonialism; colonies  
 emplacements 32, 259; *communitas*  
 and 35, 36; dead zones produced  
 by 206, 207–8; Foucault on 15,  
 16, 17, 31, 179; Foucault on  
 counter-emplacements and 17,  
 25n15; translators’ notes on 23n6,  
 24n8, 25n13  
 empowerment 47  
 empty zones 203, 204, 207  
 enclaves 259, 275, 292–3, 311, 312,  
 313–14; *beguinages* 261; in Dubai  
 294; Florence 267; gated  
 communities 163; London Muslim  
 Centre 243; Palais Royal 262, 263;  
 public domain 240; of resistance  
 194, 200; segregation into 192;  
 Spitalfields 233, 313  
 England 204, 261; London 8, 66,  
 226–45, 226, 228, 229, 230, 232,  
 235, 237, 240, 265, 313; Tate  
 Gallery and Tate Modern 268; *see*  
*also* United Kingdom  
 Erehwon 37, 38  
 ethnography 153, 276, 306n1  
 EuroDisney 267  
 Europe 216–17, 223, 259, 265; *see*  
*also individual countries by name*  
 everyday 38, 39, 98, 162, 192, 200,  
 313; architecture of the 92;  
 London Muslim Centre 242;  
 reinvention of the 4; theme park  
 streets 106  
 Evry 122–3, 123, 127–30, 128, 129,  
 132  
 exceptionality 46, 49, 49n3, 97, 292  
 excess 210, 316, 317, 321  
 exclusion 311, 313, 315, 317, 318,  
 321, 322; in camps 292;  
 citizenship and 293; of the deviant  
 46; in Dubai 294; Foucault on 21,  
 70, 81; of gated communities 153,  
 158–9, 162; in Jakarta 276, 277,  
 282; play and 96; from the *polis*  
 91; prisons and 70; from the  
 public square 83; of shopping  
 malls and theme parks 105  
 existentialists 38  
*Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners*  
*of Architecture* 7, 52, 65, 66–9,  
 67, 68, 70, 71  
 exoticism 48

- exploitation, economic and political 58
- exploration 218
- extension 5, 15, 23n5, 24n6, 259
- fairgrounds 20, 147, 263
- Faubion, James D. 6, 14, 22, 31–9, 311, 319
- fear 7, 154, 155–7, 162; *see also* security
- Feddes, Fred 205, 206
- feminism 82–3, 321, 322
- Ferguson, Bruce W. 281
- festival mall 265
- festivity *see* heterotopias of festivity
- Fiske, John 141
- 'fivesquare city' 88, 90
- flagships 231, 236, 238, 240, 241
- Florence 267
- Florida: Disney World 267, 269; The Villages 164, 166–77, 169, 170, 172, 173
- flows 8, 23n3, 246–57, 246, 249, 292, 293, 312, 316, 318
- Flow Urbanism 247–53, 255–6, 316, 318
- Fordism 75, 78, 79
- Foreign Office Architects (FOA) 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252
- Foster and Partners 74, 234, 235, 268
- Foucault, Michel 12–22, 12, 43–7, 53–64; on accessibility of heterotopias 291; on the aesthetic 38; on the ambiguity of Foucault's heterotopias 317; *Archaeology of Knowledge, The* 57–8, 60; Harold Bloom and 33, 35; on boats 200, 320; in the Castro District 36, 37; on cemeteries 18–19, 20, 26n19, 46, 55, 297; on colonies 320; on the confusion of 'Of other spaces' 75; on counter-emplacements 25n15, 93; on counter-sites 191, 291; on counter-spaces 95; criticisms of 320–1; on de-localization 179; on discourse 278–9; on double logic of heterotopias 319; on economy 98; on empty zones 203, 204; 'Foucauldian' reading of heterotopia 311; on heterochronia 185; on heterotopias of deviance 260, 261; on heterotopias of illusion 262; on the history of space 80, 259; on holiday 92; on illusion 181, 212; on incompatible spaces 81, 84, 147, 210, 290; introduction of term 'heterotopia' 3–4, 6, 17–22; on liberty 114; 'Of other spaces' 13–22; on opening and closing 167; on oppositions 87; *Order of Things, The* 6, 24n10, 43, 44, 55, 75; on painting 60–2; on periodization 76–7; on power 193–4, 279, 294; on prisons 70; in Sidi-Bou-Saïd 31–2, 39; on systems of relations 269; translators' notes on 'Of other spaces' 22–8; on the universality of heterotopias 100; on utopias 17, 24n11, 25n15, 27n30, 31, 41, 43, 54–5
