

# **Exercising control at the urban scale: towards a theory of spatial organisation and surveillance**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how urban spaces are implicated in the control and surveillance of users in a culture saturated by the notion of the self as a consuming body or entity. Using the work of Foucault on disciplinary cultures, Lefebvre in relation to the production of space, and other seminal theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman, Rob Shields and Micahel Walzer, a model for analysing the three dimensions of social spatialisation is proposed and illustrated by reference to contemporary public spaces, and specifically spaces of mundane leisure such as shopping malls and high streets. The chapter examines space in terms of its moral, aesthetic and cognitive dimensions – both as produced and as consumed – and how control is exercised over the individual's sense of identity as well as over the social aspects of place through material, managerial and aesthetic strategies. The chapter also discusses the dialogue that exists between constructed technologies of surveillance – CCTV, architectural elements such as windows and their placing in relation to the street, and internalised expectations and the self-censorship of identity and behaviour of consumers induced in a culture of highly aestheticized and depoliticised consumption. The chapter also thinks through the implications of contemporary approaches to the design of commodity dominated and privatized public space in relation to notions of the private and the public, and the idea of 'third' spaces, as they have been called. Finally, the chapter deals with how the public realm as a controlling space has been theorised in terms of opposition to such controlling tendencies – from the *flaneur*, through the self-constructed narratives of De Certeau's walker, to the digitally 'enhanced' individual today, appropriating space via technology and their own projects in tinder etc., and other potentially transgressive media.

*The city is, and always has been, constituted as a contest over space – over its production, representation and regulation; over who is authorised to be in it, and who is kept out; over what constitutes an unpolluted space and what constitutes a transgression of space.*

*Coleman, R (2007) (p240)*

## **Introduction**

The quotation at the head of this chapter taken from a text in the fields of sociology and criminology on the nature of surveillance in the contemporary city, reminds us that the control of urban space has a long history, and is even perhaps, a necessary condition of a phenomenon in which power is always exercised and exercised unequally. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the forms that surveillance as a dimension of control takes in the contemporary and emerging urban settings. In order to do this, we start with an analysis of what has been termed social-spatialisation (Shields, 1992): the particular regulatory, aesthetic and material strategies by which control and the subversion of control are exercised; and how the meaning and directedness of such control - through various forms of surveillance – is predicated on notions of space as instrumental and, particularly in the case of city centres, commodified as a space for individuated and life-style consumption. The chapter is also concerned with articulating how surveillance operates both *from the outside*, and as an apparently natural response to contemporary narratives of safety, conformity and moral propriety: but also from *the inside* with how individuals reflexively self-monitor in response to imposed clues and signals from increasingly aestheticized public environments such as theme parks, through shopping malls to the managed High Street. Finally, the chapter discusses how emerging technologies embodied in the mobile phone both extend the possibilities of a controlling and externalized surveillance, and at the same time offer the opportunity for the individual to appropriate space and its narrative meaning in a paradoxical privileging of the very private in the context of the public realm.

The chapter covers a range of themes, starting with the question of how notions of the public and the private are central to understanding what surveillance is. Building on this, it sets out a theory social spatialisation, and provides a model of the relationship between the three dimensions of public space –material or formal, regulatory or managerial, and aesthetic or felt. This section places the concept of surveillance/ the gaze, in its broader theoretical setting related to notions of propriety, safety, image and identity, and in terms of the political economy of the city.

The chapter then briefly examines how control is exercised in different public settings, from the passive and incidental to the increasingly remote and digital and briefly how different narratives have been constructed to rationalise and justify these. In particular, the focus is on how space is

socially organised through range of tangible and intangible devices of control as a form of social spatialisation.

The third section focuses on a the idea of the entrepreneurial city (Harvey, 1990; Coleman, 2007), and the use of surveillance technologies along with other management and aesthetic strategies intended to create a new type of public realm – of the depoliticised and atomised consumer as against the civic and the collective – focused in the notion of the panopticon of leisure and consumption.

The final section discusses notions of appropriation and transgression of public space, and the subversion of surveillance by turning the technology on itself - effectively the digitisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *flaneur* as celebrated by Walter Benjamin in the Arcades Project. This section speculates on the relationship between notions of the individual as gazed upon by the other – both as individual and present, but also as remote and ‘managerial’, or present by their absence; and of the individual as observer or voyeur.

### **The public and the private**

Before examining how surveillance as one dimension of control is exercised in the built environment, it is useful to think about two apparently complementary concepts – the public and the private – in so far as the relate to urban space, its design, and management. The reason for this is that the idea of surveillance, at first sight, only has meaning in the context of the notion of the public realm or the public domain – that is, of place (spatial or non-spatial) as being open to more than the individual. As the seminal literature on surveillance (Lyon, 1994, Coleman, 2007) indicates, the electronic observation of real space in real time is only one dimension of a much larger phenomenon which is concerned with the collection and analysis, for whatever ends, of digital information about individuals as they engage with other individuals. What is important here is that technologies of surveillance which collect and interpret digital data and ‘footprints’, whilst they refer to specific geographically locatable acts, exist in a sense outside of time and place, in a virtual public space. Moreover, digital data is essentially private in the sense that it is accessed and used by individuals, arguably, in the private virtual ‘space’ of the electronic device - phones, computers, tablets etc. which provide its interface. The surveillance of the spatial public realm, on the other hand, exists in specific geographical locations and, for the most part, in real time. In this sense, it is helpful to distinguish between public space, as a site of surveillance, and private space - essentially the domestic space of the home – where even today most people would regard surveillance by ‘outsiders’ as unjustifiably intrusive or voyeuristic. Whilst the technology for remotely monitoring behaviour in domestic spaces, or spaces of privacy outside the home, undoubtedly exists (and there is anecdotal evidence of the use of cameras on mobile phones and other devises to observe users

without their consent ref); this discussion is concerned with public physical space as properly distinct from the space of the private functioning of the individual.

### *The meaning of public space*

At its simplest, physical public space is space which is given over to public use. That is, within any city it is represented by those spaces, such as streets, squares, plazas, market places, theatres, malls, and railway stations, which are social to the extent that they can be occupied or used by more than the solitary individual, and which exist outside of the spaces of work or domestic reproduction. As Henri Lefebvre (1991), amongst others (Mumford, 1987; Morris, 1979) has suggested, public space is an inevitable dimension of the urban. So, for example, his discussion of space within Roman society, provides a clear definition from the perspective of a spatial dichotomy between the private and the public,

*(public space) is the space of social relationships (as against) private areas (spaces for contemplation and retreat). (Lefebvre, 1991, 153)*

This is the sense in which public space is often treated by physical designers, as if it were a homogenised product where distinctions can only be made between different kinds of public spaces, according to their pragmatic and cultural functions, de-situated from their ethical and political context: streets as routes, markets as places of commercial exchange, theatres as spaces for performance, or theme parks as places of escape. The design literature approaches the problem of public space as a product precisely from the view that its cultural and functional performance can be measured and designed for (see Whyte, 1980; Cooper Marcus and Francis, 1998; Carmona et al. 2010).

