City, Suburban and Pastoral Spaces and the Formation of Identity in Cold War America (1945 - 1965)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the culture and literature of Cold War America and seeks to challenge accepted notions and assumptions about this era and its culture, pointing ultimately to the possibilities for transgression or escape from enforced homogeneity. Using feminist theories, urban theory, and a cultural materialist approach, this thesis employs the work of Judith Butler (1993, 1999), Elizabeth Grosz (1994, 1995, 2001, 2008) and Beatriz Colomina (1992, 2004), and draws on the ideas of Gilles Deleuze, to undertake an examination of subjectivity and its relation to built and landscape environments of the Cold War, enabling an investigation that includes literary texts and criticism, visual and media culture, and cultural, architectural and technological discourses. This study of identity examines the way in which bodies react to and are shaped by their surroundings engaging with sights (Disneyland, The Monsanto House of the Future & the Playboy Mansion), places (New York City, Southern American states and suburbia) texts, and objects (television & cook books). Racial, sexual and youth identities are examined in chapter one, through the street spaces of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), the works of the Beats, Hubert Selby Jr's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1964), and Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) illustrating how street identities manage to complicate the purported containment of the era, and blurring the distinction between public display and private spectacle where transgressive personae can find authenticity of selfhood from within their urban location. Chapter two considers suburban gender identities and their manufactured proscription through architecture and technology as presented in Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961), John Cheever's short stories, Vladimir Nabakov's *Lolita* (1958), John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960) and Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), each examined in order to question containment, surveillance and gender proscription in this space. Finally, I examine the tensions between traditionally conformist selves and racial and sexual Others in the landscapes of Southern states, in the works of Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948) and Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood* (1952). Using imagined spaces and landscapes this section considers a different form of spatially-determined identity, identity formed in an essentially *hyperreal* space – and exposes the contradictions of conformity and transgression. This thesis' original contribution to knowledge is based in the application of a theoretical feminist framework to established Cold War cultural criticism. In bridging the gap between existing theories of feminist corporeality and cultural criticism, my work will extend and challenge accepted notions of Fifties conformity and homogeneity in new and dynamic ways.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION - COLD WAR BODIES

This thesis examines the literature, culture and mapped sites of the Cold War; a period of American history characterised by fear, control, and containment. By examining Cold War culture, this thesis attempts to expose the way in which these key qualities extended beyond politics, and into the spaces framing American bodies, actively encouraging the production of a type of national body - one which was moulded by conformity. My thesis contests the "contained" nature of the postwar era, and instead argues for the paradoxical nature of 1950s culture though an examination of bodies and spaces. By accepting a dualism at the heart of a static cultural ideology, we allow for the possibility of transgressive and marginalised identity to form in defiance of homogeneity and conformity. Fifties culture purports a rigidity, a fixed form of identity, gender and sexuality, but at the same time might offer a line of escape through physical, virtual and literary spaces, landscapes and architectural forms. This thesis attempts to bridge gaps in previous studies by linking bodies to city, suburban and pastoral spaces and in doing so, allow for a new way of reading identity during the Cold War.

So highly emblematic of "Americanism" and frequently considered with nostalgia, the dominant ideology of the Fifties promoted suburbia, housewives, child-centric living, Hollywood, "togetherness", Tupperware and television. The America of the Fifties is both driven and formed by various postwar booms – consumer, child and housing. It was a time of great political and social Conservatism, moral familial values, wholesomeness – and yet, in both the culture and literature produced at the time, we find marginality, transgression and an escape from this typecast "America". The culture of postwar America seems so highly paradoxical, being at once conformist and transgressive - television parodied normalcy in *I Love Lucy* and film encouraged insurgency in *Rebel without a Cause*; architecture provided transparent surfaces to bring the outside in, yet divisions between inside and outside are upheld for protection; *Good Housekeeping* prescribed domestic divinity, whilst *Playboy* threatened masculine debauchery. With a culture based upon such multiplicities, and without univocal identity, how can the self be grounded, formed, or situated? Without concrete assertions of what it is to ascribe to normalcy, authenticity, conformity, "us" – how can identity and selfhood be produced at this time? It is precisely the multivocal nature of Cold War culture - its fractures and folds in the conformity it proscribes - that mark it as a period pertinent to the formation of American identity and hence, for further investigation.

Furthermore, if the Fifties is a period remembered for its “American” values, then the examination of individual selfhood within this thesis might unearth findings pertaining to the nature of American national identity. At the heart of this analysis is a series of bodies who attempt to be the American “norm” and any suggestion of their lack of authenticity intimates something about the nature of American bodies as a whole. “Americanness” is repeatedly shored up through representation in objects - the American flag, the American soil, and distinctly American icons. When children pledge an allegiance to the nation, they do so to the flag; when the bodies of soldiers return from war, their caskets are draped in the flag and returned “home”; when America advertises itself, it does so through images of Disneyland, New York and Southern plantation homes. American memories become objects for collective identity, and over time they “accumulate on the urban landscape, define social hierarchies, affect sociobiological memories, shape individual identities and evoke feelings about place”.[1] These notions of identity are highly problematic, especially at a time when authentic identity seems necessary, for there is arguably very little original identity to be found in an image and a flag; these objects used as pillars of “Americanness” repeatedly negate the self, the body and the American individual. As Cheryl Clotfelty writes, “there is no such thing as an individual, only an individual in context, individual as component of place, defined by place”.[2] What it does manage is to highlight how national identity is both a visible and landscape based ideal - the American flag on the body, not the the body of the soldier, denotes their nationality.

American culture is clearly a troublesome concept, one which lacks a definite and concrete identity for bodies to reflect. As George McKay writes, “how people use or conscribe America differently suggests less of the hypodermic notion of Americanisation by which that culture is injected, into their lives, but rather a more creative process in which consumption and production are interwoven”.[3] Hence, if “American” is an interchange, it is forever open to the possibility of a shift in meaning, and it leaves its boundaries of definition open to reinterpretation and manipulation. Without a clear definition, American identity seems reliant upon the land and objects within the landscape in order to anchor American bodies to some American truth. It is the America of the 1950s that creates “Fifties bodies”, and if this culture is unveiled as inauthentic and no more than a construction, it opens up

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[1] Wanda Rushing, *Memphis and the Paradox of Place: Globalisation in the American South.* (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2009), p.35

[2] Cheryl Clotfelty, *The Ecocrticisim Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* (Athens: University of Georgia,1996), p.103

[3] George McKay, *Issues in Americanisation and Culture.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p.14

the possibility for bodies to find the real in fractured, non-conformist spaces, for it is space:

> anchored in global flows, [which] give shape and boundary to social inequalities, cultural traditions, personal identity, family ties and history, interpersonal relations, economic development and social change... place and feelings about place, can form the basis for community.[4]

Problematically, the culture of the Cold War is not only suggestive of American identity, but also the manner in which that identity can be sustained - through the visible actions and appearance of the body as American. As Jean-Paul Sartre wrote in his essay *Americans and their Myths* (1954):

> perhaps nowhere else will you find such a discrepancy between people and myth, between life and the representation of life… Americanism is not merely that clever propaganda stuffs into people's heads but something every American continually reinvents in his gropings… The anguish of the American confronted with Americanism is an ambivalent anguish, as if he were asking 'Am I American enough?' and at the same time 'How can I escape from Americanism?' In America a man's simultaneous answers to these two questions make him what he is.[5]

Indeed, the definition of what it means to be "American" is based upon a series of actions, values and behavioural patterns, as Singh writes on becoming an American citizen:

> adherence to certain normative values rather than the presence of existential or organic forces such as blood ties, language, skin colour, religion, defines what it is to be an American … 'being' American is not a given… certain values, beliefs and attitudes are intrinsic to American identity, while others are alien.[6]

Hence, Cold War identity can be understood as falling into one of two categories – the homogenous, conformist and ideologically authentic American identity, or that of the potentially Communist or homosexual, heterogeneous, counterculture of marginality. Individualism, whilst considered a benchmark of traditional masculinity and heterosexuality, was also conversely, associated with deviance, transgression, questionable sexuality and a defiance of domestic ideology. As Siebers writes, "Cold War criticism…is suspicious of emotions, claims for morality and altruism… the desire to escape from the self, promoted everywhere in Cold War criticism, obeys the desire to have a self other than the one revealed to us".[7] It is therefore

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[4] Wanda Rushing, *Memphis and the Paradox of Place: Globalisation in the American South.* (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2009), p.197

[5] Jean Paul Satre, "Americans and their Myths", *The Nation*, 18 October, 1947, <www.thenation.com/article/americans-and-their-myths> [accessed 22nd June 2013]

[6] Robert Singh, *American Government and Politics: A Concise Introduction.* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.8-10

[7] Tobin Siebers, *Cold War Criticism and the Politics of Scepticism.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1993), pp.33-34

pressing to examine a period of American history which, whilst fearing inauthenticity, promotes a form of blind conformity based on surface, and in doing so threatens to abandon the notion of the individual.

THE CONTAINMENT OF AMERICA

In the aftermath of the devastation of the Second World War, successive American governments saw Moscow and Communism as a potential threat to their newly achieved peace, and with the hope of preventing another world war, sought to isolate themselves from Communist sympathies and associations. The reality of the threat posed by the Soviets and other Eastern nations was of clear concern for the American government. In 1956 at the Paris meeting with Soviet leaders, "the United States now faced an increasingly belligerent Soviet leader who appeared intent on re-establishing his communist revolutionary credentials" and more worryingly, "in the Third World... communism appeared to be on the rise".[8] President Dwight Eisenhower's major foreign policy during 1956 was a reaction to the increasing fears over a Communist uprising and its influence on the West, resulting in "a combination of nuclear threats, covert actions, diplomatic skill and good fortune [keeping] the peace".[9] American government took action: in 1949, when Truman was inaugurated for a second term, eleven Communist leaders were jailed; in 1953 when Eisenhower was elected, the Supreme Court declared Communist Party membership as grounds for alien deportation; and in 1955, troops were sent to Vietnam to begin the containment of Communism abroad.[10] Whilst Eisenhower reportedly believed in calming the nation's fears so as not to threaten the long term survival of the US,[11] he was also in pursuit of modernisation - a combination which manifested itself in the vast economic growth seen during the Fifties coupled with the McCarthy-ites and Red Scare. It is as though whilst pushing for American power abroad, the nation had resorted to isolationist tactics, calming fears through self-promoted growth and a belief in American nationalism as strong enough to withstand outside influences. As Langston writes of Eisenhower:

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[8] Richard Damms, *The Eisenhower Presidency.* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), pp.104 - 105

[9] Ibid. p.55

[10] Chris Cook & David Waller, *The Longman Handbook of Modern American History, 1763 - 1996.* (New York: Longman, 1998)

[11] Thomas Langston, *The Cold War Presidency: A Documentary History.* (Washington: CQ Press, 2007)

> he needed to project just the right image: not scared, but concerned; not hostile, but resolute. By holding the line against fear and hostility, the president felt he could hold the line against the twin dangers of Communist encroachment abroad and a garrison state at home.[12]

Yet, this duality in political power clearly extended beyond Washington DC and into the public consciousness, endowing the postwar American population with "concern" and protective "resolution". Whilst Eisenhower hoped to protect the nation, he contained it, isolating American identity into homogenous and conformist patterns out of fear of transgressive, and therefore, Communist identities.

The aim and logic of the Cold War was the centralisation of authority within the national government, easing the nation's fears over Soviet infiltration by administering a staunch political climate of control and protection over American values and bodies - a culture dubbed "containment culture". The result is an ideological climate which created rigid parameters of definitions to exclude "them" and preserve "us", ensuring the dominance of hegemonic attitudes and beliefs, and homogenous societies and culture: "just as the United States tried to contain communism around the world, domestic ideology attempted to contain men, and especially women, within narrow boundaries of permissible thought and behaviour".[13]

My thesis therefore, attempts to identify a link between the spaces of containment culture and transgressive bodies in the nostalgic Fifties, examining the manner in which, in defiance of the Cold War proscription of homogeneity and semblance in sights, architecture and ephemera, bodies and selves managed to escape into individuality. With use of contemporary theorists (such as Deleuze and Grosz), this thesis examines the representation of the Fifties as an American and cultural icon of the last century, and utilises a cultural materialist framework to analyse broad aspects of Cold War culture in the hope of unearthing the fractured spaces of selfhood free from contained performativity and moving closer to a clearer understanding of this complex and diversified era. Its methodology is one which attempts to question existing ideas of the way the era is remembered in Cold War studies, and establish a new understanding of this period in history through literature, film and culture. By developing a new vision of postwar American culture, this thesis employs current theories which enable the bridging of space with subject, and therefore permits a reading of these Cold War bodies as reflections and reactions to their environment, rather than unresponsive conformists. Previous

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[12] Ibid. p.124

[13] Christian Appy, *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966.* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), p.4

studies, such as Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture* (1995), Martin Halliwell's *American Culture in the 1950s* (2007), Douglas Field's *American Cold War Culture* (2005), Steve Cohan's *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (1995) and Winni Breines' *Young, White and Miserable: Growing up Female in the Fifties* (1992) have all attested to the conformist and seemingly univocal nature of postwar American culture. But whilst ascertaining a range of cultural concerns from gender proscription to conformity and increased marginalisation and a desire for transgression, very few of these texts have attempted to ask and indeed, answer, why the period created these types of rigid and homogeneous identity types. This thesis is not alone in questioning the identities adopted by Cold War bodies, and indeed, takes much of its research from texts such as these, but what the addition of modern theorists and feminist corporeality does, is allow for a reading which not only points to desire for change, but establishes how and if, this could be achieved.