- fragmentation 47, 48, 64, 75, 78–9, 113, 131, 133, 174, 192
- France 58, 116–34, 116, 119, 265; Cergy-Pontoise 126–7, 132; EuroDisney 267; Evry 122–3, 123, 127–30, 128, 129, 132; gated communities in 154; Noisy-le-Grand 130–2, 131; Palais Royal 262–3, 262; Passage des Panoramas 264; Pompidou Art Centre, Beaubourg, Paris 265–7, 266; the Zone 206–7
- Frankfurt School 141; *see also* Marxist
- Frantz, Klaus 153
- Fraser, Nancy 83, 84, 113, 321
- freedom 37, 294; *see also* liberation; liberty
- French *urbanisme* 117
- Freud 136, 145
- function of heterotopias 21
- 'garden city' 106, 165, 185
- gardens 19–20, 46, 146, 159–60, 262
- gated communities 7, 152–63, 152, 169, 170, 180, 288, 313, 317
- gay communities 36–7, 38, 194, 197, 198, 199, 314, 318
- Gehry, Frank 258, 268, 269
- Geist, Johann Friedrich 263
- Genari, Flaminia 220–1

- gender 195–6, 321, 322; *see also*  
 homosexual men; lesbian;  
 masculinity; men; women
- genealogists 37, 38
- Generic City 169, 254–5
- Genet, Jean 35, 37
- Genocchio, Benjamin 44, 49n1, 82,  
 192, 210
- gentrification 233, 243, 313
- ghettos 36–7, 227, 231
- Gibian, Peter 140
- Gibson, Timothy A. 110, 111
- globalisation 187, 215–17, 293, 312,  
 318
- Goffman, E. 197
- Goss, John 140, 146, 147
- Gottdiener, Mark 166
- governance: community development  
 districts (CDDs) 174–6, 177;  
 language of 4, 278, 279, 281;  
 private 154, 159, 160–1, 173
- governmentality 37
- Graham, Stephen 103, 110, 112,  
 186, 264, 269
- Gramsci, Antonio 193, 194, 200
- Grayling, Anthony C. 141
- Groupe d'information sur les prisons  
 (GIP) 58–9
- Gruen, Victor 120, 121–2, 123, 125,  
 127, 140
- Guattari, Felix 23n3, 56, 255
- Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain 258,  
 268–9
- Guggenheim museums 258, 268–9,  
 270
- Guillot, Xavier 7, 178–88, 178, 181,  
 182, 183, 184, 311, 313, 317
- Habermas, Jürgen 82
- Hajer, Maarten 239–40, 242
- hammams, Muslim 21, 31, 37, 45
- Hardt, Michael 291–2
- Harper, S. 141, 143–4
- Hartsock, Nancy 321
- Harvey, David 24n9, 80, 81, 209,  
 217
- Ha'Yarkon Estuary, Tel Aviv 205,  
 206
- Hayden, Dolores 154
- hegemony 199, 317, 318, 319; 'dead  
 zones' used by the 204, 207, 209,  
 317; defined by Gramsci 193;  
 enclaves of resistance and 194;
- Israeli masculinity 195–6, 197,  
 200; *see also* domination; power
- heroization 38
- heterochronisms 20, 26n21, 185–6
- heterogeneity 31, 42, 44, 45, 46,  
 316, 317; in contemporary society  
 217; gated communities and 154;  
 themed spaces and 166
- hetero-normativity 194
- heterotopia: Foucault's introduction  
 of term 3–4, 6, 17–22; medical  
 and biological meaning of term  
 24n12, 41–3, 42, 44, 58, 75;  
 summary of different  
 interpretations of term 311–12
- heterotopias 96, 100
- heterotopias: of compensation 146,  
 212, 233, 313; of crisis 18, 45, 76,  
 259, 260; of difference 84; of  
 festivity 20, 26n24, 26n25;  
 Foucault's six principles of 18–21;  
 grotesque 32; of masculinity  
 194–6, 195; medical/ biological  
 24n12, 41–3, 42, 44, 58, 75;  
 sublime 32; types of 27n30
- heterotopias of deviance 75, 79, 106,  
 191, 193, 259, 260; in the *Cine  
 Citta* 261–2; dependence on  
 networks 263; Foucault on 18,  