However, Lefebvre also argues that the meaning of the public as against the private realm has shifted, historically, with changes in the mode of production, and within the present mode of production, in which the definition of what is public and private and what belongs under each realm depends on who owns what and how it fits within a system of production and social reproduction, used to maintain hegemonic interests. This hegemony can be seen to be exercised through various means of control – including the deployment of technologies of surveillance – whether by the state, or by state sanctioned, but essentially non-civic interests such as those of capital, in this context. Ownership precedes rights of use and is overlaid by class and gender specific expectations of power. In Victorian society (Daunton, 1983; Jackson, 1990), for example, the private sphere was the home, the space of the family and of social and sexual reproduction, with its own rigid power structure. A society dominated by the male 'breadwinner', with social roles and property rights organised along

the 'natural' divisions of gender. The public space, the unassigned space of the street at least, was the responsibility of the state as owner in terms of control and organisation. Rights of use and powers to proscribe public behaviour were based on the claims of the state as owner of the space and these were given particular form by the class in control of capital, law making and ownership of the space. Its dominant (class) interests were the preservation of social order, the maintenance of standards of conduct in which the proletariat, for example, were regarded as a permanent threat in the form of the crowd or mob (Golby & Purdue, 1984).

Jackson (1990) has claimed that this separation between private and public was lived in the imagination of the dominant group in society to the extent that the public domain became a demonised territory, and represented a potential threat to the sanctity of the home,

*The street was symbolically opposed to the home, a profane versus a sacred world....A clear association was assumed between the private virtues of family life in the home and the public dangers of the street. (Jackson, 1990, 100)*

As we shall see, the sense of the street as a threat to the moral sanctity of the home may have decreased – not least because the home is no longer a space so completely closed off from the world of the street as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – but this has been replaced by a different sense of the threat represented by the street as a place of economic immorality or anarchy which needs to be disciplined (See Coleman, 2007) , in part by the use of technologies of surveillance.

Daunton (1983) also argued that the street as a public place was a space with no particular purpose or prescription except, on the face of it, as a route or passageway. It therefore came to represent a threat because it was indiscriminately available to any class of individual for anything. This is a key point in our argument: the street in Victorian England stands as a type of public space towards which the state had, at best, an ambivalent attitude: protecting rights of use, but limiting or controlling uses, according to a particular social and moral conception of public order and efficiency. It is no accident that the Victorian period saw a proliferation of bye-laws regulating the use of public spaces, including the street and the new public parks. Little has changed, arguably, since the Victorian period in terms of the presumption that whilst the state has some rights to control, regulate and legislate over behaviours out of the public gaze (ie the home); it has an absolute right to observe behaviours in public space. Indeed, over the last twenty years in the UK there has been a further proliferation of laws to control and demonise forms of behaviour in public spaces in the UK – to which we will return. The key point here is that the distinction between the

public and the private is central to assumptions about what spaces can and ought to be surveilled, and to how these are then justified or legitimated by agencies who have the resources the desire to exercise such surveillance in its various guises.

It is also significant that with respect to what have been termed 'third places', as they have been called (Oldenburg, 1989), surveillance technologies have become commonplace. Third places are public spaces assigned to specific semi-public functions, in which codes of conduct, customs and practices, were historically prescribed by 'in-house' rules as well as social norms particular to those spaces. Such spaces would include theatres and concert halls, pubs and buses, and even hospitals and schools. These 'third places' are actually quite complex in the sense that they may also be seen as spaces for private, or at least personal projects. But what is interesting today is that few people would object to the presence of CCTV cameras in such settings, as though being observed anywhere except the home has become normal and even expected – particularly in the UK.

In contemporary culture, from the later part of the last century, it has been argued that the distinction between the private and public is being transformed, if it has not already been entirely lost (Harvey, 1990; Bauman, 1994, 1993; Jackson, 1990 ; Shields, 1992; Giddens, 1990, 1992). The home remains the private space for accommodating the interests of the nuclear family and of social reproduction, as well as a space for the retreat of the individual from the collective project and gaze. But the public sphere, as the space of public duty and responsibility, of collective and community identification, and as a territory for the expression of the community interest, has been argued to be under threat (see, for example, Heller and Feher, 1988; Bauman, 1992, 1994). The question is whether this threat is because of the privatisation of space or the privatisation of interests, or both.

The physical nature, the apparent social space of the city of the 2010s is not, arguably, much different to what it was in the nineteenth century. It may still be physically categorised under the headings already alluded to: the domestic space of the family<sup>1</sup>, or of social reproduction, the public domain of the street as a pathway, the nodes or dedicated spaces within the urban fabric, such as squares and plazas which are capable of being appropriated for collective ends, and the 'third places', of entertainment, worship or refreshment. There is also a relatively new type of public space, the mall, the internalised common space for personal consumption in which surveillance takes on a particularly intensive policing, managerial and even aesthetic function .

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<sup>1</sup>The family, of course, is different today to that of the nineteenth century. in the sense of having contracted to two parents and 2.5 children, or the (contradiction of?) the one parent family. But the point still holds, that the family, whatever its actual make up in terms of numbers or extension, can be conceptualised in terms of the social unit of parent(s) and children.

## **Social spatialisation**

Having briefly sketched in the nature of the complexity of the two concepts of the public and the private, we can now begin to think about the place that surveillance as a concept has within the broad field of social-spatialisation – which is, the theory of the relationship between or interdependence of space – here urban space – and the social.

The term has been used to relate social practices with spatial organisation (Shields, 1991, 1992; Jackson, 1990). It understands the meaning of all social space as socially constructed, both from the social situation of a particular place (its historical associations, and the control over its uses and values ascribed to it by competing interests), and objective material relations (in particular, access to the means by which spaces are manufactured and managerially organised). This construction is an active and dynamic process. There are discrete spatial practices within design, management and promotion which can be analyzed in terms of their relationship to the issue of spatial control. In essence, the term social spatialisation has been used

*to designate the ongoing social construction of the spatial at the level of the social imaginary (collective mythologies, presuppositions) as well as interventions in the landscape (for instance the built environment).*

(Shields, 1991, 31).

In terms of understanding the place of surveillance in the physical public realm, on the basis of this concept, we can begin to grasp that the use of different devices or spatial strategies of control – including the technological such as CCTV, as well as the architectural such as the placing of windows to provide eyes on the street – are only one part of a larger whole. This larger construction of the urban is made up of a number of components, both tangible and intangible, which create or impose identity on place. These components include designed elements- such as street furniture, and building facades; as well as discursive elements –narratives of place either deliberately constructed through place promotion campaigns to attract, say, tourists or visitors; or manufactured in a more *ad hoc* fashion in press articles, usually focusing on the negative aspects of identity such as crime or anti-social behaviour. Strategies and instruments of control and surveillance represent one of the means by which a normative sense of place is created or sustained , in conjunction with other both physical (design) and non-physical (advertising and place promotion, management and policing) tactics of place making.

*Surveillance as Spatial Practice.*

Social spatialisation is not limited to explaining the existence of social meanings and how these are reflexively modified over time. It can also be used as a way in to understanding the material and technical practices used in the manufacture of real spaces, alongside the tendency of such practices to be complicit in the creation and enforcing of a particular hegemonic identity – bound up in notions of what is acceptable and appropriate in relation to behaviour and individual performance, or identity.