Like Cohan and Breines, the focus of this research is on gender and how the spaces of a nostagically remembered postwar culture both created and influenced the formation of gendered identity. Yet where these previous studies have indicated conformity and desire for escape, this thesis takes inspiration from Beatriz Colomina's *Cold War Hothouses* (2004) and reads potential fractures in the built and non-built structures as indicators and passages of this possible transgression. Whilst Breines focuses on femininity however, this thesis tackles the image of the postwar male, offering a reading which goes beyond the grey flannel suit and into ways in which the home, city and pastoral spaces both permitted and denied authentic male subjectivities. Masculinity, during a time of homogeneity and familial focus is arguably more complex than domesticated femininity, for it appears repeatedly threatened by the era's insistence on corporate and homely men. The ideology of the period seems to be at odds with the traditional notions of male bodies, creating fractured identities between town and home, job and family and individualism and togetherness. Men, therefore, seem to be more influenced and also increasingly challenged by the spaces of postwar America, thereby suggesting a study of their possible escape into authenticity is both of scholarly value and original.

Throughout this examination certain terms must be unpacked. The idea of nostalgia heavily influences the way in which these texts are interpreted, approaching the Fifties from a perspective which acknowledges the historical period and also the way its culture is remembered. This thesis does not attempt to uncover links between spaces and bodies that existed in history, but rather those that can now be uncovered with mindful attention of the notion of the Fifties as icon and how it is sentimentalised. The examination of these films and books is

therefore undertaken with hindsight, finding room for bodies to negotiate between a culturally conformist (and remembered) version of postwar America and its counter-culture. With the nostalgic perspective, aspects of Cold War ideologies are seen to be fragmented and pliable, allowing for a modern reader to find diverse identity in place of the previously considered affinity. The idea of the body is used within this thesis to underscore the lack of agency granted to bodies and to differentiate between the "self" and the body as object. The body, according to Judith Butler, is "not inhabited by spatial givens"[14] and is open to reconstruction through the occupation of certain spaces. Self refers to a body which has achieved a coherent identity and subjectivity, a term frequently used here to highlight the necessity for spatial escape through movement.

The idea that bodies are different to selves, however opens up the complex issue of authenticity. For the purposes of this thesis, my understanding of this term takes the form of a political and ideological appreciation versus autonomy and individualism. According to contemporary accounts of authenticity from theorists such as Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927), bodies and selves, in order to become authentic, must be aware of their potential for the future - a realisation of one's position in the world, and in order to be a free subject one should be capable of doing things and making changes. As Mary Warnock's writing on Heidegger illustrates, "authentic existence can begin only when we have realised and thoroughly understood what we are... [to grasp that] each of us has his own possibilities to fulfill... [we] become authentic."[15] In response to the Cold War, an existential belief in authenticity encourages anxiety around bodily action and identity, for according to Heidegger, failing to separate oneself from the masses (being inauthentic), indicates how action and authenticity are inextricably linked and inter-determinate. Put another way, during the Cold War to be ideologically authentic is to be conformist, but potentially belie an inner identity; whilst to be truly authentic is to transgress and adopt a marginalised, yet autonomous selfhood in defiance of dominant culture which "was perceived as increasingly commodified, fragmented, and 'unreal'".[16]

According to Charles Taylor, the fascination with authenticity during this period of history is a direct symptom of postwar consumerism, resulting in the importance of "find[ing] and live[ing] out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous

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[14] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender.* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p.217

[15] Mary Warnock, *Existentialism.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1970), p.55

[16] Michael Klein, *An American Half Century.* Pluto Press, London, 1994, p.4

generation, or religious or political authority".[17] In a similar vein to Heidegger, Taylor argues that authenticity is a choice to be made by the individual resulting in the promotion of aspects of society and culture over others. Ultimately however, these "authentic" choices remain external to the body rather than internal, so whilst the 1960s is celebrated as a time of freedom in contrast to the contained 1950s, Taylor asserts that this resulting expressiveness is no more authentic than the "crushing conformity" of the previous decade:

> what this shows, however, is that fragments of the ideal selectively acted on, remain powerful; and even the abandoned segments may still tug at our conscience. The ideal, however distorted, is still powerful enough in a society like the US to awaken strong resistance in certain quarters, and to be the subject of what have been called 'culture wars'.[18]

What Taylor seems to suggest is that authenticity is no more than an ideal, socially and culturally constructed to sustain a sense of choice amidst the systems and machines of modern living. Yet as Taylor and Heidegger indicate, there exists an inherent difficulty in defining authenticity, and the concept of the authentic might lie in rewriting the balance between the real and performative identity, as suggested by the work of Abigail Cheever. Cheever argues for "uniformity" not "conformity" as the defining aspect of the postwar generation, insisting that phoniness, so long as it remains ethically sound internally, can still be considered authentic. Her argument lies in the idea that the self can be authentic so long as there is a belief in ourselves as real; so despite a phony surface, if a coherent self lies beneath the phoniness, authenticity exists.[19] I will return to Cheever's ideas in my final chapter, but what all three theorists make clear is the importance of visibility and the need for a mutual space where display leads to determinations of our actions - hence, authenticity, whilst linked to consumer goods and a capitalist society, could remain external in appearance and behaviour, finding authenticity in one choice over another: "in embracing some style from within, I may feel myself to be breaking out of some more confining space of family and tradition".[20] Clearly there exists a cultural need for the "authentic", whatever it might be, to exist and be located.

In terms of the postwar period, the desire for authenticity from within is expressed in a plethora of images in the literature, art, music and film produced

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[17] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age.* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p.475

[18] Ibid. p.478

[19] Abigail Cheever, *Real Phonies: Cultures of Authenticity in Post World War II America.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010)

[20] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age.* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,2007), p.483

throughout the years 1945 - 1965, offering brief glimpses of an insurgent counterculture, rising into the following decade. As Howard Brick argues:

> the ideal of authenticity – of discovering, voicing and exercising the genuine, whole personality freed from the grip of mortifying convention … authentically combined such ideals as personal autonomy, and flexibility, free self expression, determination to pursue truth and 'face reality' and a search for well grounded and meaningful motives of action… the impulse to strip away illusion, look behind appearances and gauge the validity of long held, oft professed ideals or norms followed demands for social change.[21]

Indeed, the search for authenticity is expressed across the sights, frames, landscapes and texts explored in this thesis, at once challenging the norms of ideologically formed selfhood prescribed by culture, politics, economic trend and architecture, towards a possible line of flight away from homogeneity. It is here where counterculture is formed that we encounter the possibility for individualisation:

> we allow for rival cultural biases within a society the active, negotiating individual is resorted by giving the individual competing norms and values over which to negotiate. No longer is the individual faced with only a grim choice between conformity and deviance… or between submission and revolution… in a world of clashing cultures/biases, culture is a prism, not a prison.[22]

The very existence of a recognisable and established counterculture, whether or not it be heterogeneous, illustrates the possibility for an autonomy of self and the persistence of cultural dualism; as Klein notes:

> the counterculture [preached] a romantic primitivism… of getting away from the artificial constraints of civilisation, the enslavements of commodity culture and its inhibiting social disguises and back to authentic human needs, the truth of the body and the simple, natural pleasures of the self. The counterculture rediscovered the old anarchist ideas of building a new society within the shell of the old.[23]

Space too, is an important term in this investigation. In the words of Michel De Certeau, place is a locus where "the order [of whatever kind] in accord with which elements are distributed in relationship of coexistence".[24] Space on the other hand "occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities"[25]. Hence, "place" refers to one's place, or a specific

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[21] Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s.* (London: Cornell University Press,1998), pp.66 & 68

[22] Joseph Ellis, *American Political Cultures.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.175

[23] Michael Klein, *An American Half Century.* (London: Pluto Press, 1994), p.77

[24] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life.* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984), p.117

[25] Ibid. p.117

location, but space suggests a different kind of spatiality, an area surrounding the body at any given time which can stimulate function. As Elizabeth Grosz writes:

> the body image is not an isolated image of the body but necessarily involves the relations between the body, the surrounding space, other objects and bodies and the coordinates or axes of vertical and horizontal. In short, it is a postural schema of the body. The body image is the condition of the subject's access to spatiality (including the spatiality of the built environment).[26]

Here, it is space that bears some influence on the fashioning of our bodies, not "place". Space marks a point of perspective, allowing bodies and identities to be categorised, recognised and made visible and spaces not one place, are crucial for defining the body and its various identities: it is, as Foucault wrote, a surface of emergence, a space of otherness, a heterotopia.[27]

COLD WAR BODIES

The chapters of this thesis aim both to question and ultimately answer how Cold War bodies were moulded not by ideologies and political policies, but by the spaces of the Cold War. Each of the chapters examine a particular type of space and the bodies therein, establishing connections between urban, suburban and pastoral spaces and seeking to ascertain the ability for individual subjectivities to exist within these areas.

In Chapter One, I analyse the nature of city bodies and the potential for marginalisation, examining New York's urban metropolis and the effects it has on black, homosexual and youthful bodies inhabiting its spaces. Given the postwar investment in consumerism and the reliance upon surface and appearance, New York seems to epitomise the qualities of an urban postwar space. It is a relatively new city, dense in population and varied in ethnicity; and it pushes the boundaries of modernism and lies at the locus of the economic boom. This city is used as the focus for urban bodies for it is here that they are both fixed and fluid - anchored to New York by categorisation and marooned on its island location, and yet divergent, indefinite and contrasting. The city is also the focal point of many popular postwar novels such as Saul Bellow's *The Victim* (1947), John Clellon Holmes' *Go* (1952), Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963) all of which clearly attest to the assorted nature of New York bodies from racial and gendered, to disillusioned and transgressional. Literature produced here increasingly emerges as racially aware, radically challenging audiences with new

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[26] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Boies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.85

[27] Jeremy Crampton & Stuart Elden, *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography.* (USA: Ashgate, 2007)

visions of black, deviant and youthful bodies in James Baldwin's *Another Country* (1962), Evan Hunter's *Blackboard Jungle* (1954) and Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* (1965). However, whilst these texts offer a relevant and powerful portrayal of life in New York, and address the multiplicitous nature of the city, they do not convince the reader of the importance of surface, appearance and visibility and the effect on the body and/or subject. Whilst both Hunter and Baldwin's texts illustrate the importance of the black voice in urban spaces, and the formation of such in these spaces, they do not examine the role of spatial plasticity and bodily change. Similarly, Mailer and Baldwin's homosexual and homicidal protagonists whilst fitting the "transgressive" nature of the bodies explored in this section, do not illustrate the fluid movement between differing states of being (and surface and substance) as the characters in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958), *Invisible Man* (1952), *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1964) and *Catcher in the Rye* (1951). These latter texts highlight the importance of bodily visibility as crucial to identity, and in doing so, unmask the insubstantiality of such a reliance and its inability to separate "them" from "us". Capote, Ellison, Selby Jr and Salinger offer a vision of New York based on the body, where the self is negated through surface. These texts manage to underscore the links between a city's reflective surfaces (on skyscrapers) and the density of interpersonal relations within the metropolis, where the protagonists clash between the identity granted by the city and other bodies, and their own authentic self. Whilst the disenchanted New York of Bellow's, Plath's and Rand's fiction emphasises the city's ability to remould bodies, and the persecuted men of Hunter's, Baldwin's and Mailer's works highlight disparate camps of conformity and counteraction, the texts chosen here manage to encompass both aspects, demanding attention be granted to bodies of divergent types and their ability to be fluid and multiple selves in the city. Using postcolonial, queer and feminist theories in order to strengthen the bridge forged between built structure and organic bodies, the chapter attempts to instill a sense of inscription and interchange from body to object and back again - a theory which feeds into my next chapter on technology and gender in the suburbs.