 76–7; as instruments of  
 normalization 317; in Tel Aviv  
 191; *see also* deviance
- heterotopias of illusion 191, 212,  
 259, 260, 267–9, 270, 313, 317;  
 Disneyland 264–5; Disney World  
 267; Palais Royal 262–3, 262;  
 Pompidou Art Center 266;  
 Spitalfields 233; *see also* illusions
- heterotopology 6, 17, 25n16, 45–6,  
 47, 53, 260, 317
- Hetherington, Kevin 49n1, 240, 262,  
 318–19
- Heynen, Hilde 8, 49n1, 71n7,  
 71n10, 310–23, 310
- Heyns, Maureen 8, 226–45, 226,  
 228, 229, 230, 232, 235, 237,  
 240, 313
- hieratic spaces 90, 97, 231, 239
- Hieromènia* 92
- Hill, John 139
- Hippodamus 88, 89, 90, 96
- history: dead zones and 206, 209,  
 210; of space 15, 24n7, 80,

- 259; Spitalfields and 233; of the subject 63; The Villages and 164, 166–7, 169, 170, 171–3, 172; of thought 57
- Hoffman, Michael L. 281
- Hölderlin, Friedrich 38
- holiday 92, 162, 313
- home 7; *see also* condominiums; gated communities; informal settlements (*kampung*); *oikos*; planned communities; retirement communities
- homelessness 110, 111, 207, 233
- hometown 166, 167–8, 169, 173, 176
- homogeneity 47, 48, 49, 158, 160, 162, 166
- homosexual men 36–7, 194, 197, 198, 199, 314, 318
- homotopia 45, 47, 48
- Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Plaza 74, 79
- Hong Kong Disneyland 268
- Hooper, Barbara 83
- Horkheimer, Max 322
- Horne, Philip 142
- housing 7, 281–2; *see also* condominiums; gated communities; informal settlements (*kampung*); *oikos*; planned communities; retirement communities
- Huizinga, Johannes 95–6, 98
- human agency 320–2
- Hurley, Robert 14, 22, 26
- Idea Store, Spitalfields, London 226, 232, 239, 240, 242–3
- identity 63, 76, 79, 83, 322; constructed by consumers 141; politics of 237, 239, 242, 243; in Spitalfields 227, 235; in Tel Aviv 196–7, 199, 205; of Suharto 280
- illusions: art and 62, 63; condominiums and 180, 181; dead zones and 212; in the double logic of heterotopias 319; gated communities and 162; mirrors and 55, 56, 62, 63; Spitalfields and 233; *see also* heterotopias of illusion
- Il Pianeta come festival (The Planet as Festival)* (Sottsass) 310
- imagination 35, 38, 54, 69, 70, 148, 209, 320
- immigrants and immigrant communities 5, 83, 97, 172, 207, 216; in England 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 235, 236
- in-between space 227, 230, 231, 234, 238, 241, 322
- inclusion 158–9, 276, 292, 294, 311, 313, 315, 317, 318
- incompatible spaces 19, 62, 81, 84, 147, 210, 290
- Indonesia 8, 274–85, 274, 276, 284, 318
- informal settlements (*kampung*) 277, 284
- infrastructure 248, 249, 252–3, 256
- Innocenzi, Aldo 214, 220–1
- insecurity 155–9, 176
- intensity 248, 250–1, 254
- International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) 106
- internet 114, 254, 269–70
- inversion 36, 38, 65, 67
- Islam: Bangladeshi community in Spitalfields 228, 229, 231; in Dubai 287, 288; hammams 21, 31, 37, 45; heterotopias of illusion in the Islamic world 270; Islamic enclaves 259; London Muslim Centre 232, 237, 238–9, 240, 241–2, 243; Suharto and 280
- islands *see* offshore islands, Dubai
- Israel 8, 190–1, 190, 194–201, 195, 198, 205, 206, 314
- Italy *frontispiece*, 5–6, 86, 217–19, 220–3, 267
- Ithaca, New York 33
- Jackson, Kenneth T. 139, 147
- Jacobs, Jane M. 80, 233, 235
- Jakarta 8, 274–85, 274, 276, 284
- Jameson, Frederic 3, 47, 279
- Japan 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 256, 267
- Jesuit colonies of South America 21–2, 32, 320