The term 'spatial practices' derives originally from Lefebvre's (1991) philosophical analysis of the production of space. According to this view, space in both its material form (as built environments and existing landscapes), as well as in how it is represented in maps and discourse and in what it is imagined to be for (utopian and other visions of the future), comes into being as a social fact through distinct technical, intellectual, artistic and other practices of individuals, institutions and other agencies. Every social space can be understood in terms of the particular spatial practices which have brought it into being, and which maintain its meanings and availability for particular ends. Lefebvre's contention is that space is a product of particular interests – generally class interests – and its design, along with its management in the broadest sense, and its appropriation in use are conditioned by these particular hegemonic interests. Again, surveillance can be regarded under this view as an aspect of this exercise of hegemonic interest, and one which is, as we shall see, foregrounded or hidden in particular narratives of the city: for instance in the promotion of the idea of city centres as safe from crime or social disorder, or terror.

Developing the concept of spatial practice and how surveillance as a practice in itself can be understood today, it is helpful to analyse it in terms of what the sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman (1994) implied as distinct 'fields of experience' and how these are addressed in the manufacture and control of public space.

*social space is...far from simple and needs...unpacking. In particular it ought to be seen as a complex interaction of three interwoven yet distinct processes - those of cognitive, aesthetic and moral 'spacings' - and their respective products...If the cognitive space is constructed intellectually, by acquisition and distribution of knowledge, aesthetic space is plotted affectively, by the attention guided by curiosity and the search for experiential intensity, while moral space is 'constructed' through an uneven distribution of felt/assumed responsibility.*

(Bauman, 1994, 145-6)

What Bauman is suggesting is that social or public space is experienced in terms of three things: its



cognitive possibilities (what we believe or think it is for, functionally) its moral possibilities (how we ought to act in it, particularly in relation to others), and its affective possibilities (how we experience it as a site of pleasure, or discomfort). What I want to argue is that these three modes of experience are provided for in the design and management of public space, consciously or not, in order to reinforce or instantiate particular hegemonic interest. In neo-liberal settings, these interests are generally commercial, and focus on the individual as consumer whose behaviours must conform to the interests of the neo-liberal economic system, be predictable, but also feel as though they are voluntary and undirected – all within a context that feels both safe and comfortable/fun. Different public space settings demonstrate this hegemonic tendency or reality in different degrees – ie some public spaces are more controlling and surveilled than others – from the domestic or residential street at one end of the spectrum, to the mall or theme park at the other. It goes without saying, that the more physically or discursively controlled access to a particular part of a city is, the less it needs to be surveilled and controlled through CCTV and other such methods. Indeed, highly aestheticized places of leisure (of play or shopping) exhibit the co-ordination of design and management strategies at perhaps their greatest intensity, and for the reasons suggested again by Bauman in his trenchant analysis:

*If reality is oozy, ubiquitous, straggly, spattered all over the place, play is securely protected behind its spatial and temporal walls...play has its place...as well marked, by stage frame, fence, guarded entrance. (Bauman, 1994, 173)*

Here cognitive distinctions and moral responsibilities can be suspended. However, this may only happen in a situation in which cognitive spacing has already occurred so that the aesthetic experience can take place free from the threat of the intrusion of the unwanted other, 'Only in the well administered and policed space can the aesthetic enjoyment of the city take off' (Bauman, 1994, 169).

Likewise, moral claims are anathema to aesthetic experience, and the aesthetic experience can only be enjoyed in a space free from the pressing presence of, say, 'real' suffering or poverty. The best aesthetic spaces in this sense are the liminal, bounded, separated off (temporally or spatially) and which have their own artificial game rules or codes which inform users how to play in an 'as if world':

Bauman cites the Arcades and streets of Baron Hausmann's Paris in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as a type of the space of play for the late nineteenth century French bourgeoisie, the game

played to its fullest by the *flâneur* (see below) However, the street as the broader territory of the *flâneur*, is now too dangerous, too cognitively indiscriminate, to allow the play it once guaranteed. That play - the safety of the aesthetic experience - has retreated to the well surveilled and guarded spaces, such as the mall. But that play has in turn been transformed by the very nature of the mall as an over-specifying<sup>2</sup> space.

The other characteristic of the aesthetic which is of interest is its contemporary ambiguity. Spaces such as malls appear, on the one hand, to be places of the liberation of experience in which outer reality is held at bay or apparently suspended, and on the other are surveilled and *produced* spaces with 'real' intentions. At once an apparent space of freedom they can be read as spaces in which freedom is curtailed by being directed towards particular and instrumental goals which are not voluntarily scripted or invented by the spectator in any authentic sense. .

The three fields of experience designated by Bauman, the cognitive, moral and aesthetic, can be turned around for the purposes of understanding surveillance as a dimension of public space, by examining how these are addressed in the design and operation of such space. That is, it is possible to categorise techniques of management, design, promotion and so on under the three headings: *form*, *image* and *rules*. *Image* involves both aesthetic and cognitive spacing and has to do with the 'look' of a place as well as its discursive status and its manufactured affective associations. In practice, image is produced through strategies such as advertising and place promotion, as well as through retrofitting or redressing public space to make it more aesthetically attractive, or the appearance of being well maintained. Likewise, *rules* have to do with moral and cognitive spacing, controlling through both explicit and informal codes how space may and may not be used, and how individuals may relate to each other in them - what is permissible. These would include both criminal and civil law – (such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in the UK) – expressed through the presence of CCTV and signage warning against such things as drinking in public. *Form*, on the other hand, has to do with the material organisation and disposition of parts according to a cognitive strategy, but with moral and aesthetic outcomes. This is illustrated in gated communities, where public space is privatised through physical exclusivity; or shopping malls which either have doors, or a particular aesthetic to signal that the user is moving from the civic space of the street to the commercial space of the shopping centre. Particular techniques of social control, such as the use of closed circuit television, can be interpreted as having a complex function: enforcing rules,

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<sup>2</sup> This term refers to the tendency of spaces such as the mall to be designed, managed and controlled in such a way as to powerfully imply certain requirements in the way that individuals ought to regard themselves: as players acting out a script which they have not written.

contributing to an image and having formal characteristics, as well as moral, cognitive and aesthetic implications. Fig 1. illustrates how these categories are interrelated

**INSERT FIG 1** – Diagramme of spatial practices and public space

Each of these strategies (rules, image, form) in practice, affects and is affected, by each of the others; the dominant quality of any public place will depend directly on the degree to which and by whom these strategies are deliberately *articulated together* to add up to a particular environment. The ontology of a place which is the product of a unified intention in its image, form and rule strategies is arguably quite different to that where a number of intentions exercised at different times, have had an influence over each of these qualities.

*'Single Minded' and 'Open Minded' Social Space.*

We have already touched on the idea that some types of public spaces are more controlling – and more co-ordinated in terms of their formal, aesthetic and managerial characteristics, than others. It is worth expanding on this a little, since it has a direct bearing on the question of both where and in what ways forms of surveillance operate.