Chapter Two examines texts set in suburban areas during the Fifties and Sixties. Here however, the space of suburbia is less obviously regionalised than in the city, and is more determined by the figurative, theoretical and symbolic space surrounding urban areas. It is a space frequently shored up in art and cultural forms as polemically familial, wholesome and child-centric, whilst equally being alienating, disillusioning and ruinous. Postwar writers such as Lorraine Hansberry, Charles Webb, and John Cheever wrote of these dual qualities embodied by the newly established suburban areas - a space which can bring both hope and despair. In Webb's *The Graduate* (1963) and Cheever's *Bullet Park* (1969) suburbia is depicted as prosperous and wealthy, a place that offers new accolades

and social elevation through middle class housing developments and pool parties. The protagonists in both, however, become dissatisfied and probe beneath the surface of this seemingly flawless American way of life only to reveal the stifling nature of suburbia through themes of adultery, promiscuity, psychosis and death. Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) however, examines the disparaging nature of suburbia from the perspective of an African American family in Chicago. In many ways, Hansberry's text voices the desires of marginalised peoples - to move to the utopian suburbs, where middle class values prevail and prosperity and happiness persist. But the play shifts from striving for the sublime goal and towards an altogether different reality, being driven out and attacked by their new white suburban neighbours. Whilst the play makes clear the existence of racial tension in suburban areas, and the ideological exclusivity of this space, Hansberry's play manages to depict a similar vision to that of Webb and Cheever - where the manicured lawns and pool parties can not live up to their promise of the good life. Despite the powerful vision of suburbia contained within these texts, I chose to focus on texts which unveil a very specifically domestic version of suburban living. Whilst the writers above convey a dark and dystopian suburbia evidently revisiting the importance of vision and surface from the previous chapter, the texts analysed attempt to continue to develop a theory of domestic gender performativity which falls either into disillusionment or conformity. For this reason, the chapter focuses on *Revolutionary Road* (1961)*, Rabbit Run* (1960)*, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955) and *Lolita* (1958) all of which, whilst strengthening the negative view of suburbia from other writers, also emphasise the role of domesticity as a space for bodily inscription or escape. Using these texts, the chapter investigates how cookbooks, toys, Tupperware, television and magazines further entrench male and female bodies into specific modes of gender performativity from which they must escape into authenticity.

Chapter Three shifts the focus from the built environment towards the pastoral, expanding on the suggestion of a utopian space from the suburban chapter, and with this, returns to the notion of regionalism. The texts examined here attempt to investigate how postwar bodies were influenced by the landscape of America itself, analyzing how this landscape is imagined, shaped and expressed in culture and in so doing, influences the bodies who inhabit this space. Perhaps no other space is more fitting of the pastoral ideal than the South - a region defined by its conveyance of a lifestyle, the state lines above and below Mason Dixie, a picturesque genre for urbanites, with its traditional values, moral codes and history - yet the American South is also a region marked by its mapped "otherness" to the rest of the country. The South is frequently shored up representationally as old, conservative and perfectly "contained" but it is also the home of hillbillies, freaks and monsters. The works of Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*

(1937)), Caron McCullers (*The Member of the Wedding* (1946)) and William Faulkner (*The Light in August* (1932)) all depict a traditional South slowly altering in the early part of the twentieth century as it attempts to shift away from its bloodied past towards the New South of civility and fellowship. Faulkner's *Light in August* focuses on the events at a planing mill in Mississippi sixty seven years after the Civil War. Here, Faulkner's characters are all ultimately victims of their geographical location, falling prey to the inscriptions of place marked by domination and subordination, corruption and moral values. Whilst Faulkner's Southernscapes foreground Southernism as defined by the history of segregation, white supremacy and patriarchy, there is also an effort to accommodate the "individualising south"[28] by exposing the inherent racism and misogyny of this tradition. Faulkner's characters too, embody this duality, offering up ambiguous states of subjectivity premised upon race and gender. Joe Christmas clearly attests to these shifts in Southern culture - a black man who bears the initials J.C conjuring up biblical references - illustrates the ambiguities at the heart of Southern race and individual identity. The South depicted in Hurston, McCullers and Faulkner's texts is therefore, one of uncertainty, straddling the divide between old and new South, where bodies remain ambiguous and spaces unfixed. The version of the South encountered in *The Moviegoer* (1960)*, Wise Blood* (1952), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) however, herald a different kind of emergent body and landscape. This is the space of post-antebellum South, where regionality is a product to be sold, and bodies are threatened with commercialisation. It is this particular image of the South that warrants investigation for here we return to the notion of surface and vision. Repeatedly governed by the "tourist eye", the novels and plays explored in this chapter highlight a very specific type of influence the mythical and idealised South has on bodies and selves who struggle to find rootings in the apposite but absent "real". But, if the "real" South has disappeared, where do the "real" and authentic bodies reside?

The answer might lie in the theories employed in this investigation. As David Riesman's seminal work *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) makes clear, there exists three divergent cultural types of selves in Cold War society - the tradition-directed, other-directed and inner-directed individual. Riesman, in particular criticised "other-directed" types for being reliant upon the approval of others and his work underscores the failure of the postwar American society to recognise inner-directed characters (individuals) over the other-directed malleable consumers.[29] Similarly,

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[28] James Cobb, *Away Down South; A History of Southern Identity.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.163

[29] David Riesman,*The Lonely Crowd.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950)

William Whyte's *The Organisation Man* (1956) takes issue with the collectivist ethic at the heart of Cold War culture and urges for a return to individualism. Whyte claimed society was becoming too reliant on the "organisation" or companies, and were too willing to be swayed by collective creation over and above individual work. The result, he argued was a deep and unnecessary reliance upon corporations.[30] Whyte's and Riesman's theories go some of the way in developing an understanding of the nature of postwar identity - albeit, the centralisation of consumer and capitalist investments in society that extend down to shape the individual. Their theories also suggest ways to interpret the permeation and attendance to conformity by the American public as a whole, ascertaining in part, why consumerism, domesticity and indeed, surface became significant in identifying the self. However, these accounts do not allow for the unlocking of the complexities of the era from a nostalgic perspective, and hence do not permit a re-reading of the Cold War as it is understood now. Perhaps of most significance is the manner in which both Riesman and Whyte focus only on corporate masculinity. This thesis attempts to enable a nostalgic reading of the period that not only investigates identity from within consumer and corporate culture, but also outside this dominant frame, into other spaces such as the South and marginal non-spaces. Furthermore, this thesis adopts a particular position with regard to spaces and bodies that requires an additional theoretical framework to enable the bridging between spaces and bodily inscription.

In the works of the late twentieth century theorists Elizabeth Grosz and Gilles Deleuze, the possibility for a fractured boundary, where bodies can be re-territorialised with autonomy and individualism is revealed:

> with no frame or boundary, there can be no territory, and without territory there may be objects or things but no qualities that can become expressive, that can intensify and transform living bodies. Territory here may be understood as surfaces of variable curvature or inflection that bear upon them singularities, eruptions or events.[31]

Territories and boundaries define subjectivity, where "the body becomes intimately connected to and informed by the peristaltic movement, systole and diastole, contraction and expansion".[32] By examining space and identity in this manner, the possibility for autonomous and transgressive subjectivities becomes a reality as it allows for a delineated space to be formed outside – an "other" space that can be

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[30] William Whyte, *The Organization Man.* (USA: Simon and Schuster, 1956)

[31] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp.11-12

[32] Ibid. p.16

annexed from the cohesive inside – a space that is “always open to the chaos from which it draws its force”.[33]

The work of Deleuze influences much of Grosz’s theoretical analyses of spaces and bodies, and therefore an understanding and exploration of his methodologies inform this thesis. As Paul Patton writes, Deleuze develops concepts relating to bodies, architecture and the assemblage of subject matter, and by doing so, through “deterritorialisation, orderward, faciality, vitornello, nomadism, and different kinds of becoming”[34] his work lays down the frame for a coherent awareness of models of multiplicity and transformation. Without Deleuze, there could be no “becoming”, no movement beyond the bodily fixity of corporeality for “real movement, real transformation and change seem to require that the distinction between movement (the process) and moving (the agent or patient) be abandoned… movement affects both space and the bodies moving through it. To move is to become the other than itself”.[35] Beginning with architecture, Deleuze notes in *The Fold* (1993), the ability for subjectivity (a mind rather than simply a body) to exist in between and from within an unfolding of perception, between two distinct levels which mark differentiation. From this equation, an object’s status no longer refers to its condition within a spatial mould, but can transcend its form through temporal modulation, towards a developed form – applied to architecture (which is itself an inscribing object), it “can be defined by the severing of the façade from the inside, of the interior from the exterior and the autonomy of the interior from the independence of the exterior”.[36] It is now possible to understand a bodily exterior as separate and distinct from interior identity, where boundaries and territories of selfhood are split and hence, where the inscriptive influences of spatial locality may not penetrate.

Deleuze’s theories in *Dialogues* (1987), that bodies are territorialised through their physical fixity and therefore are only able to transgress through the occupation of an alternative non-space by affecting events and outcomes, for “affects are becomings… bodies are not defined by their genes or species, by their organs or functions, but by what they can do, by the affects of which they are capable”.[37] Under these terms, bodies are without organs, they are vessels of thought, influence, ideas, assemblages and multiplicities, and any resulting sense

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[33] Ibid. p.19

[34] Paul Patton, *Deleuze: A Critical Reader.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing,1996), p.2

[35] Ibid. p.84

[36] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), p.28

[37] Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues.* (London: The Athlone Press,1987), p.60

of identity or selfhood is felt through action – “true entities are events, not concepts”.[38] How then, can we speak of the self, subjectivity, identity or even corporeality? It is through territorialisation and reterritorialisation that Deleuze argues for the realisation of a bodily state, or assemblage for it is only through the “state” of things that bodies can interpenetrate, mix and transmit affects. Put simply, we require territories in order to find, locate and recognise our “state”, and from this point can we begin to affect with the hope of transformation – “there is no assemblage without territory, without territoriality and reterritorialisation… [deterritorialisation] carries expressions, contents, stages of things and utterances along a zigzag broken line of flight, it raises time to the infinitive, it releases a becoming which no longer has any limit”.[39]

Extending Deleuze’s theory further, territories as frames, inform and mark the body with its subjectivity precisely as they provide the boundaries of influence, the inscribers of selfhood; so what is the consequence of deterritorialised bodies? Bodies and selves without fixed boundaries, which affect individuals’ exteriority? Herein lies my thesis, for if all bodies are spatially formed and inscribed, thereby rooting Cold War bodies to conformity, where is the fractured space from which they can escape into “authentic” individualism? According to Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateau*s (1987), deterritorialisation advocates the notion of a line of flight whereby:

> to flee is not to renounce action; nothing is more active than a flight. It is the opposite of the imaginary. It is also to put to flight – not necessarily others, but to put something to flight, to put a system to flight… the great and only error lies in thinking that a line of flight consists of fleeing from life; the flight into the imaginary or into art; on the contrary, to flee is to produce the real, to create life.[40]

It is notable that Deleuze’s theory relies so heavily upon movement and action, a sense of deterritorialisation or becoming, taking place with a physical change of space – “lines of flight, for their part, never consist of running away from the world, but rather causing runoffs. There is nothing imaginary, nothing symbolic about a line of flight. There is nothing more active than a line of flight, among animals or humans”.[41] Hence, to “become” is to flee bodily and structural territorialisation, in a line of flight or escape, toward planes of consistency where contours, entities and things occur and affect. But how is this achieved? How can a line of flight be realised without being drawn into a form of reterritorialisation? Because “it is never

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[38] Ibid. p.66

[39] Ibid. p.72

[40] Ibid. pp.36 & 49

[41] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.* (London: The Athlone Press,1987), pp.225-226

the beginning or the end which are interesting… what is interesting is the middle… one begins again through the middle… things do not begin to live except in the middle".[42] For Deleuze, it is through a movement that this notion of the "real" is cultivated, and hence it is by moving away without laying down roots, from territories and boundaries that bodies can achieve subjectivities so long as they remain in motion. In other words, the middle is where the non-space occurs, and hence, it is only with an understanding of Deleuze's theoretical works that we allow for the possibility of a genuine, authentic "becoming" – a self formed from interiority, a fractured territory and autonomous corporeality:

> it has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle from which it grows and which it overspills. It constitutes linear multiplicities with a dimension having neither subject nor object… when a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, [it] undergoes a metamorphosis.[43]

Deleuze allows us to link the disparate camps of authenticity, between constructivist and existential ideas on the definition of being, for his work suggests the authentic self can become fluid and becomes authentic in its own right, thereby reinventing inauthentic as newly authentic. The line of flight allows for a process of self-realisation, effectively deterritorialising authenticity, where the phony can become real through transgression, movement and crossing over territories. When applied to the Cold War, bodies are no longer simply contained by their culture, trapped by conformist ways, but rather, it is from within these contained boundaries that they might be able to locate and exit through a fracture of rigid spaces and performative identity.