- Judaism 196, 228, 229, 231, 238, 239
- Jumeira Islands 288, 289, 290
- Kallus, Rachel 8, 190–201, 190, 195, 198



- Kelling, George L. 110, 111  
 Kern, Kathleen 7, 104–15, 104, 108, 109, 311, 313, 318  
 Kershner, Anne 227, 236  
 Kinshasa, Congo 8, 296–308, 296, 315, 318  
 Klingerer, Frank van 123–4, 124, 125, 126, 127  
 Klossowski, Pierre 38  
 Kohn, Margaret 110, 112, 113  
 Koolhaas, Rem 65–6, 69, 71, 106, 169, 254–5, 268  
 Krens, Thomas 268–9, 270  
 Kurokawa, Kisho 182  
 Kwok, Kian Woon 187
- La Défense 116, 118, 127  
 landscape of fear 156–7; *see also* fear  
 Lang, Fritz 68  
 Lang, Peter 8, 214–24, 214, 311, 316, 318  
 language 55; relation to painting 61; *see also* discourse  
 ‘La Peinture de Manet’ (Foucault) 60, 61  
*Las Meninas* (Velázquez) 61, 62  
 Lax, Sigurd F. 41–2, 42, 43  
 Lefebvre, Henri 4, 7, 76, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 114, 118, 192, 311  
 Lelystad, Netherlands 123–4, 126  
 lesbian 83, 199; *see also* homosexual  
 Les Halles 132–3, 265, 313  
 liberation 63, 64, 65, 96, 319, 321, 322; *see also* freedom; liberty  
 liberty 114; *see also* freedom; liberation  
 libraries 20, 54, 61, 239, 242, 243  
 lifestyle centres 105, 106–9, 108, 109  
 limbo 34, 293  
 liminality 33, 34, 35, 36, 48, 157, 162, 243  
 liminal spaces 96, 227, 231, 243  
 liminoid states 96  
 linguistics 47  
 localization 15, 23n5, 80, 179, 259  
 localized utopias 53  
 London 8, 66, 226–45, 226, 228, 229, 230, 232, 235, 237, 240, 265, 313; Tate Gallery and Tate Modern 268  
 London Muslim Centre 232, 237, 238–9, 240, 241–2, 243  
 Low, Setha 7, 152–63, 152, 311, 313, 317  
 Lukács, Georg 165  
 Luke, Timothy W. 260  
 Lynch, Kevin 259
- Mallarmé, Stéphane 38  
*Mallrats* (Smith) 138–9, 142, 143–4  
 malls *see* shopping malls  
 Manet, Édouard 60, 61–2, 63, 64, 70n1  
 Mannheim, Karl 31  
 Mardijkers 277  
 marginality 35, 47, 311  
 Marling, Karal Ann 265, 267  
 Marne-la-Vallée 130  
 Marvin, Simon 105, 110, 112, 186, 264, 269  
 Marxist: critics 153; focus 205; tradition 91  
 masculinity 190, 194–6, 195, 197, 200  
 mass market 78–9  
*matanga* (mourning rituals) 299–300, 302, 304, 305  
 Mauss, Marcel 98  
 Mbembe, A. 299  
 meaning, transformation of 45–6  
 medical/ biological heterotopia 24n12, 41–3, 42, 44, 58, 75  
 mega-complex pattern 130, 132, 133  
 megastructures 66, 67, 186, 208, 209  
 men 190, 194–6, 195, 197, 200; *see also* homosexual  
*Metropolis* (Lang) 68  
 middle class 148, 154, 156–7, 158, 162, 180, 186, 229, 269, 317  
 Milton, John 32  
 mirrors 17, 25n14, 54, 55–6, 63, 64, 70; dead zones and 210; in painting 53, 61, 62  
 Mitchell, Don 112, 113  
 mobility 248–50, 255–6, 260  
 Modleski, Tania 141, 143  
 moral minimalism 159–60  
 Moretti, Jean-Charles 92, 97  
 Morgan, Lewis Henry 33  
 Morse, Gary 175, 176  
 movie houses 19, 46; *see also* cinema, shopping malls in; theatres

- multicultural engagement 235, 237, 238, 240  
 multimedia documentation 218  
 museums 20, 46, 54, 61;  
   Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain 258, 268–9; Guggenheim brand 258, 268–9, 270; Pompidou Art Centre, Beaubourg, Paris 265–7, 266; Tate Gallery and Tate Modern, England 268; Uffizi Gallery, Florence 267  
 Muzzio, Douglas 7, 136–49, 136, 146, 311, 313, 318  
 Muzzio-Rentas, Jessica 7, 136–49, 136, 146, 311, 313, 318  
 Native Americans 172–3, 172  
 negativity 48  
 Negri, Antonio 291–2  
 Nesbit, Molly 206, 207  