In the 1980s Michael Walzer (1986) proposed a distinction between what he called 'single minded' and 'open minded' space:

*Zoned business and residential areas are single minded, as is the modern dormitory suburb. The central city (as it once was) and also the 'quarter', the neighbourhood with its own shops and small factories constitute 'open minded' space. (Walzer, 1986, 471)*

Essentially 'open minded' space is, in theory, social space that is available and accessible for more than one purpose and to more than one interest. It is also space which is capable of being experienced for more than one end by its users. It is pluralistic both in its appeal and function. It is space which is reflexive or responsive over time; capable of being imaginatively and functionally appropriated for different ends. Walzer clearly associates it with the space of the 'traditional city'.

'Single minded space', on the other hand, is space dedicated to particular ends, and intended to be used, in its contemporary context, for the satisfaction of private goals. He implies at least that it is coming to replace 'open minded' space,

*Designed by planners or entrepreneurs who have only one thing in mind, and used by similarly single-minded citizens...*

*The reiteration of single mindedness at one public site after another (is) something societies should avoid. (Walzer, 1986, 470)*

He claims that we not only use these spaces differently because of the single function that they house, but we also feel differently in them. We recognise an intention towards us that the space contains in its design, management and in the type of individual it attempts exclusively to attract. He also suggests that this 'single mindedness' is a general cultural characteristic of modern day life, in which time is increasingly spent in spaces either physically separate and private, such as the car, or instrumentally separate and given over to personal ends (see Table 1 for a summary of spaces dichotomised as 'open minded' and 'single minded' by Walzer).

<b>Single minded space</b>	<b>Open minded space</b>
zoned business district	quarter/neighbourhood
dormitory suburb	the street
the highway	forum
government centre	square
medical centre	courtyard
green belt	city park/playground
housing project	urban block
urban mall	cafe/pub
fast food restaurant	urban hotel
motel	long distance train
airplane	theatre
cinema	urban fair ground
exhibition centre	row of shops
department store	university campus

Table 1: Open Minded and Single Minded Spaces (After Walzer, 1986)

Helpful as Walzer's distinction is, we need to make an important caveat thrown up by thinking about surveillance as an aspect of the contemporary public realm. The first is that, as the work of Rustin (1986 ) and Vidler (1978) imply, 'open minded' space can be historically located as the chaotic space of the *petite bourgeoisie*, the space of the nineteenth century public street or square. That is, it is in part a romantic ideal which no longer effectively pertains, precisely because of the technological possibilities of remote and ubiquitous surveillance, alongside the neo-liberal turn represented by both the commodification of even mixed use streets combined with the rise of the solipsistic and aesthetic project of the individual.

Despite these qualifications, one measure of the success of an urban space must be how pluralistic it is, how constraining, and in whose interests it is managed and designed.

## **Forms and associated narratives of surveillance and control: from eyes on the street to the Panopticon.**

Surveillance as an aspect of the urban, as we have seen, is a highly complex phenomenon, in that it can be exercised in different ways – formally and informally, and for different purposes, from state control to individual safety and even pleasure. In order to unpack the nature of this complexity and to better understand how surveillance operates as a dimension of public space, this section briefly highlights the key narratives which have either critiqued or been used to justify surveillance within public space over the last few decades, and attempts to link these with a broader political perspective in relation to notions of individual agency as against hegemonic control. The following analysis suggests first that surveillance is a strategy that has to be understood in relation to other methods, tactics or tropes of control (discursive, managerial and formal) and is co-opted to reinforce the power of these other aspects of place; second, that the function of surveillance as a ‘protective’ mode of the urban can be understood in relation to the dominant interests within a place – from the domestic, suburban street, to the High Street, and the shopping mall.

A helpful starting point for this analysis is the work of Gold and Reville (1983), who have attempted to list the common features of ‘safer cities’ as they called them (Table ). It is worth highlighting that the features that they identified range from the physical, such as walls, the regulatory, such as signage, the managerial, such as street ambassadors, the technological, such as CCTV, and the ‘natural’ (what they refer to as the ‘animated’), such as the presence of people. Different narratives of the city, as we shall see, justify or explain and even celebrate the use of these various components of public space depending on their underlying ideological perspective, and their alignment or otherwise with the dominant narrative of the city – for instance currently that of neo-liberalism, anti-terror, and entrepreneurialism.

**Table 2 Urban design approaches to safer city centres**

From Gold and Revill (1983, 193):

Safer city approach	Common features
<b>Fortress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walls</li> <li>• Barriers</li> <li>• Gates</li> <li>• Physical segregation</li> <li>• Privatisation of territory</li> <li>• exclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Panoptic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• control of public space</li> <li>• privatisation of space</li> <li>• explicit police presence</li> <li>• presence of security guards</li> <li>• CCTV systems</li> <li>• covert surveillance systems</li> <li>• erosion of civil liberties</li> <li>• exclusion</li> <li>• the 'police state'</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management of public space</li> <li>• explicit rules and regulations</li> <li>• temporal regulations</li> <li>• spatial regulations</li> <li>• CCTV</li> <li>• the 'policed state'</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ambassadors/ city centre reps.</li> </ul>
<b>Animated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people presence</li> <li>• people generators</li> <li>• activities</li> <li>• welcoming ambience</li> <li>• accessibility</li> <li>• inclusion</li> <li>• 24-hour/ evening economy strategies</li> </ul>

Having set out an at least provisional set of spatial strategies through which control is exercised in public space, we can now turn to different perspectives and narratives of public space, and of how such surveillance should operate and to what ends. Essentially there are two largely opposed positions in the debates about how cities should be surveilled – on the one hand, the liberal view that takes the urban as a place of community and neighbourliness; on the other, the instrumental view that public space is part of a neo-liberal political economy where it’s economic security and performance is paramount. I want to argue that these opposing positions are apparent in those strategies of surveillance argued for and deployed in practice. For the sake of simplicity, and drawing on Gold and Revill’s analysis, I have termed these the *animated city*, and the *panopticon city*.

### *The animated city*

The underlying presumption in the view that streets and other public spaces are genuinely public if they are animated – ie well used, by a variety of individuals for multi-valent ends – is that the public realm is the civic realm, a democratic place that is pluralistic and open minded. This is an essentially romantic ideal that has its origins in the Greek Agora and the Roman Forum.

One text, above all, that has been deeply influential in promoting the idea that public space is safe and even humane if it allows for ‘eyes on the street’ – ie natural surveillance – is *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, by Jane Jacobs, first published in 1961. Jane Jacobs was a journalist and



urban activist, whose views on the quality of urban spaces, and the need for design to enable and encourage diversity of use and users, arose from her personal experience of living in a mixed neighbourhood in Boston in the 1950s and early 60s. Her writing powerfully conveys her sense of the humanity of city streets characterised by mixed use – combining residential apartments above independent shops, bars and cafes, in high density neighbourhoods. Her seminal book is highly anecdotal, as here where she describes the response of her neighbours to an attempted abduction of a young child:

*As I watched from the second-floor window, making up my mind how to intervene if it seemed advisable, I saw it was not going to be necessary. From the butcher beneath the tenement had emerged the woman who, with her husband runs the shop; she was standing within earshot of the man, her arms folded, a look of determination on her face. Joe Cornacchia, who with his sons-in-law keeps the delicatessen, emerged about the same moment and stood solidly to the other side. Several heads poked out of the tenement windows above, one was withdrawn quickly and its owner reappeared a moment later in the doorway. Two men from the bar next to the butcher shop came to the doorway and waited. On my side of the street, I saw the locksmith, the fruit man and the laundry proprietor had all come out of their shops and that the scene was being surveyed from a number of windows besides our own.*

Jane Jacobs (1984, 48)

From this and other personal experiences of living in this particular neighbourhood, she generalised a set of design principles which still dominate the thinking and practice of many urban designers to this day, although often observed more in the breach. The following extract captures part of her thinking:

*There must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to ensure the safety of both residents and strangers must be oriented to the street. They cannot turn their backs or blank sides on it and leave it blind...*

Jane Jacobs (1984, 45)

What she successfully advocated was a response to a narrative of the city as a sociable, self-policing and largely self-managing setting where civilised neighbourliness would be enabled through a combination of particular elements – doors and windows onto public space, a mixture of different land uses (including housing) to ensure variety and, as far as possible, 24 hour vitality and activity, and connected and permeable route systems to ensure both choice in movement, and a pedestrian friendly layout.