As I shall explore later, territory and the de (and re) territorialising of identity are not only confined to geo-political discourses, but rather can be used to explore the fracturing or breaking of bounded bodies, as well as the physical space of the built environment. To understand the body as a bounded space is to accept the notion that bodies are vehicles for an inner organising core of identity and subjectivity – they are frames and walls for selves, in much the same way as a body is contained and bound to architecture, and hence these frames are able to be traversed by transgression. Crucially, bodies, desire and sexuality are not "things" or "objects" but rather processes of production, machines of the body – they are forever coming into being. As Grosz notes in *Becomings* (1999):

> when there is becoming, when the social systems and the subject systems deterritorialise into flows of desire, and the body becoming, such becomings will

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[42] Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), pp.39 &55

[43] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.23

> come from one of two directions: from within or without… as an outsider, as deterritorialised, becoming is possible.[44]

Furthermore, this notion of territorialisation is bound to a traditional sense of masculinity – the territorialising of property, finances, spouse and self are all linked to the associations of individualistic and old forms of manhood – to defend what is yours. If performative gender is partly informed by its surroundings, and an identity is performed according to its spatial location, might it be possible to argue that masculinity, an autonomous and undomesticated version, can potentially be shored up without boundaries or territories? Might it be possible to use mobility or a traversing of these fixed spaces as a transgressor from spatially informed feminised identities? Movement, whether it be from cities to suburbia, from North to South, or along the newly built highways of 1956, seems crucial in establishing autonomous male selves. As Knights notes, male initiation is permitted when "the search for a domain sufficiently removed, sufficiently undomesticated permits the refloating of the narrative of [the] male".[45]

THE ROAD AND THE REBEL

American men in the Fifties, it seems, had become victims of their spatial location, as Kyle Cuordileone writes, "American males had become the victims of a smothering, over powering… society that had smashed the once autonomous male self".[46] Furthermore, this meant:

> the unmanning of American men… to yield to an all consuming group whose effect was to crush men's sense of self and thus to obliterate their manhood… [where the older male identities] based on individual initiative and achievement, autonomy and mastery… were eroding.[47]

Masculine identity was therefore often deemed to be feminised in the Fifties, a form of white middle class American normalcy that prided itself on "soft" other-directed men who not only cooked, cleaned and washed the dishes; but also strove for corporate achievement and financial prosperity. As James Gilbert notes, men:

> were pulled in multiple directions… to re-establish their masculinity and re-establish their individualistic values or to take it easy and enjoy leisure and

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[44] Elizabeth Grosz, *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory and Futures.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p.116

[45] Ben Knights, *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth Century Fiction.* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 1999), p.116

[46] Kyle Cuordileone, "Politics in an Age of Anxiety: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity", *The Journal of American History.* Vol. 87, No. 2, September 2000, pp.515-545, p.522

[47] Ibid. pp.524 & 528

> consumption. At the same time, they were told to be companions to their wives and children and strive for 'togetherness' at home, in the community and at work.[48]

Furthermore, Michael Kimmel's work on cultural aspects of manhood focuses a great deal of attention onto postwar masculinity, citing that "for men the celebration of the family was not supposed to be an emasculating retreat… when a man cooked for example… he was achieving and expressing his masculinity".[49] Hence, a domesticated form of masculinity was a positive cultural phenomena, albeit belying the traditional attributes of masculinity, it was still deemed as conformist, hegemonic and to be domesticated was to be patriarchal – locked into these rigid stereotypes of financial and domestic responsibilities, American manhood is seen as confused, incoherent and an unsustainable concept. According to Ben Knights the problem was that men could no longer locate a definitive subjectivity for "the narrative of male individualism… [which] stress[es] the need to escape both women and the feminised domain".[50] This form of "escape" appears to be unachievable within the confines of prescriptive gender roles, for a form of maleness which failed as the breadwinner or father created children who were "homosexual… became juvenile delinquents, [or] they became Communists – soft, spineless dupes of a foreign power who were incapable of standing up for themselves".[51] This type of male identity is set up as oppositional and inconsistent with previously established ideas of maleness. The idea that Cold War masculinity was in "crisis" suggests that pre-war manhood was defined in ways which directly contradict the "domestic" nature of this new male. Given the importance of the war, and the likelihood that the writers encountered in this thesis were children during the Second World War, their idea of masculinity appears to have been greatly influenced by pre-war ideals. Fathers and soldiers, aggressive patriotism and assertive national defense, individual courage and male bodies who prized the notion of fighting for their family's prosperity, must have had some influence on these writers and their conception of masculinity. It is perhaps rather unsurprising to find postwar masculinity described as "unmanning" and "feminised" when pre-war combat is set aside for postwar aprons.

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[48] James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p.79.

[49] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.161

[50] Ben Knights, *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth Century Fiction.* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 1999), p.114.

[51] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.156

By accepting these established readings of postwar masculinity, we allow for the possible creation of a different version of maleness. Domesticity and the fear of feminisation held these identities within a crisis, and, if manhood could be achieved or defined elsewhere, created autonomously without feminine influence, could this alternative form of gender now be unyielding? Could "inner-directed" masculinity be achieved in the postwar era through experience or escape? As the established readings suggest, the crisis of anxious masculinity was tied to an identification with the feminised space of the home, thereby domesticating individualistic manhood. If this is the case, there is a clear link between the space of the home and the prescription and performance of postwar masculinity – domesticated manhood could not be so without the walls and boundaries of the suburban home inscribing some aspect of identity onto men.

This particular reading of masculinity (as a mapped and spatially informed gender) is plausible when we consider the examples employed by Beatriz Colomina in her examination of subject and object interplay in *Cold War Hothouses* (2004). Plastics used as militaristic indicators of Cold War culture can also be indicators of a subjectivity built upon kits of parts, and therefore have the potential to transform domestic life, "the arranging and rearranging of fragments to make new forms and spatial structures… the very idea of putting together again and again a world out of a set of small fragments may give people a sense of control over their environments in a world threatening to explode".[52] Hence, plastic kits not only signified war, but also domestic leisure, a paradoxical relationship between object and subject which highlights the duality of postwar culture. Furthermore, the Monsanto House of the Future is another example employed by Colomina to evaluate the parallels created in subject and object relationships during the Cold War, where:

> the house provided for domesticity within a theoretically transportable kit of parts, tailored to a future lifestyle and speed and push button efficiency. The Monsanto House of the Future advertised future consumption as the means to a safe, modern living under the guise of a theme park's tourist attraction… an exhibition house for industry that masqueraded as an amusement ride.[53]

If plastic homes indicated a utopian form of domesticity, a universal sense of leisure and an amusement, then the domestic setting is juxtaposed as equal to the warfare which inspired and made possible its creation. Furthermore, there is something alarmingly performative in the notion of a house made of parts – a kit of subjectivity – were selves are made from objects, further compounding the use of spatially formed subjectivity. Even cars are considered as objects which

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[52] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.19

[53] Ibid. p.119

communicate aspects of subjectivity by Colomina's text, as illustrated by her work on Kerouac, where the car is "once again an interior on wheels, a space to eat and sleep",[54] and this reading of the car begins to develop my thesis for a mapped analysis of Kerouac's masculinity in *On the Road* (1957), where a redefinition of the self might be achieved through unbounded non-space. *On the Road* serves as a fitting example of the manner in which bodies are affected by the various spaces examined in this thesis, with Sal encountering city, suburban and pastoral locations and each resulting in a type of transformation.

Kerouac's text features the constant movement between suburban spaces and the non-bounded space of the road, as indicated by Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty's constant mobility across America. As Colomina notes, the text maps the surface of America, and through this "mapping activity and his employment of the America-as-body metaphor, Kerouac also explores marginal spaces, extracted, so to speak, from the national body".[55] This marginal space however, is only enabled by its implicit removal from the feminised spaces which are repeatedly escaped from – notably it is after Sal's marriage fails, that he meets Dean and thus the removal of female influence facilitates the road adventure, "I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up… with the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road".[56] Neatly and concretely Kerouac sets up masculine bonds and the road in a directly oppositional relationship to conformity and Cold War "normalcy". Furthermore, if bounded and therefore, proscriptive identities are formed within domesticated and walled spaces – in this case, the home as the inscriber of feminised masculinity – then Kerouac's employment of negative imagery associated with suburban spaces highlights the negativity of these spheres, "cute suburban cottages of one damn kind and another, all laid out in the dismal gray dawn"[57]; "I looked greedily out the window: stucco houses and palms and drive-ins, the whole mad thing, the ragged promised land, the fantastic end of American… red brick, dirty, characters drifting by, trolleys grating in the hopeless dawn, the whorey smell of a big city".[58] Domestication, as we have already established, is associated with private spaces, and hence, Kerouac's distinctly disapproving prose compounds the necessity for an individualistic and therefore, unbounded subjectivity to be formed elsewhere. Furthermore, the text associates those characters who are unable to escape these boundaries as

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[54] Ibid. pp.13-14

[55] Ibid. p.204

[56] Jack Kerouac, *On The Road*. (London: Penguin,1957), p.3

[57] Ibid. p.17

[58] Ibid. p.74

homogeneous, a unified subjectivity without autonomy, “I thought of all my friends from one end of the country to the other and how they were really all the same vast backyard doing something so frantic and rushing about. And for the first time in my life, the following afternoon, I went into the West”.[59] These frantic movements in the same space implies an ideological and cultural conformity which renders identity and individual subjectivity as non existent, and Paradise’s imagery used when leaving these built environments, further marks his distaste for conformist masculinity, “just like other figures in New York and New Orleans; they stand uncertainly underneath immense skies, and everything about them is drowned".[60] The use of “drowned” is notable – the implication being a subjectivity battling towards liberation, without ever succeeding. Indeed, for Kerouac, these established and bounded hegemonic spaces reify the national identity, “this is the story of America. Everybody’s doing what they think they’re supposed to do”.[61]

Throughout the text, this imagery of destructive defined spaces is employed, implying at times a deathly existence based on futility; the “grabbing, taking, giving, sighing, dying”[62] of New York is in stark contrast to the vast and uncontained spaces encountered elsewhere. However, New York is not consistently conveyed as negatively as the suburban spaces from which he continually escapes. Indeed, the “fantastic hoorair of New York”[63] implies a positivity, a place where, as Colomina notes, a heterogeneous space might be possible: “Times Square suggests a conception of space that allows a multiplicity of practices and a fluidity of subjectivities to be experienced”.[64] It is this notion of fluidity which is of importance here – a fluidity of subjectivity is key to the understanding of broken territories, for it is movement which allows Paradise and Moriarty to escape the spaces they despise. It is the implicit fluidity of certain spaces which can create an alternative to accepted forms of masculinity, and this case, it arrives in the form of the car and the open space of the road. Against the darkness, grayness, and dullness of the spaces left behind, the text alludes to a rebirth of the self through a road adventure – it is notably Spring when Sal’s desire of flight takes place, “then came spring, the great time of travelling, and everybody

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[59] Ibid. p.13

[60] Ibid. p.151

[61] Ibid. p.61

[62] Ibid. p.96

[63] Ibid. p.96

[64] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.210

in the scattered gang was getting ready to take one trip or another".[65] With the obvious association of newness and the creation of life implied by springtime, Kerouac's use of the road becomes an already alternative identity for his protagonists – an identity marked by its nonconformist status. Furthermore, this re-birth of subjectivity, the breaking from the old, contained identity formed in enclosed spaces, is reinforced by Sal's first attempt at crossing the continent, "I woke up as the sun was reddening: and that was the one distinct time in my life; the strangest moment of all, when I didn't know who I was - I was far away from home, haunted and tied with travel…. I wasn't scared; I was just somebody else, some stranger, and my whole life was a haunted life; the life of a ghost".[66] Here, Sal loses his sense of self completely, being far away from home, he finds he has no way of locating his subjectivity in the unfamiliar surroundings of the cheap hotel, yet far from being a negative experience, this becoming allows for a distinct shift away from his old self, seeing his previous existence as "haunted", thereby implying a hollowness and meaninglessness to his old life. By contrast to his ghostly life, the creation of a new self allows him to be "somebody else" – a subjectivity which is coming into being. As Colomina asserts, *On the Road* is "a search for becoming… the move west allows the narrator to dispose of his old identity and reinvent himself. The road functions as a dissociative mechanism for the loosening of a fixed identity and as a vehicle for expanding experience".[67] Clearly, movement and mobility is key in the understanding of altered subjectivity – unsurprisingly, therefore, this shifted mode is distinguished by individuation and liberation in the unbounded space of the car - for it appears to facilitate the literal movement from one, fixed form of self, to the creation, or possible transgression to another; literally and physically crossing boundaries and remaking their perimeters. Individualism is therefore the antithesis of conformity, it is the reassertion of the self in the face of the drowning men who are doing what they think they should, and instead, Sal's new identity can occupy a space beyond the boundaries of acceptable identity, quite literally leaving behind homogeneity, "what is that feeling when you're driving away from people and they recede on the plain till you see their specks dispersing? – it's the too-huge world vaulting us, and it's goodbye. But we lean forward to the next crazy venture beneath the skies".[68]

The car and road itself is therefore crucial to Kerouac's creation of a newly defined masculinity, implying by its very being, the movement away from the known

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[65] Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*. (London: Penguin, 1957), p.8