 Netherlands 123–4, 124, 125, 126;  
   Arnhem Central interchange 246, 247, 248–9, 250, 251, 252–3; colonization of Indonesia 275, 276, 277, 280  
 networks 25n16, 57, 114, 186, 251, 253, 254, 256, 259, 265–6;  
   heterotopias dependent on 263–4  
 network society 4–5, 8, 23n3, 217, 254, 267–70  
*New Babylon* 208, 248; *see also* Constant  
 New Haven, Connecticut 32  
 New Lanark, Scotland 261, 262  
 New Towns 118–32; Cergy-Pontoise 126–7, 132; Evry 122–3, 123, 127–30, 128, 129, 132; Noisy-le-Grand 130–2, 131; in Singapore 179, 181, 182  
 New York City 265, 267, 268  
 Noisy-le-Grand 130–2, 131  
 Nolli Map of Rome *cover*, 2, 5  
 non-places 4–5, 47, 48, 55, 62–3, 205, 253, 316  
 normalization 63, 64, 77, 186, 243, 253, 256, 294, 317, 319  
 Oedipus 33, 94  
 Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) 7, 52, 67, 68, 247  
 offshore islands, Dubai 286–91, 286, 289, 290, 294, 317  
*Offside* (Panahi) 100  
 ‘Of other spaces’ (Foucault) 13–22, 43–4, 53, 62; translators’ notes on 22–8  
*oikos* 87, 90, 91, 93, 97  
 opening and closing, systems of 21, 81, 167, 311; *see also* exclusion; inclusion  
 Orillard, Clément 7, 116–35, 311, 313, 318  
 orthotopology 43, 45  
 otherness 23, 44, 48, 98, 192, 210, 317  
 ‘other spaces’, translation of ‘*Des espaces autres*’ as 22–3  
 Owen, Robert 261, 262  
 Oxford colleges 261  
 painting 53, 60–2, 70n1  
 Palais Royal, Paris 262–3, 262  
 Palestine 205, 206  
 Palm Deira, The (Dubai) 290  
 Palm Jebel Ali, The (Dubai) 290  
 Palm Jumeirah, The (Dubai) 286, 289–90, 290  
 Panahi, Jafar 100  
 Panopticon 261–2, 294  
 Paris 116, 118, 132–3; Palais Royal 262–3, 262; Passage des Panoramas 264; Pompidou Art Centre, Beaubourg, Paris 265–7, 266; the Zone 206–7; *see also* La Défense  
 Parisian region (SDAURP) 119–21, 119; New Towns of 118–32, 123, 128, 129, 131  
 Passage des Panoramas, Paris 264  
 Pentecostalism 297, 298, 303, 306  
 Petti, Alessandro 8, 286–95, 286, 289, 290, 293, 311, 315, 317  
 Phantasmagoria 263  
 philosophers 57, 92, 96  
 philosophical 35, 60  
 philosophy 60, 87, 95, 209  
 Piano, Renzo 265, 266  
 Piazza at Noisy-le-Grand 130–2, 131  
 planned communities 164–77, 164, 169, 170, 172, 173, 313, 317; *see also* gated communities  
 play 95–6; playing 320, 322  
 Poag, G. Dan 106  
*polis* 88, 89, 90, 91, 94, 320  
 politics 317–20; citizenship and 293; enclaves of cultural deviation and 199; enclaves of resistance and

- 194; Foucault's interest in 59, 63; of identity 237, 239, 242, 243; in Indonesia 277–83; in Kinshasa, Congo 297, 298, 299–301, 305, 306, 315; political exploitation 58; political role of architecture 192; political role of heterotopia 100; in public space 112; student protests 37, 58, 63, 217–18, 283; US–Soviet relations 215; in The Villages 175–6, 177
- Pompidou Art Centre, Beaubourg, Paris 265–7, 266
- postcivil society 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 100, 109, 152, 156, 162, 292
- post-Fordism 75, 78–9, 81
- post-industrial zones 208–9
- postmodernism 44, 47–8, 216
- Postrel, Virginia 107
- potlatch space 98
- power 317, 318, 321, 322; archipelagos and 293; architects raising questions of 56; in capitalism 77; of children in Kinshasa 300–1; of discourse 279; Empire and 292; Foucault on 'governmentality' 37; Foucault's study of 58, 59, 63–4, 70, 192, 194, 279; in Indonesia 276, 277, 278, 280, 282; in Jakarta 279; masculinity and 196, 200; in the society of control 294; *see also* domination; hegemony