The notion of a naturally surveilled place was taken up by Oscar Newman in his book *Design Guidelines for Creating Defensible Space* (Newman 1973) in relation to residential development. Again, the underlying presumption is that spaces are safe if they are naturally surveilled by users – in this case residents – where strangers can easily be identified and where there is a sufficient sense of community for those residents to feel they own their ‘territory’. This principle of self-surveillance, and natural policing can be seen to be expressed in quite detailed design terms in the context of domestic environments: for instance, housing design which provides a set-back in the forms of a defined front garden; and the use of windows at ground floor which allow for an unobstructed view of the street (see fig 2)



Fig. 2 Residential street and surveillance from the house

In addition, in the UK – following precedents in the United States – many residential streets employ Neighbourhood Watch schemes, involving local residents, police, local authorities and other agencies with the intention of making such environments safer through active monitoring of activity and users, and providing mechanisms for reporting unusual or potentially criminal acts.

There is, of course, a double edge to surveillance strategies such as Neighbourhood Watch (Fig 3), that whilst intended to create a sense of neighbourliness and community, also reinforce a sense of the otherness of strangers, and invoke notions of the acceptable and unacceptable which are highly normative.



Fig 3 Surveilling the domestic street – Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Much of the design guidance literature (for example *Responsive Environments*, Bentley (1985), and the *Urban Design Compendium*, English Partnerships (2000)), that has informed the approach taken by urban designers over the last fifty years, has adopted both the implicit rules of good public space making in the work of Jacobs, as well as the underlying liberal notion of the city and its streets as civic and social space which implicitly treats users as ends in themselves as against either instrumentalising or ‘othering’ them. On the face of it, it makes no presumptions about who belongs or has rights to the city and who does not.

Other narratives of the city – often to do with place promotion and marketing – ironically draw on images of the animated street and public space, but are underpinned by conceptions of place as exclusive, and as ‘performative’ (see Coleman, 2007), where users are judged in terms of their contribution to the public realm as safe, economically productive, and conforming to a limited notion of the aesthetically acceptable and morally appropriate, as we shall see.

### *The panoptic city*

The so called *panoptic city*, might be seen as the opposite of the *animated city* and it is also worth sketching in the background to this commonly used trope employed in debates about the surveilled city (which Gold and Revill’s analysis mention); and also how it links to the broader notion of the disciplinary society (see also Reeve (1996, 1998), originating in Foucault’s seminal text *Discipline and Punish* (1973).

On the face of it Foucault’s book is simply an historical account of the disciplining and punishment practices of European societies. It examines the legal institution and cultural practices of punishment, incarceration, torture and surveillance. The fundamental idea of a society as a whole, managed through the exercise of physical constraint, of power of the state or other institutions over the body, extends as a metaphor in Foucault’s work, however, beyond the actual spaces of imprisonment. In a similar vein to Guy Debord’s notion of spectacle (1973), punishment and discipline are seen as ideological and material techniques, used to maintain the hegemonic interests of particular dominant classes or groups, at different historical moments. Discipline, Foucault argues, suffuses modern, rational society to such a degree that it has become an internalised value: we discipline ourselves whilst being reminded, through the physical institution of prisons, that discipline is necessary for the healthy functioning of society. What crimes are considered worthy or necessary to punish is an indication of the interests of the dominant groups in any particular society. Attitudes inscribed in punishment, proscribed for particular crimes against property or crimes against the person or state, will vary depending on how these relate to the threat they represent to the dominant interests within a society.

But the exercise of power through discipline and punishment has an important spatial dimension. As Shields has said, ‘spatial control is an essential constituent of modern technologies of discipline and power’ (Shields, 1991, 39). For Foucault, the disciplining mode of nineteenth century capitalism, for example, in part took spatial forms: in certain building typologies associated with certain social practices - the prison, the clinic, the asylum. Markus (1993) has demonstrated that

the internal layout of many nineteenth century and earlier institutional buildings can be interpreted as 'texts' of social control exercised through spatial dispositions.

One of Foucault's particular interests was, as suggested above, the prison, and particularly the Panopticon designed by Jeremy Bentham in the late Eighteenth century. The peculiar characteristic of this spatial arrangement was the organisation of cells off of a central observation tower from which all prisoners could be observed whilst the design of the building ensured that prisoners were not able to see each other. Again, Markus (after Foucault, 1973) has subjected this type to a close spatial scrutiny,

*The governor was in a tower at the centre of a cylinder of cells...invisible to*

*the prisoners and to the turnkeys who patrolled an intermediate annular passage, whilst the prisoners, lit from behind, were continuously visible.*

(Markus, 1993, 123)

As Rabinow and Dreyfus (1982) have noted, commenting on Foucault's work,

*Discipline proceeds by the organisation of individuals in space, and it therefore requires a specific enclosure of space. In the hospital, the school, or the military field, we find a reliance on the orderly grid. Once established this grid permits the sure distribution of the individuals to be disciplined and supervised; this procedure facilitates the reduction of dangerous multitudes, or wandering vagabonds, and docile individuals.*

(Rabinow and Dreyfus, 1982, 154)

Arguably, the contemporary 'amusement culture' no longer requires the disciplining power of a rigid organisation and segregation of space, given the ideological power of spectacle. However, this culture has also, ironically, witnessed the evolution of new types of disciplinary space - managed, surveilled, and sometimes, although not always enclosed. These include spaces like the mall which are arranged to better facilitate the efficient turnover of capital through the selling of banalised leisure.

A third, contemporary, element can be added to this debate. The last few decades, the period of the rise of global and disorganised capital, the era of deregulation, the free market and the erosion of the welfare state, the era of entrepreneurialism, have seen a profound shift in the social conditions of many late capitalist cities (Castells, 1989). Symptomatically, this shift has included

increased social discontent, a rise in street crime, a polarisation of incomes and working conditions, an increase in the number of homeless on the streets of many cities and more begging. This has meant that those spatial strategies associated with the nineteenth century disciplinarian institutions such as surveillance and spatial management, are being revisited, with the aid of new technologies such digital surveillance.