[66] Ibid. p.15

[67] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.198

[68] Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*. (London: Penguin, 1957), p.141

and the movement towards something new, “Somewhere along the line I knew there’d be girls, visions, everything; somewhere along the line the pearl would be handed to me” .[69] As Colomina notes, this form of un-rootedness or homelessness “is elevated by the author to a condition of choice. Mobility is represented as a productive practice that generates new forms of sociability and communality”.[70] Indeed these unbounded bodies are able to express a new form of masculinity precisely as they are “homeless” – quite literally removed from the inscriptive surfaces of suburbia and domesticity – instead allowing the road and highways of America to both distance and abolish the continent, decentralising social spaces and individualising subjectivities; “But no matter, the road is life”.[71] Notably, at times the road becomes a substitute for a lover, thereby further marking the removal of these subjectivities from conventional forms of romance, “sometimes he had no hands on the wheel and yet the car went straight as an arrow, not for once deviating from the white line in the middle of the road that unwound, kissing our left front tire”.[72] The road is uncomplicated, de-sexualised, and therefore he can not contend for the position of the individualistic patriarch in the alternative household, “Oh where is the girl I love? I thought, and looked everywhere, as I had looked everywhere in the little world below. And before me was the great raw bulge and bulk of my American continent; somewhere far across, gloomy, crazy New York was throwing up its cloud of dust and brown steam”.[73] Furthermore, the car and the road become erasers and healers of old subjectivities, wiping the memory and even reality of the past self, where the emphasis is no longer on emotion (a traditionally female attribute) but rather simply “being” – a defining of oneself: “Bitterness, recriminations, advice, morality, sadness – everything was behind him, and ahead of him was the ragged and ecstatic joy of pure being”.[74]

Marginal space is created through the road by the act of mapping oneself onto an unbounded space, yet this marginality does open itself up to interpretations which move beyond the creation of a new, heterosexual masculinity, and at times, Kerouac’s text complicates the removal of manhood from the domestic setting by aligning it within a fraternal space. By occupying borderline spaces and a familiarity with marginality, Kerouac’s text is built upon an all male community, where a revolt

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[69] Ibid. p.10

[70] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.211

[71] Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*. (London: Penguin, 1957), p.192

[72] Ibid. p.105

[73] Ibid. p.71

[74] Ibid. p.178

against the dominant regime of suburban conformity translates into a homosocially constructed space to stand in opposition to authoritative maturity – whilst domesticity was clearly a fate to be avoided at all cost, "In *On the Road*, however, the revolt against domesticity becomes a homosocial project of boys together".[75] Indeed, as Leerom Medovoi suggests, by creating an alternative space in which manhood could be reaffirmed as new and distinctly, anti-domestic, the fraternal community is set up in opposition to its substitute of marriage, where a homosocial relationship can occupy a utopian space of brotherly togetherness, and thereby transcend the domesticating manipulation of women.[76] Hence, it appears that through a creation of individualistic male selves via mobility and a fluidity of boundaries, Sal Paradise also creates an alternative version of masculine sexual identity – one which is devoid of feminine influence, and relies upon masculine bonding for its emotional support. Whilst this vision is distinctly marginal, transgressive and utopian, it complicates the purportedly anxious masculine identity of the postwar period – to be considered homosexual, for instance, would not affirm one's traditional sense of the masculine self, and would ultimately feminise masculinity further. Indeed, in escaping women through homosocial bonds, did Kerouac fail to create new identities, but rather substitute the domestic environment of the home for the domestic interior of the car? Homosociality, whilst it stands to abandon the traditional contained environment, does presuppose the male's need for companionship, and therefore is a transgressed form of masculinity on the road, another form of containment which inscribes effeminate male selves?

This troublesome idea conflates the issues surrounding cold war masculinity and indeed, Cold War identity itself – was it better to conform and risk a crisis of manhood, or to transgress, fracture boundaries and create an equally dubious version of the self through non-space? The male bodies in Kerouac's text are therefore illustrative of the nature of identity as expressed by this thesis - a body moulded and influenced by it's spatial environment - reacting with and against these plains of territoriality and attempted to transgress along the fractured and deterritorialised folds.

Another such example of masculine bodies and spaces is found in Nicholas Ray's film, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) which examines the dilemma of Fifties manhood as seen through the eyes of a delinquent teenager. Jim's father performs a spatially informed, and therefore domesticated version of masculinity throughout the film, having become "a creature of the private sphere, their wives'

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[75] Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p.230

[76] Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005)

domestic partners in a child centred family life".[77] One such instance of Mr Stark's domesticated manhood, is evident after Jim's return from the planetarium, climbing the stairs he finds his father in the hallway wearing an apron, cleaning up a dropped tray of dinner – presumably cooked and served to his wife in bed. The fact that the tray has been dropped, could possibly illustrate Mr Stark's inability to fit this domesticated role imposed upon him, and it also opens up the potential "unnaturalness" of these, normally, feminised acts. However, Jim's desire for patriarchal advice – having been propositioned with the "chickee run" – is actively denied by a father who remains on the floor - on his hands and knees and therefore submissive and subordinate stance - whilst Jim stands above him, with his arms folded. The inter-subjective relationship proposed by this scene suggests a refusal of identification between father and son, and thereby an inability on behalf of Jim to associate with his father's contained gender role. The next scene illustrates this patriarchal negation further, when Jim's blood stained shirt is discovered. Whilst blood clearly signifies an aggressive and perhaps, autonomous masculinity, offering Jim the possibility for identifying himself with a hardened version of maleness, his father's reaction is to attempt to clean the shirt – an effeminate and distinctly unmanly act - and in doing so, he fails to answer Jim's demands for paternal advice. As Medovoi notes, "his father has failed him as a model of sovereign male personality, the son must move through what Erikson called, 'disidentification' or 'negative identification', a rejection of the flawed paternal role".[78] The timing of this "disidentification" is prophetic for despite the obvious challenge to Jim's masculinity implied by the chickee run, Jim's father avoids providing any direction, and hence denies Jim both a paternal role model and an affirmation of his manhood. Hence, for Jim, his dilemma is "premised on a series of equivalences; a father's domestication equals his feminisation, which equals his loss of authority, which equals his symbolic castration".[79] During the final scene of the film, Jim's father is unable to recognise his son, mistaking Plato for Jim upon seeing the red jacket. Hence, this suggests a superficial form of identification between family members – a son who is recognisable to his father by what he wears is a troubling idea – and it also underscores the inability for Jim's father to find a connection or common masculine identification with his son. If this is the case, it stands to reason then, that Jim's father is also ineffectual and unidentifiable from Jim's perspective, and can never provide a recognisable role model for him. Medovoi writes: "Rebel is replete with shots of Jim with his eyes

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[77] Ibid. p.172

[78] Ibid. p.169

[79] Ibid. p.180

closed, or looking down and to the side, especially at these moments when his father overtly fails him."[80]

The home is quite clearly the inscriber of domesticated masculinity for it is Jim's mother who is consistently shot in scenes as standing above the other members of the household, or even as being upstairs and thereby, physically above Jim and his father, subordinating the men of the household automatically. Furthermore, the parental identity is so firmly fixed within the home that Jim's parents are never shown outside its boundaries. Despite Jim's departure on three occasions in a delinquent rage, they stand and watch from the safety of the domestic environment, and their urgency and protestations cease once Jim is beyond the door – both parents observing rather than actively preventing, chasing or following Jim. This thereby suggests the outside space is in an oppositional position to the home – if parental subjectivity cannot move beyond a domestic environment, then the public space, beyond its walls might prove to be the antithesis of domesticity. In short, their failure to move beyond the containment of the home illustrates their loss of subjectivity beyond its enclosure, and hence all other identities and subjectivities lie outside the contained sphere. The house is further used as a barrier between father and son when Jim attempts to explain the events of the evening to his parents. In this scene, the banister serves as a physical barrier between Jim and his father, cutting off the possibility for patriarchal intervention, and castrating paternal power. Furthermore, if the domestic space is an informer and reflector of identity, the static on the television in the background marks a further barrier of communication. Read one way as representative of the domestic setting, this detail could serve to highlight the ineffectuality of the familial space. Read another, but equally fractured and dysfunctional way, it illustrates the inability for the public sphere, individualism and autonomy to penetrate the Stark household. Either way, the static television represents the blankness of subjectivity which is eternally absent from Jim's familial space, and without sovereignty, Jim is forced to find an alternative and unorthodox form of selfhood.

One way in which Jim attempts to find this alternative form of selfhood is through clothing – a trying on of different identities. At the start of the film, Jim's appearance is marked by its conformity and domesticated manhood as implied by the "soft" tweed and flannel clothing worn in contrast to the "hard" denim and leather of Buzz and his gang. Yet, once Jim decides to defend his masculinity, emerging from childhood into adulthood by accepting the chickee run in defiance of his domesticated father, he resorts to wearing a red jacket, thereby suggesting the putting on of a suitably violent and aggressive masculinity – wearing a rebellious masculine mask. This rebellious masquerade seems faintly eroticised (also

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[80] Ibid. p.183

signalled by the wearing of red), and the eroticising of subjectivity draws a distinct differentiation between the drabness of his father's impotence and normative manhood, and the possibility of a glamorised struggle for antisuburban sexuality. Yet the ambivalence of masculine clothing questions the naturalness of masculinity altogether – whilst Jim's father wears an apron within the home, he also wears his suit underneath; and whilst Jim drinks milk from the fridge underscoring his child-like status, his red jacket seems a highly conscious form of defensive clothing, to hide his fear and weakness. These "worn" identities therefore conflate the idea of the performative male, masking his identity with conformity, no matter what his spatial location might be, remoulding, refitting and reterritorialising himself to find a suitable subjectivity.

Leerom Medovoi's *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (2005) contends that *Rebel Without a Cause* seeks to establish a counter suburban narrative which contests traditional authority, and whilst it is clear that Jim's father is the product of his suburban environment, and the distinctly unfavourable depiction of this masculinity serves as a warning for Jim, I am unconvinced of the film's anti-suburban nature. Is a "worn" rebel identity distinctly antisuburban and masculine? Or is the vision in this film, conformist, showing the categorical need for patriarchy? It is fair to say that the domesticated form of manhood instilled in Mr Stark is a comically, and highly unrealistic version of manhood, used to illustrate the crisis of Fifties' gender roles, however, the fact that Jim constantly reaches out for a patriarchal controller compounds the ideology of Cold War culture, and instils rather than detracts from the notion of familial togetherness. Rather than working as an antisuburban text, the film clearly shows the then contemporary preoccupation with the delinquent adolescent and the destructive effects and deathly consequences of fatherless children, and hence I would argue, compounds an image of masculinity built upon cold war ideology, where the man's place was in the home.

In much the same way as bodies are inscribed by their spatial environment, so too are bodies themselves indicators of performative subjectivity, both in Ray's film, Kerouac's text and others examined in this thesis illustrate. Furthermore, I want to extend a reading of masculinity into the masculine bodies as represented by James Dean and Marlon Brando as instances of territorialised and bounded selves capable of fracturing boundaries. In order to understand these performances of gender, it is first necessary to consider Laura Mulvey's idea of scopophilia as described in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975). By basing her theory on Freud, Mulvey asserts the use of cinema as the facilitator of pleasurable structures, and therefore, scopophilia arises from "pleasure in using

another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight".[81] Under these terms, watching Brando and Dean becomes an erotic act, and therefore transforms their performances of masculinity into something more closely aligned to traditionally feminine spaces – eroticism. As Mulvey notes:

> the split between spectacle and narrative supports the man's role as the active one of forwarding the story, making things happen. The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extradiagetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle.[82]

Whilst a scopophilic reading of Marilyn Monroe is more acceptable, transforming this gaze into a female eroticising a man on screen, implies a complication, for does this now imply something effeminate on the receiver of the gaze? Is masculinity, when displayed in film, now a feminine form of gender performance? Furthermore, this idea of eroticised masculinity begins to question the use of interiority and exteriority – does an eroticised exteriority translate into objectified, and therefore non-space interiority? Can masculinity performed under these circumstances ever be considered "authentic"?

As this thesis illustrates, bodies both in literature and on screen are moulded by spaces, but this then suggests the potential for inauthenticity. Both Dean and Brando exhibit a form of masculinity which is inextricably bound to their own performances to such a degree that there remains almost no sense of a coherent self underneath its enactment. Dean's slightly feminised persona, although in stark contrast to Brando's rough and hard version of masculinity both render their versions of maleness as equally inauthentic, yet equally representative of masculinity in the postwar period. However, these identities – Dean's pout and red "rebel" jacket, and Brando's ripped t-shirt over a muscular torso (an openly sexualised and homoerotic body) – are replete with fixed and bounded poses, expressed repeatedly in order to be affiliated with their, ironically, individual versions of manhood. This repetitive form of posing masculinity renders both Dean and Brando's bodies as distinctly emasculated by its hyper-performative nature, playing with images of masculinity from a position of relative security so as to underscore and question the apparently concrete masculinity of the real stars. Far from possessing the "ideal" masculine bodies, Dean and Brando's self-objectification serves to highlight the incompatibility of conceptual masculinity – either a coherent boyish selfhood, or a fluid identity constituted entirely by performance - and this irreconcilable condition of male bodies in Hollywood

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[81] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen,* Vol. 16, No. 3, Autumn 1975, pp.6-18

[82] Ibid.

delineates a trying on, mimicking and practising of masculine bodies for the audience and hence, the nation.