- prisons 18, 21, 35, 37, 46, 58–9, 63, 64; Attic Prison Riots 69–70; Panopticon 294; shopping malls as 138; *see also Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*
- private governance 154, 159, 160–1, 173; *see also* governance
- privatization 2, 4, 93, 112, 180
- protected public spaces 117, 118, 127, 132, 133
- public domain 239–40, 241, 242, 243
- public-space heterotopias 193–4, 200
- public spaces 3–7, 16, 76, 82–3, 91, 93, 99, 103–10, 112–14, 209, 247, 248, 251, 255, 256, 299; democratic 112, 113; *see also* protected public spaces
- Pump Up the Volume* (Moyle) 144
- purification 21
- Rabinow, Paul 38, 56, 57
- radical openness 46, 47
- real estate developers: in Indonesia 281; New Towns, France 125, 127, 128, 129, 132; shopping malls and 140; The Villages, Florida 175, 176, 177; Spitalfields Development Group (SDG) 233–4
- reformism 228–30
- refugees 5, 97, 215, 216, 218, 222, 227
- regeneration 227, 231, 234, 236, 238–9, 241, 243
- Regulation School 78, 79
- regulatory controls 77, 78, 79
- Reijndorp, Arnold 239–40, 242
- religion 227–8, 228, 277; Christianity in Congo 297, 298, 303, 305, 306; Judaism 196, 228, 229, 231, 238, 239; London Muslim Centre 232, 237, 238–9, 240, 241–2, 243; *see also* Islam
- representation 70, 167, 173, 207; spaces of 76, 80–2, 83
- resistance 63–4, 70, 192–3, 207, 318, 319, 322; enclaves of 194, 200; by Jewish rabbis in the Diaspora 196; Stalker and 221; *see also* counter-hegemony; subversion
- resorts 153–4
- retirement communities 154; The Villages, Florida 164, 166–77, 169, 170, 172, 173
- revelation 33
- revisionism 32
- Rich Mix 236–8, 240–1, 240, 242, 243
- rites of passage 33, 35, 45, 76, 94
- ritual 33–6, 66, 81, 92, 95–6, 100, 194, 227, 254, 278, 304, 306
- Ritual Process, The* (Turner) 33–5
- Rochester, New York 33
- Rogers, Richard 265, 266
- Rome *frontispiece*, 5–6, 218–19, 220–3
- Romero, George A. 137–8, 139, 142
- Romito, Lorenzo 219, 220
- Rose, Gillian 206
- Rossi, Aldo 86

- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 38  
 Roussel, Raymond 38, 43
- sacralization 16, 31, 87  
 sacred 34, 90–1, 297, 305  
 Safe Streets Act 111  
 sameness 44, 47, 48  
 San Antonio 152, 161  
 Sanchez, 'Silencio' 164, 172  
 sanctuary 32, 36, 89, 97, 261; gated  
 communities as 155, 162, 163;  
 shopping malls as 138; in  
 Spitalfields 229  
 saunas, Scandinavian 21, 31, 45  
*Scenes from a Mall* (Mazursky)  
 145–6, 146  
 Schwartz, Harold 166, 168, 171  
 Scotland 261, 262  
 SDAURP *see* Parisian region  
 (SDAURP)  
 Seattle 110–11, 114  
 security: attempts to secure the city  
 113; in business improvement  
 districts 110; in Disneyland 265;  
 in gated communities 155, 156,  
 157, 162; in lifestyle centres 108;  
 in shopping malls 106, 143; in  
 Singapore 180; in *The World*,  
 Dubai 291; *see also* fear  
 segregation 192, 275, 276, 277,  
 317, 318  
 self-discipline 322  
 semi-public character of heterotopia  
 6  
 sexuality 194, 195–6, 197, 198; *see*  
*also* gay communities; gender;  
 homosexual; lesbian; masculinity;  
 men; women  
 Shane, D. Grahame 8, 24n7, 47, 49,  
 258–71, 258, 260, 261, 262, 264,  
 266, 311, 312–13, 315  
 Shaw, Stephen 236  
 ships 22, 54, 86, 200, 320  
 shopping 318  
 shopping malls 7, 46, 49, 105–10,  
 117, 122, 138, 313; in Asia  
 270; in cinema 136–9, 136,  
 142–6, 146, 147, 148; differences  
 between *agora* and 124–5; in  
 France 120, 123, 127, 128,  
 131–2, 131, 133; as heterotopias  