### *The entrepreneurial city*

So, perhaps the dominant narrative today which has a powerful influence in decisions about the design, regulation, retrofitting and management of city spaces is that of the entrepreneurial city. It is here where all the strategies of control cohere and are articulated together to produce public space as the space of neo-liberalism – that is, the space of economically efficient performance. It is also here that the use of remote electronic surveillance, principally but not exclusively in the form of CCTV is most evident.

The concept or category of the entrepreneurial city is not a very recent one. David Harvey (1987) sketched out the idea in an article in *Antipode* in the 1980s, at a time when many cities were having to repurpose themselves following their decline as centres of production, in an increasingly competitive global market. In effect, the making of commodities became replaced by the making or offering of services, and was – and continues to be – associated with places as settings for leisure consumption, and as attractors for foot-loose capital. In this context, cities have had to market themselves through discursive strategies of image making (Ashworth and Voogd (1990), Knox (1993)), requiring the product of place to correspond with the projected and metonymised image. In this context, there has been a powerful and ineluctable tendency for cities to develop or create a particular ‘look’ or aesthetic in order to attract visitors, as well as investors. Coleman (2007) has argued persuasively that this entrepreneurial drive, in which places need to be visually pleasing, can be directly linked to surveillance and other mechanisms of control and exclusion – managerial, and regulatory.

Setting the scene, he says that,

*As the latest trope in a reinvigorated pursuit of urban spatial order, camera surveillance in the UK is a normal feature of city development that propagates the idea of ‘capable guardian’s’, and symbolizes the state imaginary with respect to urban order in the UK. (232)*

He goes on to suggest that

*The notion of the visually pleasing space is tied to aesthetic considerations concerning the moral probity and appropriateness of behaviour in public space. (234-5)*

And finally that

*The visible 'differences' that homeless people, the poor, street traders and youth cultures bring to the city, undermine the hegemonic notions of 'public' spatial utility and function. Indeed, for these groups, it is often merely their visibility alone and not their behaviour that is deemed problematic.* (239)

Several decades ago, my own research work (Reeve, (1996, 1998) and Reeve and Simmonds (2000)) demonstrated that there has been a growing convergence between conceptions and expectations of the High Street and that of the shopping mall which points up Coleman's argument. There is no reason to believe this convergence has ended. The shopping Mall, in a sense, has always been a space apart from the everyday and from the fully formed public space of the city – a single minded space, to use Walzer's term (see Fig 4). Its techniques of control and surveillance have been well understood, and to a degree accepted because of the difference of such space to the civic space of the street. The use of private security guards, the aestheticisation, even theming, of the interior, along with the use of CCTV to monitor users simply revealed its difference, and normalised it as liminal space which applied these strategies in order to be economically viable, and to deliver a special experience – these are places of spectacle, in which the user becomes a spectator of the 'gift' (Maus, 1969), and therefore, again, assumes a different identity to that in the real world of the public street. In this context CCTV, to use Coleman's term, offered a form of visible guardianship, the paternal eye.



Fig. 4 The mall as a liminal and aestheticized space

However, it can be evidenced and argued that precisely the same strategies of guardianship, in which consumer identity is privileged over other identities, have found their way onto the street – and have been reinforced through such things as Town Centre Management, Business Improvement Districts (see Reeve, 2008), and a raft of legislation from ASBOs (*Anti-social Behaviour Orders*) to Public Space Protection Orders brought in under the UK's *Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014*, which effectively criminalise historically normal modes of conduct in public space (Fig 5). As an aside, these strategies also include the use of such designed elements as twenty-minute seating, seating so designed that it becomes uncomfortable to sit on after a short while, and impossible to lie down on (Fig 6). I would argue that the increasing monitoring of city streets, along with the license given under the 2014 Act in UK town and city centres, represents increasingly desperate efforts to maintain the aesthetic mythos of town centres as spaces of safe leisure in a context in which real poverty, homelessness and the other visible consequences of the failure of the state are becoming more and more evident and intrusive.



Fig 5 Seating as a form of control





Fig 6 Rules of use as a form of spatial control

What is perhaps particularly alarming for those on the liberal left, is the degree to which this situation has become normal: particularly the extensive use of CCTV to surveil public space (Fig 7). In *Ground Control*, Anna Minton (2009) suggested that *'when asked, most people like the idea of CCTV and agree that its introduction would make them feel safer'* (168). However, she goes on to say that whilst there is little evidence that it has had any impact on crime figures, its use has resulted in a 'retreat' from 'collective and individual responsibility to self-interest and fear' (169). In other words, the much celebrated tendency for animated spaces to offer natural surveillance has been eroded by the presence of the technology of surveillance. In addition, the normalisation of CCTV as an aspect of everyday life is underpinned by the extent of its use – in 2009 4.2 million

cameras in the UK according to Minton, and by implication the vested commercial interest in finding reasons to justify its continued use.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 7 CCTV in public space – Oxford

As an aside, the logic of economic neo-liberalism in the city, also finds expression in the suburban and residential setting, principally in the form of gated communities. These are exclusive enclaves, often heavily CCTV'd, which literally turn their back on the larger public realm, and whose privately owned dwelling attract a premium because of their emphasis on both safety and exclusive community.

### **Transgressions in the city – appropriating the gaze**

Having explored surveillance in the contemporary city as an expression of control, social, political, economic and so forth – and the way in which the various modes of control are articulated together as an expression of the current neo-liberal hegemony – we can now examine surveillance from the complementary or opposite perspective; that of the individual situated in public space.

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<sup>3</sup> No one knows how many cameras now operate in public space, but estimates have put the figure at around six million.

This is a highly complex theme, which can only be briefly outlined here; but in essence it incorporates the idea of the user as increasingly private, but one whose choices in terms of identity in particular have become increasingly aestheticized in a culture of over-production of competing signs and signifiers of the self. The individual, as a body situated within urban space (ie located historically and geographically), moreover has today not only the possibility of exercising his or her gaze at the other in their immediate and unmediated physical context, they also have the means via digital technology of locating and expressing themselves to others who are physically distant, and thus appropriating new and potentially empowering narratives and identities in the juncture between the real and the virtual. At the same time, the new technology allows the environment to respond at an individual level to the apparent gendered and other identity characteristics of users in real space - for instance, in the responsiveness of advertising screens that change their content according to the dominant characteristics of those present within their space.

The final sections think through the idea of the counter-hegemonic strategies of individuals as occupiers of the city by drawing on concepts of appropriation, critical making, walking as narrative, and the *flâneur* as a now technologically empowered focus of experience and identity. The key sources here include Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, begun in 1927 (1999), Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991), and De Certeau's *The Practice of Every Day Life* (1984).

### *The aestheticized self of public space*

In order to appreciate the nature of the surveilled and the surveilling self in the contemporary city, it is important to grasp how this self in post-industrial and culture after modernism is different to its predecessors. A number of cultural theorists have identified two recent cultural changes which mark out the present state of public space from the past, in their extreme forms at least: first the privatisation and aestheticisation of all aspects of social existence, at the level of the individual. Second, and connected with the first, a general loss of the meaning of the collective and the community which so powerfully underpinned the political assumptions of the modernist period. This was represented historically by the welfare state (at least in Britain from the late 1940s to the 1990s) and the division of public from private responsibilities, duties and rights. These values have been displaced by the 'rightsism'<sup>4</sup> of the individual, who has become the apparent arbiter of social values and goods, a situation in which identity politics have displaced the politics of the collective,

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<sup>4</sup>'Rightsism' refers to what might be termed an informal, moral movement, the main characteristic of which is to define the individual in terms of the rights that they might make claim to within society, thus emphasising the centrality of the individual over the collective, or community.

where the interests of the individual were arguably secondary to those of his or her class, nation, or other construct.