Finally, consider another example of masculine bodies and spaces in the interiors of bachelor pads, where reification and the use of objects within interior spaces as signifiers of identity further compounded the performative nature of Cold War masculinity. In some respects, it is slightly strange to encounter a form of hyper-masculinity in the very space designed to liberate it, and indeed, individualise males from the domestic setting – yet the highly prescriptive nature of bachelor pad designs and toys further encased men into a consumerist society, swapping one domestic environment for another, replete with yet more objects by which to inscribe their identities. Perhaps the most obvious difference which marks these spaces as alternative, is the absence of female influence, and whilst this indicates a momentary return to traditional, alternative and sexualised (possibly) maleness, it also allows for the potential for a deterritorialised (homo) sexuality to take up residence in the once conformist space. As Joel Foreman notes, the problem with an undomesticated form of masculinity was it "exposes its fear that bodies, however framed and contained, might pass as something they are not".[83] Indeed, it is troubling that a space which attempted to remove itself from feminisation and stand in direct opposition to the familial ideals of the decade became a site of consumerism rather than the den of iniquity it aspired to be, where a repositioning back within the domestic ideology of the period indicated, "recuperation as a consumer whose masculinity could be redeemed – even glamorized - by the things that he bought to accessorise his virility".[84] Hence, masculinity takes on perhaps its most critically anxious form yet – one which is almost entirely manufactured in response to objects – an identity based on reification, entirely composed from a domestic setting. The new private space of the bachelor pad actively carves up masculinity by dividing space into an apartment which sought to avoid feminine influence, and also interiorise masculine domination over an individualistic space – in doing so, the bachelor pad actively divided masculinity into the seductive room, the gadget filled kitchen and the active zones originally intended to indicate an autonomous and authentic masculinity. As Steven Cohan suggests in *Masked Men* (1997) the bachelor's performance of maleness queries the stability of a heterosexual masculinity by rendering "the bachelor's body [as the] mask".[85] Beatriz Colomina also asserts the plethora of

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[83]Joel Foreman, *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p.229

[84]Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.266

[85] Ibid. p.303

ambiguities created by the bachelor pad, where a reformulation of interior space, a privatisation, created "a new anti domestic and yet interior regime, or even a form of non domestic interiority… [these interior] and domestic spaces as naturally suited to women [were now] promoted [as] the masculine occupation of interior space".[86] Whilst the interior strove for undomesticated manliness, the prescriptive interior designs used in *Playboy* and *Esquire* to promote heterosexual lifestyles deployed various aesthetic codes which merely served to stress consumption, commodities and elegance in creating heterosexual integrity – an identity which appears to be more closely aligned with undermining the iconography of traditional masculinity. Hence, even a site whose very definition is based upon a transgressive form of identity cannot escape the inscriptive markings of spatial objects onto subjectivity and hence, once again, we return to the underscoring of an escape from bounded space altogether, the creation of non space, transient, fluid spaces may open up gender to the possibility of "real" becoming.

NEW YORK CITY AND INVISIBILITY

As these examples illustrate, male bodies and spaces are inextricably linked and produce either performative and inauthentic bodies or transgressive and unterritorialised selves which react with and against their surroundings. This thesis examines bodies under these terms, attempting to highlight the marginal or conformist nature of Cold War identity as read through city, suburban and pastoral spaces and through an examination of the works of Ellison, Selby Jr, Wilson, Yates and O'Connor, bridges existing Cold War studies with feminist corporeality to permit a nostalgic reading of the era from a new perspective.

City bodies also fall into one such category, creating bounded and territorialised subjectivity; only these selves are inscribed by a specific form of urbanity, distinct from suburban or object inscription. In urban theory, cities are densely populated, technologically advancing structures, which remain separate from the fixed spatiality of the car or home. These spaces allow for a self to be shored up in a manner that holds the possibility of reinvention and reinscription by a continually changing and transforming set of significations. Returning to the analysis of the bachelor pad as cultural icon of masculinity, the playboy apartment was normally situated within urban and metropolitan areas so as to mark the differentiation from domesticated and individualistic maleness. Indeed, in the 1956

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[86] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), pp.219 & 221.

film *Pillow Talk*, Rock Hudson's character epitomises the life of the bachelor, replete with allusions to promiscuous sexuality, technology-centred living arrangements and performative interior design. Hudson's character, despite fitting an archetypal depiction of normative social structures, raises questions about the visibility of gendered and sexual identities through a series of framed and passing discourses. The film repeatedly insists upon the disruption of categorical distinctions (stability of identity, socially respectable, masculine visibility) whilst also insisting upon their maintenance mapped into the relationships between interior spaces, identity and performance. In other words, as Foreman notes, "the film's [exploration of] normative social structures (heterosexuality, whiteness, middle classness) … signifies both conformity and challenge to these structures".[87] If Hudson's performance is testament to the repression of subtextual codes, *Pillow Talk* directly challenges representations of homosexuality for:

> all identities are at risk in motion because they depend on one another for their definitions…his nervousness over marriage – which as he understands it, is a way of being feminised or homosexualised – is an accepted sign of his masculinity, but he must, paradoxically, be married in order to be correctly heterosexual.[88]

What is challenging about the film's depiction of the bachelor lifestyle is the possibility for seemingly framed and contained bodies to pass as something they are not, an affirmation of the performance of acceptable gender, and by extension, the possibility for marginalised, "closeted" identities to exist within urban areas.

Cities, it seems, are capable of closeting homosexual and ethnic selves through a guise of normative performativity. New York City in particular seems emblematic of the inauthentic in American culture. Consider the associated images of Fifth Avenue – materialism, consumerism, façade, and aesthetics - a street elevated to signifying social mobility, class and money. Indeed, even the use of space within bachelor pads suggests something of a division of the self; as Cohan writes:

> the ideal playboy pad does end up dividing space… by reflecting how the bachelor's masculinity is itself divided… the Playboy's carefree bachelor existence into spatial recognition of his divided subjectivity queries the singularity, stability and authenticity of the Playboy's heterosexual masculinity.[89]

It would appear that city spaces are capable of dividing selves. Rather than striving between domesticated masculinity and individualistic corporatism, cities demand a

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[87] Joel Foreman, *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p.226

[88] Ibid. pp.242-243

[89] Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp.273 & 287

conflict between closeted sexuality and a mask of conformity as seen in the next chapter with the tension between visible race and sexuality and invisible selfhood. The city is a space where Kerouac is returned to after his road trips, where Capote's protagonist resides and where Ellison's Invisible Man is relegated to his underground hole. It is a space of varied function, and changeable atmosphere shifting between one's end and beginning; and a home and a prison. But what emerges from the next chapter is the manner in which New York City can both entrap bodies and set them free, fixing them to the sidewalk whilst offering glimpses of fractured plains where they can transgress into selfhood. As perhaps most powerfully conveyed by Ellison's *Invisible Man,* the city emerges from my analysis as both creator and eradicator of individualism.

CHAPTER ONE: NEW YORK SPACES AND MARGINAL BODIES

New York City embodies a plethora of subjectivities, which both reject and embrace universally "American" identities. It is a city defined in the twentieth century by associated meaning - Fifth Avenue alludes to wealth; Wall Street to capitalism; Times Square to diversity; Harlem to racial difference. Unlike the homogeneous spaces of postwar suburbia, Cold War New York's urban space failed to exclude ethnic, sexually marginalized, and other socially transgressive groups - Manhattan's metropolis embraced diversity. It is from within these spaces that the importance of bodily visibility is communicated as a crucial factor is determining identity in postwar urban areas and where Grosz's theories of reflection and the mutually inscriptive flow between surfaces is most evident. This chapter will aim to reveal a city space capable of remoulding the body.

Postwar New York City was a global power and the centre for international diplomacy with the United Nations headquarters taking up residence in 1947. During the 1920s, the city became the most populous urban area, overtaking London and eventually surpassing Paris as the culture capital. Between the 1930s and 1950s, the city emerged as a financial capital as well, with Wall Street dominating the world's economic systems, and despite the extent of the damage inflicted by the Second World War, it appeared relatively unscathed with a building boom in midtown and the implementation of public housing projects in the East Village. As a Cold War city, New York was a metropolitan space that offered hope, prosperity and newness as illustrated by the centrality of Times Square in the works of the Beats, where Kerouac, Burroughs, Ginsberg and Holmes cite the area known as "the crossroads of the world" as a place to both lose and eventually find oneself, recognising this urban space as an area of masculine transgression.

As a geographical space, the city is "expressive of lives pressed upon and entangled within the city's threefold materiality that extends up, sideways and deep down"[1] and this fracturing of horizontal boundaries encourages the possibility of breaking bounded subjectivity within such spaces. As Martha Banta states, it is this unique use of the lived urban space that encourages a particular:

> Manhattan street narrative (maleness, anonymity, statistics, surrealism, interpretive ambiguity)... [where] the underground becomes the new utopia, a way out and down from the contested spaces of harbor views and street scenes that betray the original hope.[2]

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[1] Martha Banta, "The Three New York's: Topographical Narratives and Cultural Texts". *American Literary History,* 1995, 28-54, p.29

[2] Ibid. p.46

Indeed, the original and heterogenous narratives to emerge from New York find their transgressive qualities in the limitless spaces of possibility embodied by the city itself. New York is not only emblematic of capitalism, consumerism and wealth, but also subterranean, invisible and marginal voices, echoing through the streets from above, below and across the Manhattan grid. Arguably, however, it is the streets themselves which speak the city's character most audibly, as Jane Jacobs wrote:

> A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction. It means something only in conjunction with the buildings and other uses that border it, or border other sidewalks very near it. The same might be said of streets... streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of the city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull... if a city's streets are safe from barbarism and fear, the city is thereby tolerably safe.[3]

City culture is therefore, almost entirely defined by the appearance of street life; the bodies on sidewalks acting as indicators of the urban spaces' interiority, mirroring cultural, architectural and technological aesthetics of metropolitan areas. Furthermore, as Thomas Bender asserts, the effect of reading a city's character through its street life reignites the Butlerian ideas of performance and masquerade, since the emphasis in urban culture is on "the visual, the glance, the on rush of impression, surprise. All of this suggests that metropolitan life and culture is defined in the street, in public places, in theaters".[4] By emphasizing the importance of "the visual" in urban culture, Bender's ideas touch upon the Deleuzian notions of "becoming" used in this thesis and, therefore, New York could also embody a quality of perpetual "newness". There is a sense of reinvention, rejuvenation and and a reterritorialisation in New York spaces, a place where "its very essence is to be continually in the making, to never be completely resolved.. New York's character is to be unfinished".[5] Arguably, it is this sense of incompleteness which allows subjectivities to refract and realign into new, transgressive forms from within the urban space, despite the parameters of conformity in the 1950s. As William Taylor writes:

> as the urbanites watched skyscrapers surpass skyscraper, as they observed canyons along their principal streets deepening and the outer contours of the

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[3] Jane Jacobs,*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. (New York: The Modern Library,1961), p. 37

[4] Thomas Bender, *The Unfinished City: New York and the Metropolitan Idea.* (New York: The New Press, 2002), p.68

[5] Ibid. p. xi

> city changing form, they were virtually forced to perceive themselves as part of an environment of restless and progressive change.[6]

If bodies are reflectors of spaces, and New York is forever coming into being, then so too are individual selfhoods - mutating and crossing boundaries with every revanchist remaking of a New York area or newly erected skyscraper.