 146–8; in Jakarta 283; readings  
 of 141–2; in the US 140;  
*see also* lifestyle centres; theme  
 park streets  
 Sidi-Bou-Said, Tunisia 13, 30, 31,  
 39, 57  
 simulacra 260, 265, 267  
 Singapore 7, 178–88, 178, 181, 182,  
 183, 184, 313  
 Situationists 207–8  
 Smith, Judith 140  
 Smith, Larry 120, 121, 122  
 smooth spaces 255, 256, 291, 292  
 Snyder, Mary Gail 154  
 social and cultural facilities 120,  
 123, 127, 130, 131–2  
 social dualisms 275  
 social jealousy 282  
 social norms 76–7, 78, 275  
 social splitting 157  
*societas* 34, 36  
 society, global 215–17  
 society of control 292, 293–4  
 socio-spatial contexts 47  
 Socrates 35, 91, 92, 145  
 Sohn, Heidi 6, 24n12, 40–50, 40,  
 42, 311, 315, 317  
 Soja, Edward 47, 48, 49n1, 75, 82,  
 83, 147, 192, 311  
 Sola-Morales Rubio, Ignasi de 210,  
 212, 248  
 Sottsass, Ettore 310  
 soul 55  
 Soviet Union 215  
 space, role of 312–17  
 space of flows 254, 292; *see also*  
 flows  
 space of hidden appearance 91, 94  
 spaces: of compensation 180, 181;  
 of illusion 180, 181; in-between  
 227, 230, 231, 234, 238, 241,  
 322; incompatible 19, 62, 81, 84,  
 147, 210, 290; Lefebvre on 80,  
 81; of representation 76, 80–2,  
 83; *see also* public-space  
 heterotopias  
 space(s), Foucault on 14–17;  
 heterotopias 17–22; history of  
 space 15, 24n7, 80, 259  
 Spain 258, 268–9  
 spectators 62, 63, 64, 197  
 Spitalfields 226–45, 226, 228,  
 229, 230, 232, 235, 237, 240,  
 313  
 splintering urbanism 8, 122

- sports 94  
 Stalker 8, 214, 217, 218–24, 316  
 statements 59  
 Stickells, Lee 8, 246–57, 246, 249, 311, 316, 318  
 streets and roads 104–15, 122;  
   Castro Street, San Francisco 36–7, 38; death in Kinshasa's 299;  
   downtown 109–12, 113; in  
   Jakarta 277, 282–3; Piazza at  
   Noisy-le-Grand 130; simulacra  
   265; underground in Paris 133;  
   Village at Park Royal, Vancouver  
   104, 108–9, 108, 109  
 student protests 37, 58, 63, 217–18, 283  
 subjectification 63, 77  
 subjectivity 69, 321, 322  
 subjects 37, 38, 54, 61, 63, 210, 322  
 subjugation 63, 64, 69, 77  
 suburbs 120, 121, 122, 140, 143, 144, 165; gated communities 152, 154, 162; planned communities 169, 170, 171, 173, 176; US 264–5; *see also* New Towns; Spitalfields  
 subversion 44, 47, 48, 192, 193, 317, 318, 319; of the logics of identity formation 322; in Tel Aviv 199, 200, 314; ships and 200; of young people in Kinshasa 306; *see also* counter-hegemony; resistance  
 Sudjic, Deyan 254, 266  
 Suharto 274, 278, 279–80, 281, 282, 283, 318  
 Sukarno 280  
 Sumptuary Code 276–7, 276, 283  
  
 Tafuri, Manfredo 47, 192, 208  
 Tate Gallery and Tate Modern, England 268  
 Teatro del mondo, Venice 86  
 technology 33  
 teenagers 143–4; *see also* young people  
 Tel Aviv: drummers at the Dolphinarium 194–6, 195, 197, 198, 199, 314, 318; Ha'Yarkon Estuary 205, 206; Independence Park 194, 197, 198, 199, 200; shoreline 8, 190–1, 190, 194–201, 195, 198, 314  
  
*temenos* 95–6, 97  
 temples 94, 95  
*terrains vagues* 7–8, 65, 202, 203, 204, 207, 212, 219; *see also* dead zones  
 thanatocracy 299  
 Thayer, Kelly 105, 109  
 theatres 4, 5, 19, 31, 36, 46, 90;  
   ancient Greek 91, 92, 93, 94;  
   censored by the French Crown 262; drumming in Tel Aviv compared to 197; Foucault on cinema 19; hidden appearance and 94; in Spitalfields 231; Teatro del mondo, Venice 86; *see also* cinema, shopping malls in  