With different emphases a number of social scientists, writing at the beginning of this moment of change (Featherstone (1992), Bauman (1992, 1994), Shields (1991, 1992), Giddens (1991), and Harvey (1990), stressed that one of the cultural characteristics of post modernism is the rise of the individual as a solipsistic, or at best family-centred, project, situated in a culture where there are no longer any objective and external guarantees of value. Under this view, the individual is private in a new sense: not simply a subject occupying a separate social territory in his or her feelings and actions (the home in particular), as distinct from the polis, the (urban) world of collective actions and responsibilities. The individual was now seen as a subjective project, even in the heart of the polis, of the social.

Taking this position in one direction, identity is guaranteed not so much by class or structural social allegiances, but increasingly by reference to unstable taste or life-style categories. In this sense, the individual finds his or her sense of self, in its public dimension, with great difficulty and often only through its apparent opposition to other taste groups, its aesthetic difference. In an important sense, then, the self as an object of surveillance in the public domain, is the subject whose intention is to be surveilled and therefore to be visible on the basis of their predominantly aesthetically expressed characteristics – whether of gender, sexuality, life-style group, race or other visual aspects of being. In a sense, the individual can be seen as *subject to* the identity giving claims of a relatively new and aggressive consumer culture in which 'life-styles' become the anchor for the manufacture of self, both the foundation and arbiter of projects for the individual. The claims of collective responsibility, the sense of the *other* as being there in their own right and demanding some moral recognition because of that are, according to this view, under increasing threat (Bauman, 1992, 1994). The argument is that both as a consequence of the techniques of consumer persuasion (seduction according to Baudrillard, 1990) through product advertising in particular, and as a resource for its continuing manipulation, the self is what it consumes.

The counter view is that the whole of the public domain of contemporary free market societies is not saturated by consumerism, and its attempted effect of instrumentalising the self as a subject of consumption. If this were the case, we would have to cynically accept that the neo-liberal economic project, whose aim is to reduce individuals to politically neutered vectors of consumption, had succeeded. The opposing position is that individuals creatively appropriate the possibilities for self-expression, the expression of identities which are not given by consumer culture (gender based, tribe based, sexuality based etc. etc.) by re-engineering or repurposing the products of consumer

culture to their own ends. Fiske (1989) after Gramsci, refers to this as expropriation, a process in which elements of the dominant culture – in this case free market consumerism – enter the domain of the popular and emerge transformed. This is a form of appropriation not dissimilar to Lefebvre's use of the term, and particularly in his argument regarding *spaces of representation* and *representations of space*. The distinction he makes here is between the imposed identity of urban space which is manufactured by certain political or economic interests – through image, aesthetics and regulation (representations of space at their most obvious in environments such as shopping malls) – and the created identity of urban space made through the appropriation of users collectively and individually, where the given identity is transgressed or contradicted as a form of spectacle. Along with De Certeau (1984) Lefebvre uses the term 'lived space', to designate that space which is appropriated by individuals and groups for their own ends, as opposed to space which is simply a setting for the instrumentalised expression of manufactured and inauthentic and alienated identity.

However, Fiske (1989) reminds us that what he calls the 'guerrilla tactics' and the micro-political appropriation or 'critical making' of public space can only achieve occasional, irregular and often illusory, or compensatory change: such appropriation affects the situation of place, but rarely the underlying structures of power or economic inequality.

In terms of the notion of surveillance, the discussion of appropriation and expropriation, particularly via the notion of the spectacle, (Reeve 1995) reminds us that the city and its public spaces provide a setting or stage set, in some sense, for the performance of individuals either as the cyphers of consumption, or as at least partial agents of their own identity, who can be the object of the gaze of others. In addition, it can be argued that acts of appropriation and expropriation provide opportunities for connecting with others who share at least some of the same provisional identities, and in that sense transgress the strangerhood of the urban. Bauman (1984) sees this alienating character of cities – what he calls 'privatism' – as the inevitable product of an historical process integral to urbanisation. In urban cultures where almost every encounter is an encounter with a stranger we have learned not to recognise others: 'societas' has replaced 'communitas'. This failure to see the other means that we occupy social space as if we were for the most part alone, seeing only the surface of the other and therefore not recognising any moral responsibility towards the other. I want to argue that, paradoxically, the fact of the urban as a site of surveillance – albeit that of the individual – provides a place for at least a provisional and momentary overcoming of the alienation of the urban.

### *The surveilling self of the city*

The previous section presented the idea of the surveilled self as both an object and subject of the city – both controlled through surveillance by CCTV, for example, and controlling via the expression of at least negotiated and temporary identities (often centred on the apparent or visible characteristics of the body) via transgressive appropriation of given stylistic tropes of appearance. This section briefly explores the idea of the individual as an active appropriator of the city, and how the gaze of the individual is a key aspect of this mode of being, enhanced by the new technologies of the mobile phone and other personal technologies of surveillance. The discussion draws on three or four themes relatively well rehearsed in the philosophical and sociological literature of the city – from Walter Benjamin, Lefebvre (again), De Certeau and John Urry (1990, 1995)– which again include the notion of the *flaneur*, the idea of the urban as a setting for ‘desire’, the idea of the city street as the raw material for the creation of ‘scripts’ of the self, and the concept of ‘gaze’ of the outsider – the tourist or visitor. I want to argue that these themes are linked together not only by their common setting – the urban – but also through the view that surveillance for these experiences and acts is a form of mediation in which the world as observed is interpreted or (and sometimes creatively) made through the act of surveillance, in which the facticity of the street is given particular personal, affective or social meaning in real time.

In a sense, De Certeau’s essay, and particularly within this the chapter *Walking in the City* provides the starting point for understanding the potential of the individual as an appropriator of the city at the personal level, and the function of what can be seen or surveilled within this. *Walking in the City* begins with a brief account of a view of Manhattan from the top of the World Trade Centre (ironically, of course, since destroyed by an act of terror broadcast and gazed upon by a global audience) , which De Certeau presents as a kind of metaphor for seeing as an act of fiction, or of myth making:

*His elevation transfigures (the spectator) into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was ‘possessed’ into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and noting more.*

92

He sets this privileged, surveilling perspective against the experience of the practice of walking the city, which he takes as an essentially creative act like speech:

*The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered. ...it is a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian. De Certeau – 97-98*

And,

*If it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (e.g. by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g., by a wall that prevents one from going further), then the walker actualizes some of these possibilities. In that way he makes them exist as well as emerge. But he also moves them about and he invents others, since the crossing drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements. 99*

One reading of De Certeau's argument is that there is an essential difference between the god-loke perspective of the spectator – the one who surveills the city from a distance or on high – and that of the individual engaged in the city as a practice, mediated solely by the 'narrative' skills and linguistic (as a metaphor) competencies of the individual pedestrian. Looking or surveilling in this sense is a simple act of pragmatic observation engaged in way-finding and way making. It is a position adopted in more recent approaches to understanding the relationship of the individual to place in non-representational geography (Thrift, 2010) – and theories of place as affect (Bohme, 1993) in which the individual becomes the focus of sensation, and what they see – the world out there - is mediated only through it's 'atmospheric' conditions.

However, it is clear that other conceptions of the individual as appropriator or practitioner of the city acknowledge that that appropriation, and how the individual sees place as having meaning and their own relationship to that meaning, is conditioned by aspects of identity and power which they bring to the experience and seeing of place, and therefore is bound up with their own authentic or inauthentic intentions towards it. To use De Certeau's terms, the individual in space creates a meaningful narrative by imposing or interpreting that space in relation to or by means of their own 'voyeurism', or set of essentially personal, political and mythic constructs.

Ironically, the *flâneur*, gets us somewhat closer to an understanding of this relationship between the city as a setting for personal narrative and self-making. The term was used most evocatively by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century French poet Baudellaire:

*The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb*

*and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world—impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. The spectator is a prince who everywhere rejoices in his incognito. The lover of life makes the whole world his family, just like the lover of the fair sex who builds up his family from all the beautiful women that he has ever found, or that are or are not—to be found; or the lover of pictures who lives in a magical society of dreams painted on canvas. Thus the lover of universal life enters into the crowd as though it were an immense reservoir of electrical energy. Or we might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life.*

Quoted in Benjamin (1964)

In his essays on Baudellaire, Walter Benjamin - *The Painter of Modern Life* (1964) and Charles Baudellaire, *A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (1983) saw the *flaneur* as both urban spectator, and as participant in urban life, whose projects of urban exploration were allowed by his appearance of economic independence, and directed by a desire for a separateness of identity to the crowd, and the intention to demonstrate, by their disguised visibility, a critical disposition towards the anonymity of modern urban life. De Certeau's naïve idealizing – that the city can be appropriated as narrative through the simple act of walking- is perhaps highlighted if we acknowledge that the *flaneur* was always a male figure. As Elizabeth Wilson (1991) in the *Sphinx in the City* provocatively suggests, the female equivalent to the *flaneur* in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris was the prostitute – whose visibility was likewise a theatrical one, but whose power or autonomy was constrained entirely by, for the most part, her lack of economic choice, in which her body became a resource for the exploitation – both visually and in other ways – of the male gaze (another form of surveillance).

Lefebvre's work is again helpful in allowing us to think about another dimension of the appropriation of public space through the surveillance by the individual, which is linked to the foregoing discussion: the distinction between needs and desires:

*Specific needs have specific objects. Desire, on the other hand, has no particular object, except a space where it has full play: a beach, a place of festival, the space of the dream.*  
(Lefebvre, 1991, 353)

It is at least arguable that urban spaces, precisely because of the aestheticisation necessitated in the recent and current neo-liberal economic and competitive context, are increasingly experienced as 'dream spaces'. This is clearly evident in environments such as the shopping mall



– which, as we have seen, are often through a combination of styling, management, function and image – are set apart from the space of the everyday street. But it is increasingly evident in the everyday street of the city, with their increasingly aestheticized qualities. In this context, at least for the consumer, if not for those who service that consumption (who in Disney World are referred to as ‘cast members’ in relation to users who are seen as ‘guests’).

John Urry’s seminal text - *the Tourist Gaze* ( 1990 ), further amplifies the point that users surveil the city intentionally- either as expression of desire, or through expectations already constructed for them on the basis of advertising or place promotion. Urry’s argument is that, in essence, users as tourists gaze on the spectacle of place in order to recognise its conformity to the stereotyped or metonymised representations experienced before the reality is encountered. In order to do this –as in Lefebvre’s notion of the leisure space set aside from the everyday – certain conditions have to be in place, such as the presence of a guide, the schedule in which elements of the tourist object (the city) are parcelled up in accordance with a structured timetable etc. etc.

Finally, some consideration has to be given to the way in which the relatively new technologies of surveillance – mobile phones with apps to guide the visitor, mapping, GIS, pop up informatics etc. – both mediate what is seen, and offer on the face of it, opportunities for a new kind of *flanerie*, voyeurism or flirting, and even sexual assignations in real time, which would previously have required the actual presence of the other.

Remote or digital surveillance is most commonly associated with CCTV, particularly in public settings such as malls, high streets, and even third spaces, as we have seen. However, the use of technology at the personal level, and for private ends within public space has become common place and indeed ubiquitous. This has implications in terms of how users inhabit space directly – ie in their physical engagement or disengagement with the street, but also in terms of how they access it’s virtual or physically un-immediate risks and opportunities. Twenty years ago, the sight of pedestrians – and even drivers and cyclists – on their mobile phones whilst navigating the street would have been highly unusual. There are now cities which are retrofitting streets with slow lanes for mobile phone users.

However, more relevant to this chapter are the modes of use of technology to observe and interface with the city and beyond, via the virtual. Clearly, at a pragmatic level, apps such as google maps allow individuals to navigate the city, along with downloadable city guides, more conveniently than other media – and place the user in real space. But even this functionality is mediated for the user through adverts for local facilities and amenities – effectively creating an edited or electronically

manufactured discursive identity of place. The counter side to this, of course, is that the phone provides access to other, blogged, readings of the city which users can personalise, or self-create, and share with others to add to or even create new communities of taste.

The new technology can also extend the gaze of the users – so that it becomes possible to surveill the city and beyond, in order, for example, to locate and track other users ( eg Snapchat). The technology can also be employed, with the right apps or platforms (Tinder is notorious) to seek out others for ends once highly private, and again to create a private and exclusive communities of, say, erotic interest in the context of the public domain: again in non-deferred real time. In terms of the opportunities for surveillance – both surveilling and being surveilled - the new(ish) technology is, then, capable of being both transgressive, and of reinforcing normative spatial practices.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to capture some of the key issues and theories around the problematic of surveillance in public space, informed from the perspective of both sociological and political theory, as well as from my own view point as an academic researching and teaching in the field of urban design.

The chapter began with a review of the nature of public space by setting the notion of the public, more generally, against the idea of the private – and by implication the concept of privacy. It sketched out a theory of social spatialisation, in which three aspects of the making of public space – form, image and regulation – were seen to be articulated together, particularly in spaces increasingly given over to consumption – the entrepreneurial city and its neo-liberal tendencies. In this I sought to contrast what the seminal literature highlights with respect to two key modes of surveillance, control and safety – the *animated place* in which natural surveillance / eyes on the street, is taken as the preferred option, and the *panopticon place*, in which surveillance happens remotely and without the consent of the surveilled.

The chapter concluded with a consideration of the user as appropriator of space via their own gaze, and use of space; but also through the emerging technologies of personal surveillance in which certain aspects of the private are experienced and reproduced in public settings.

Finally, surveillance is an inevitable condition of public space – the question is, to what ends and for what ends is the gaze of the other exercised in such settings: and to what degree are designers, managers, and society more generally complicit when such surveillance is used to restrict liberty and identity as opposed to creating the possibility for authentic self-expression and enjoyment?

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