 themed space 7, 320; in Dubai 291, 294; in Indonesia 282; planned communities 166–73, 169, 170, 172, 173, 176, 313; Spitalfields 232, 234, 235, 237, 243  
 theme parks, shopping malls as 145–6  
 theme park streets 104–14, 104, 108, 109; downtown streets 109–12  
 The Villages, Florida *see* Villages, The  
 Tiberghien, Gilles 224  
 time: dead zones and 207, 210–11; heterochronisms 20, 185–6; heterotopia defined by 92; shopping malls and 147; *see also* history  
 Toffler, Alvin 215  
 Tokyo Disneyland 267  
 topology 25n16  
 transgressions 7–8, 37, 96, 207, 210, 211, 214, 242, 252, 321–2  
*Trespassing* 214; *see also* Constant  
 Troen, S. Ilan 205  
*True Stories* (Byrne) 142, 143, 147, 148  
 Tunisia 13, 30, 31, 37, 39, 57, 58, 60  
 Turner, Victor 33–6, 96, 306  
*12 Monkeys* (Gilliam) 147  
 Twitchell, James B. 141, 142  
  
 Uffizi Gallery, Florence 267  
*Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* (Manet) 62  
 Underhill, Paco 148

- United Arab Emirates *see* Dubai
- United Kingdom 204, 263; *see also* England; London; London Muslim Centre; Scotland
- United States: Castro Street, San Francisco 36–7, 38; Cornell University 33; development in 282; Disneyland, California 264–5, 282; Disney World, Florida 267, 269; end of US-Soviet conflict 215; gated communities in 152–63, 152; New Haven 32; New York City 110, 265, 267, 268; Seattle 110–11, 114; shopping malls in 140; suburban growth in 264–5; The Villages, Florida 164, 166–77, 169, 170, 172, 173; University of Buffalo 70
- University of Buffalo 70
- University of Tunis 37, 57, 58
- University of Vincennes 58
- UN Habitat 270
- UN Studio 246, 247, 248–9, 250, 251, 252–3, 256
- urban activism 7–8, 214–24, 214, 316
- urban design ambience 107
- urbanisme* 117, 127
- urban planning 205, 206, 207, 212
- Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore 185
- urban sprawl 161, 210, 254
- utopias 38, 39, 48, 63, 319; *communitas* and 35, 36; Foucault on 17, 24n11, 25n15, 27n30, 31, 41, 43, 54–5; localized 53; New Lanark, Scotland 261; offshore islands, Dubai 291; planned communities 173, 176; proposed by Hippodamus 88; shopping malls 138, 139, 141, 148; Singapore 187; Tel Aviv 205; theme park streets 106
- vacation theme 167, 169, 177
- vacation villages 20, 27n25, 46, 54
- Vancouver 104, 108–9, 108, 109, 111–12, 113
- Van Gennep, Arnold 33–4, 76
- Van Pelt, Robert Jan 88, 90, 92, 94
- Veblen, Thorstein 141
- Velázquez, Diego 61
- Venice 86, 178, 267
- Village at Park Royal, Vancouver 104, 108–9, 108, 109
- Villages, The 164, 166–77, 169, 170, 172, 173
- Virilio, Paul 252, 253–4
- visibility 59
- vita activa* 87
- vita contemplativa* 87–8, 91
- Vriesendorp, Madelon 65
- walls 153, 157, 206, 214, 219, 252, 254; Berlin Wall 65–6, 69; *see also* gated communities
- Weber, Max 36
- Webster, Chris 98–9
- Well, The* 269
- White, Hayden 278
- Whitechapel Idea Store, Spitalfields, London 226, 232, 239, 240, 242–3
- Wilson, James Q. 110, 111
- witchcraft 300, 301, 304
- women 83, 93, 100, 195–6, 261, 263, 298, 321
- World, The (Dubai) 289, 290, 291
- Yokohama Port Terminal, Japan 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 256
- young people: children 157–8, 299, 300–2, 307n3; in cinema 143–4; of Kinshasa 296, 297, 299–306, 307, 315; student protests 37, 58, 63, 217–18, 283
- Zenghelis, Elia 65, 66, 69, 71
- Zenghelis, Zoe 65, 71n10
- zone in transition 227
- Zone on the outskirts of Paris, the 206–7
- zoning 207, 209, 254
- Zukin, Sharon 231, 265