Cities are characteristically different to suburban or pastoral spaces by way of a nighttime subculture, vertiginous architecture and high density housing. Yet, perhaps the most striking aspect of city life is the increased density of bodies, and with it, the increased diversity of types of bodies, thus "the greater density would accentuate the effects of anonymity... Greater density produces greater tolerance of strangers... Heterogeneity also creates tolerance because there are so many different people interacting".[7] Indeed, typically characteristic of city spaces is the increased density and diversity of urban individuals. But, more than simply producing a heterogeneous population and a greater tolerance, New York is increasingly subdivided between streets and localized areas appear as distinct from other communities; ghettos (created between 1914 and 1950 during the Great Migration), middle class sanctuaries (in midtown Manhattan) and a commercial core (Wall Street) break the public life into private (public) areas of the city. Located at the heart of the city are "the bright lights or 'uptown' [which] correlate to the commercial 'downtown',.. a red light district and various ethnic ghettos".[8] What emerges from New York's urban spaces is both an area of newness, a possible remolding of the self at every street corner, and also a labyrinth where selfhood can be lost - a landscape which attempts to visualize interiority in physical form - an "urban shapelessness.. a form of disorder expressing anxiety and loss of coherence, the symbolizing [of] the anonymous randomness of contemporary life".[9]

Arguably at the core of urban living is the effect consumerism bears on urbanized bodies. New York's austere and distinct skyline is recognizable precisely because of its investment in capitalism and consumerism. If the streets of Manhattan are its vital organs, then the appearance of bodies - their clothing, their conformity, their embodiment of a particularly "New Yorker" lifestyle - is key to

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[6] William Taylor, *In Pursuit of Gotham: Culture and Commerce in New York.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.31

[7] Mark Gottdiener & Leslie Budd, *Key Concepts in Urban Studies.* (London: Sage, 2005), p.7

[8] Peter Cooke, "Modern Urban Theory in Question", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.* Vol 15, No. 3, 1990, pp. 331-343, p.332

[9] Burton Pike, *The Image of the City in Modern Literature.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.129

understanding the urban space. Banta argues for the masculinizing of New York culture through its streets, wherein the central consciousness "responds to Manhattan, defines its needs according to male fantasies... the streets release phantasmagorical male fears and desires".[10] Typically, male spaces are defined as public and commercial and, as previously encountered, postwar America was increasingly consuming goods in order to fashion a particular lifestyle - in particular, as Martha Banta argues, men were adopting a potentially feminine attitude to the importance of visual appearance. Banta's argument is therefore, pertinent to the ideas I will develop in this chapter; dealing with projections of male bodies, both transgressive and conformist in Cold War cityscapes where the dominating commerciality of urban areas encourages the glorification of consumption as expressive and equal to the self. The increased reliance upon objects as rooters and indicators of a particular (performative) subjectivity is most powerfully exemplified by Times Square, an area described more recently as a place where:

> all sense of perspective and realistic depth is washed away by a nocturnal sea of electric advertising. Far and near, small... and large... soaring aloft and dying away, racing and circling, bursting and vanishing - these lights tend to abolish all sense of real space, finally melting into a single plane of coloured light points and neon lines moving over a surface of black velvet sky.[11]

Times Square, the heart of New York's investment in technological advancement and communication - an area notably used by the Beats as an anchoring of selfhood, an area they know as "home", where a version of oneself is deserted for the road and another returns - embodies the importance of appearance. Advertising "washes away" perspective, and "real space" melts into the sky. Here, by a New York landmark, your known selfhood can become lost - a place where your cultural life is most evidently "inextricably interwoven with the physical objects and spatial relationships that constitute the city".[12] Consumerism, and the relationship between bodies and objects in city spaces, function as a show - a performative subjectivity reflecting city culture where consumers 'read' and showcase New York through and on themselves.

This emphasis on consumerism, and the fashioning of bodies through objects, leads us to the importance of urban visibility in New York, "a place where one's urban identity is either rediscovered or lost to invisibility".[13] If city spaces

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[10] Martha Banta, The Three New York's: Topographical Narratives and Cultural Texts. *American Literary History, 1*995, 28 - 54, p.43

[11] William Mitchell, *Placing Words: Symbols, Space and the City.* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), p.87

[12] Ibid. p. 11

[13] Martha Banta, The Three New York's: Topographical Narratives and Cultural Texts. *American Literary History,* 1995, 28 - 54, p.30

allow for the redefinition of subjectivities, the remolding of a self-fashioned identity, then visibility is key to the success of such a performance, and in an area characterized by density and street culture, a strong visual performative presence is synonymous with "becoming" a recognisable self. Equally so, the density and anonymity of city life encourages the possibility of invisibility, the loss of selfhood in amongst the bustling street life. New York's skyline for instance objectifies the city, it is the act of looking from the outside in. Therefore, the act of looking at the city's skyline reduces New York to an artifact, a theatrical facade, visual agora. If the city itself is a recognizable visual entity, characterized by its streets, and the streets in turn are characterized by bodies, then the visibility of bodies is the link between cities and urban subjectivity - they are the mirror of the city, reflecting urbanity. Subjectivity is intimately bound to a city's identity, as Victoria Di Palma notes:

> the modern city... is considered through the way it shapes and is shaped by, ideas of the self... the intimate metropolis is thus a place in which boundaries between public and private, individual and multitude have been blurred... imaging the city as an organism, as an entity in flux, capable of variation, growth and decline, rather than an assembly of fixed parts as a collective made up of subjects whose actions, needs and proclivities change constantly.[14]

Indeed, it is not only bodies who mirror the city, but rather cities mirror subjectivities, reshaping and rebuilding their infrastructure to cater for the needs of the population. Hence, in New York, the differentially characterized areas, such as those defined by commercialization and ghettoization reflect the bodies who inhabit these areas. In turn, the commercial bodies are reified and the ghettoed bodies are marginalised. Perhaps what is most pertinent in this evaluation of urban individuals is the suggestion of blurred public and private spaces, and with that, the implication of a blurred public and private subjectivity, where the city's:

> most public of places encourage the revelation of our most private selves... the private self is both protected from the public's gaze, and projected theatrically; the metropolis furnished anonymity, but that very anonymity is what allows an individual's interiority to be revealed... public and private are thus posited as inseparable categories; and the city as a milieu in which each produces and sustains the other...[15]

Crucial to my understanding of the city is the trope of visibility, and with it, the possibility of invisibility, a desire for visibility and a blurring of the two distinctions, for it is through the act of gazing that the "self, the interior, and the city, interpenetrate".[16]

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[14] Vittoria Di Palma & Diana Periton, & Marina Lathouri, *Intimate Metropolis: Urban Subjects in the Modern City.* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p.2

[15] Ibid. p. 3

[16] Ibid. p. 3

Visibility is also pertinent to our understanding of the ways in which the city allows for the possibility of "becoming"; a breaking of bounded subjectivity into transgressive and potentially authentic selfhood. Christopher Linder explores the use of the Manhattan grid in the manifestation of individuality, citing the:

> exterior order of the Manhattan Grid [as] imposing a series of linear definitions by means of surfaces and envelopes, setting free endless interior possibilities within a rule imposed from the outside.... the Grid imposes an outer order that is both replicated and transgressed in Manhattan's interiors.[17]

Linder continues to argue for the three dimensional topography as an attempt to escape the rules of New York's imposed grid system, and through this escape conducted from within the boundaries of the city, it grows by a process of "self destruction and remaking".[18] Linder's argument highlights the possibility of individuality originating from within the city; an escape found beyond the streets but yet within them, where individuality is expressed and visible. Furthermore, returning to Jane Jacob's idea of the city streets as vital organs, the anatomical attributes of city life enforce the idea of its shifting state, the fluidity of its being, forever coming into being. Increasingly, city narratives trace the search for subjectivity from within the streets of New York, hoping to find themselves in the urban wilderness, and most strikingly, characters such as Capote's Holly, Ellison's Invisible Man and Salinger's Holden, rarely imagine a life beyond urban terms - when salvation cannot be found on the streets, surreal and hallucinatory versions of the New York landscape offer a symbolic escape. As Richard Sennett writes, "speed, escape, [and] passivity"[19] characterize urban experience, where destruction and growth occur simultaneously, punctuating the boundaries of the subjectivities inhabiting its interior, and remolding bodies from within its centre.

Elizabeth Grosz, in her seminal work *Space, Time and Perversion* (1995) theorizes how bodies are marked by their urban surroundings, resulting in bodies who are specifically and recognizably "urbanized". She premises her argument on the previously explored idea of bodies as objects who can reflect and be inscribed by spaces so that the body becomes an object of "reflection, intervention, training or remaking".[20] For Grosz, the malleable status of the body means that it becomes

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[17] Christoph Linder, *Urban Space and Cityscapes; Perspectives from Modern and Contemporary Culture.* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.175 & 153

[18] Ibid. p.160

[19] Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization.* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), p.366

[20] Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.12

the tool by which a subject locates itself, and is thereby also informed by the objects within such spatial rootings, for, as she states:

> for the subject to take up a position as a subject, he must be able to situate himself as a being located in the space occupied by his body. Thus anchoring of subjectivity in its body is the condition of coherent identity and moreover, the condition under which the subject has perspective on the world [the body] becomes the point from which vision emanates.[21]

Furthermore, if subjects are directly informed by the spaces they inhabit, gaining "vision" from their position within such a perceptual sphere, then it is possible for bodies to mirror these surroundings; in this way, "the space represented is a component of the kind of subject who occupies it".[22] Hence, New York City and the bodies who occupy the city are inescapably interwoven with the representation of the others' identity, for if it is "our positioning within space... that gives the subject a coherent identity and an ability to manipulate things, including its own body part"[23] then it stands to reason that the city provides "the organization that automatically links otherwise unrelated bodies; it is the condition and milieu in which corporeality is socially, sexually and discursively produced".[24] If the city parallels the body and the body mirrors urbanity, then in a city as diverse and culturally saturated as New York, the body becomes amenable and fluid, shifting appearance and its visibility in order to reflect the "takeover and transformation by images, representational systems, the mass media, and the arts - the place where the body is representationally reexplored, transformed, contested, reinscribed".[25] A paradoxical tension between grids and fluidity, epitomising the potential for these bodily frames to fracture and fold.

Equally, cities reflect the desires of the bodies inhabiting them, and the constant shifts in the architectural aesthetics of the cityscape reflect and project a shifting and mutating demographic - embodying through physical representation a city body's pliability and objectification - for here urban frames convey "the outside [as] the transmutability of the inside".[26] Grosz's examination of architectural frames continues into *Chaos, Territory, Art* (2008), where her exploration of Deleuzian theory is applied to the construction of territories where "becoming" is made possible - "without territory, there may be objects or things but not qualities that can

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[21] Ibid. p.89

[22] Ibid. p.90

[23] Ibid. p.92

[24] Ibid. p.104

[25] Ibid. p.108

[26] Ibid. p.132

become expressive, that can intensify and transform living bodies".[27] Continuing in her argument for city spaces and the spatial creation of metropolitan bodies, here Grosz asserts the potency of frames as walls around which sensations either emerge from within, or are excluded. In this sense, it is possible to think of the city itself as an architectural frame for the bodies within it, where urban "framing is the raw condition under which sensations are created, metabolised, realized into the world, made to live life on their own, to infect and transform other sensations".[28] Whilst framing suggests the creation of a territory within which one is contained, it also suggests a division of spaces where new sensations may emerge, for "the wall also provides new connections, new relations, social and interpersonal relations with those on its other side".[29] Indeed, by framing subjectivities. And, in this instance, distinctly citified bodies, space can also allow for transgression - a possibility for a fracturing of the frame of the New Yorker's cultural signifiers, where objects might be delimited. As Grosz writes, territory creates "both an inside [and] an outside, a passage from the one other, and a space that is annexed, outside, contestory, a resource, a cohesion inside, a domain outside, doorways from one to the other".[30] It is this process of framing city bodies that actively allows the representational fluidity in metropolitan selves, for New York's visible identity itself is constantly shifting between local, bounded and territorialised communities, breaking frames on every block where bodily qualities can be unleashed and made possible.

In Steve Pile's *The Body and the City* (1996) he extends the theory of bodily mutation by arguing for the duplicity of bodies in metropolitan spaces, where:

> the individual is... multiplied, dynamic, participating and determined... the site of constantly changing mutations of difference, at once stable and dislocated, at once fixed and changing. The subject is never in one place.[31]

Pile's argument compounds Grosz's theses by exploding the ideas relating to bodily appearance and the subject's (and/or object's) visibility in city areas. By accepting Grosz's notion of bodies as manifestations of cultural and aesthetic urban signifiers Pile's argument, which emphasizes the importance of a bodily, pedestrian fluidity manages to underscore the relevance of cities as sites of performance. As he writes, the importance placed on the image of individuals, and

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[27] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth.* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008), p.11

[28] Ibid. p.18

[29] Ibid, p.14

[30] Ibid. p.47

[31] Steve Pile, *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space and Subjectivity.* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p.74

therefore, when this importance is placed on an area of high density where images of bodies are experienced as fragmented, the subject "learns to read their selves off from the reflections they see in the hall of mirrors in which they are placed, producing identities which are best understood as (their) masquerade"[32]. It seems city spaces encourage a performance of subjectivity rather than a communication of the inside, for in such metropolitan spaces where visibility is key to interpersonal relationships, bodily mobility and social and cultural conformity, the infrequency and fragmented nature of one's bodily experience in a city comprised of dense yet divergent bodies, means that performance is akin to individuality. Indeed, for Grosz, bodies wear city identities through and on themselves, and in this sense, they are a mapped site - objects to be read - "bodies are spaces where multiple, interrelated meanings can be mapped... the body reflects society and society reflects on the body; each is mirrored in the other".[33] Here we see Grosz's notion of bodily agents - where bodies are reactive sites within spaces - manifest most acutely, as bodies can now not only occupy and "become" a space, but they also make space, permitting a "reading" of the body like a city street map. Visibility is therefore an essential and fundamental trope in the understanding of both conformist and marginalized city bodies. These bodies are the effects of city signifiers, contained within a field of visibility where the "self" is continually remade through the identifications and the gaze of the spectator.

BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S AND HOLLY'S "TRAVELLING"

A clear illustration of a fluid and visibly metropolitan body can be found in Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958). Here, the protagonist, Holly Golightly, moulds her appearance into a particular type of New Yorker, rejecting her true identity as a Texan child-bride in order to be recognised as a more superior Manhattan socialite. As her name suggests, Holly is a character who is defined as unstable and in constant flux, changing her name from "Holly" to "Holiday" and finally to "Millie Tendresses" at the end of the novel. Her unstable persona is highlighted further by the card on her mailbox reading "Miss Holiday Golightly... Travelling"[34] and underscored later in the text when she explains "After all, how do I know where I'll be living tomorrow? So I told them to put Travelling... I felt I owed it to them to buy some little something. They're from Tiffany's".[35] Indeed, Holly's character is constantly "travelling", shifting her presentation of a coherent

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[32] Ibid. p.168-169

[33] Ibid. p.185

[34] Truman Capote, *Breakfast at Tiffany's.* (USA: Random House, 1958), p.16

[35] Ibid. pp.42-43

subjectivity between the spaces of pastoral America (as Lulamae Barnes) to the self-fashioned ideal of Holly, the New York socialite. This refusal to be named, and therefore provided with a permanent identity, actively enforces her desire for a fluid subjectivity, allowing her to remake, remould and reterritorialise her bodily representation of a single female in the city. Her persistent idealization of Tiffany's, likening it to "being rich and famous" but still being a place where she can be "me when I wake up one fine morning and have breakfast at Tiffany's"[36] highlights Holly's fantastical persona, avoiding a stable subjectivity through unattainable ideals, and thereby firmly asserting the importance of appearance rather than substance as equal to authentic identity. The employment of Tiffany's also works to create a distinctively "New York" character, linking her to New York sights and a shaping of the body which relies upon fine things, entertainment and capitalist markings in order to root it within the city space. Holly's apartment, for instance, is described as "though it were being just moved into"[37] where "suitcases and unpacked crates were the only furniture"[38] and her bedroom had a "camping-out atmosphere",[39] evidently pointing to her shifting character, one which is refused permanence by denying herself a home. Instead, Tiffany's emerges from the text in an ironic fashion, as a symbol for home, and a sense of belonging she can never acquire: "I don't want to own anything until I know I've found the place where me and things belong together. I'm not quite sure where that is just yet. But I know what it's like... It's like Tiffany's".[40] Holly's inability to find stability is the result of her adoption of a citified body, and her literal embodiment of the New York culture in which she lives directly informs her quest for ideals through consumer and capitalist tastes. Holly is, herself, a product of New York - "I love New York, even though it isn't mine... that belongs to me because I belong to it".[41]

Holly's character is increasingly undermined in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* through the insistence on her inauthenticity. During the party towards the beginning of the text O. J Berman informs the narrator, "she is a phony.. she's a real phony. She believes all this crap she believes"[42] and later on explains "she's such a

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[36] Ibid. p.39

[37] Ibid. p.31

[38] Ibid. p.31

[39] Ibid. p.51

[40] Ibid. p.40

[41] Ibid. p.78

[42] Ibid. p.32

goddam liar... we modelled her along the Margaret Sullavan type".[43] As the plot reveals, Holly is indeed a "phony", yet so much of her assumed persona is informed by New York that her phoniness is nothing more than a fashioning of the body in keeping with the cultural signifiers surrounding her. Her body is rigorously created through the use of objects and props in order to create the effect of a coherent identity as "Holly" - emerging from "such wreckage... [with] the eventual effect: pampered, calmly immaculate".[44] Her use of "a pair of dark sunglasses" and a "slim cool black dress, black sandals, [and] a pearl choker"[45] create the illusion of the Manhattan socialite she aims to embody, and the fact that "she was never without dark glasses, she was always well groomed... [and] one might have thought her a photographer's model"[46] mean that her citified body is granted identity entirely through visibility. Her body becomes a deliberate artifice, with a distinctive and recognisable identity, fashioning herself into an artificial object of her own creation, much like the branding of Tiffany's as exclusive, precious and with emphasis on aesthetic value. Indeed, as the narrator discovers by observing her "trash-basket", "she smoked an esoteric cigarette called Picayunes; survived on cottage cheese and melba toast [and] her vari-coloured hair was somewhat self-induced".[47] Holly's artificial characterisation is further linked to the city space through entertainment, regularly reading "tabloids"[48] and her confusion over *Wuthering Heights* remarking "My wild sweet Cathy. God, I cried buckets. I saw it ten times.' I said 'Oh' with recognizable relief 'oh' with a shameful, rising inflection, 'the movie'".[49] Holly's failure to consider literature over film is yet another symptom of her city-inscribed nature, where visual stimulation, with its immediacy and speed, informs her version of the commodified New Yorker. Furthermore, Holly's embodiment of New York's entertainment culture is reflected in her reliance upon commodities, such as her visible props - the dark sunglasses, pearls and makeup - as well as the text's constant employment of blurred boundaries between real and artificial, and the projection of capitalist aspiration and worship. And whilst Holly herself is an ideal consumer, desiring objects in order to maintain her performance, she herself is bought and sold as consumer product - as the "carving of the girl's

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[43] Ibid. p.34

[44] Ibid. p.52

[45] Ibid. p.17

[46] Ibid. p.19

[47] Ibid. p.20

[48] Ibid. p.20

[49] Ibid. p.59

head"[50] in Africa, and her questionable relationships with gentlemen callers; "he's an opportunity, believe me".[51] In the same way the New York skyline is distinctive for its appearance, its visibility as capitalist, consumer-driven, and objectified urbanity, so too is Holly Golightly observed as citified, objectified and identified through the presentation of a discernible image. The narrator of Holly's story allows her to be "travelling" by distancing himself through a third person diegetic and in this sense, the narrative perspective is similar to that of the flaneur - observing whilst framing the Fifties city, in distinctly place specific terms with Holly firmly rooted within it.

Bodies are capable of mutating beyond the boundaries dictated by the urban space. As Grosz informs us, spatial inscription is a fluid concept, where bodies who are marked by their surroundings, in turn, shape the city - "the body (as cultural product) transforms, reinscribes the urban landscape according to its changing.. needs, extending the limits of the city".[52] If bodies are signifiers of the city space, then bodies must also be capable of altering the conception and recognition of visible street spaces by transgressive bodily action for:

> the relations between bodies and cities that sees them, not as megalithic total entities, but as assemblages or collections of parts, [are] capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages [and] machines.[55]

Hence the divergent nature of New York bodies is the direct result of visible difference and Othering, where communication of subjectivity extends to visible non-conformity and in turn, transforms that small part of New York street culture. In Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1964), the concept of inscriptive fluidity is highlighted, where:

> the outside and inside are both intimate - they are always ready to be reversed... on the surface of being, in that region where being wants to be both visible and hidden, the movements of opening and closing are so numerous, so frequently inverted... that we could conclude... man is half open being.[56]

In this sense, Bachelard reiterates the Deleuzian notion of "becoming", where subjectivity is not yet realised, always seeking to "be" rather than to do. Under these terms, if the subject (as object) is always visible and always being informed and informing the spaces around the body, then street bodies are an eternal masquerade. It is with this idea of visibility and performance that I wish to examine

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[50] Ibid. p.13

[51] Ibid. p.39

[52] Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion. Essays on the Politics of Bodies.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.109

[55] Ibid. p.108

[56] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 218-222

New York bodies, for the ceaseless repetition of corporeal performances opens the possibility for a fractured boundary and a deterritorialised visual definition - as Bachelard writes, “entrapped in being, we shall always have to come out of it”.[57]

If there exists an essential and implicit relationship between bodies and spaces, then it must be possible for bodies to inscribe architecture, where city structures actively reflect the bodies within and around them. As Grosz writes, “the body’s infinite pliability is a measure of the infinite plasticity of the spatiotemporal universe in which it is housed and through which bodies become real, are lived and have effects”.[58] Hence, as we have already explored, the fluidity of bodies translates in the built environment to a “plasticity” of space, where the mutual flow of inscription creates bodies with “effects”, and therefore this relationship between structure and subjectivity is one of “intrication, specification, interpolation, and inscription that produce identities for both cities in their particularity and population in their heterogeneity”.[59] Bodies are the unspoken condition of architecture, and hence in cities, and particularly in New York, where architectural structures are key to the definition of the city space and those inhabiting it, the built environment is as much a reflection of corporeal alignments as they are reflections of it:

> cities have always represented and projected images and fantasies of bodies... in this sense, the city can be seen as a (collective) body prosthesis or boundary that enframes, protects and houses while at the same time taking its own forms and functions from the (imaginary) bodies it constitutes.[60]

Holly’s persona might not be so much informed by Tiffany’s, but perhaps she inflects some aspect of her social aspirations onto the image of Tiffany’s itself, branding it as “ideal” by her investment in the fantasy it projects. Exteriors shape individual perceptions of interiors. As Beatriz Colomina writes, exterior appearance is the agent of recognition, so bodies are “the realm of exchange, money and masks... the unified self”[61] in much the same way as buildings are judged, recognised, monied, and ‘unified’ through their facade. It is therefore helpful to consider bodies and city structures as projections as well as products of each other, for:

> the city is made and made over into the simulacrum of the body and the body in its turn is transformed, ‘citified’, urbanised as a distinctively metropolitan body...

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[57] Ibid. p.213

[58] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside; Essays on Virtual and Real Space.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), p.33

[59] Ibid. p.49

[60] Ibid. p.49

[61] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p.94

> the body...does not have an existence separate from the city, for they are mutually defining.. the form, structure, and norms of the city seep into and effect all the other elements that go into the constitution of corporeality and/as subjectivity.[62]

As this quotation underscores, bodies and buildings in urban spaces are interconnected, where bodies are capable of actively inscribing architecture, where subjectivity is mapped onto the city skyline itself, and hence is highly visible - a form of corporeality that frames and organises metropolitan spaces. In this sense, it is through a built environment that selfhood can be found.

MASCULINITY AND CITY ARCHITECTURE

In Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* (1943), the inscription of selfhood onto Manhattan architecture is explored through the two central, yet paradoxical characters, Howard Roark and Peter Keating, whose mutual vocation, as architects, maps their selves onto the streets of New York. By basing her novel in the world of Manhattan architects Rand's text deals most obviously with an exploration of masculinity, for "one of the vital functions of architectural representations... is to operate as transcendent projections of desire, and that masculine desire... has thrilled to dominate".[63] Indeed, the text's investment in the image of the skyscraper is testament to its tribute to ultimate masculine power, virility and the mastery of the urban realm as embodied by the hero, Roark:

> He looked at the granite. To be cut, he thought, and made into walls. He looked at a tree. To be split and made into rafters. He looked at a streak of rust on the stone and thought of iron ore under the ground. To be melted and to emerge as girders against the sky. These rocks, he thought, are here for me; waiting for the drill, the dynamite and my voice; waiting to be split, ripped, pounded, reborn; waiting for the shape my hands will give them.[64]

It is Roark's mastery of the space surrounding him - reorganising it to form new structures and objects under his autonomy - that symbolizes the equation of male heterosexuality and freedom, where the "melding of body and machine communicates masculine power and virility... embodied in the phallic skyscraper".[65] Rand's hero is the embodiment, not only of the urban realm through his virile masculinity, but he also symbolizes her philosophy of "Objectivism" - the belief in selfishness as a virtue. Roark is an independent thinker, he "saw no one. For him,

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[62] Ibid. p.242 & 248

[63] Ibid. p.185-186

[64] Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead.* (USA: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), p.4

[65] Merrill Schleier, "Ayn Rand and King Victor's Film "The Fountainhead"; Architectural Modernism, the Gendered Body and Political Ideology"; *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians.* Vol. 61, No. 3, (Sep 2002), pp. 310-331, p.315

the streets were empty. He could have walked there naked without concern"[66] and his belief in his own steadfast identity and values is what actively allows him to create unique, ingenious structures which mirror his own morals - that of individuality. His architectural designs are "sprung from the earth and from some living force, complete, unalterably right... No laws had dictated a single detail. The buildings were not Classical, they were not Gothic, they were not Renaissance. They were only Howard Roark".[67] Despite the fact that Roark's buildings reject traditional designs, and consequently carve a treacherous and difficult path for him to traverse in order to succeed, Rand's text warns us of the dangers of "copying", and instead urges for a truthful selfhood:

> Now here we are, making copies in steel and concrete of copies in plaster of copies in marble of copies in wood. Why?... A building is alive, like a man. Its integrity is to follow its own truth, its one single theme, and to serve its own purpose. A man doesn't borrow pieces of his body. A building doesn't borrow hunks of its soul.[68]

By rejecting social conformity, Roark is able to shape and mould New York around his selfhood, whose independence can produce truthful relationships between ideas and reality to be communicated by way of new creation, achieving values and producing a vision of New York in keeping with his subjectivity:

> An architect uses steel, glass, concrete produced by others. But the materials remain just so much steel, glass and concrete until he touches them. What he does with them is his individual product and his individual property. This is the only pattern for proper co-operation among men.[69]

Peter Keating, on the other hand, the text's anti-hero, is what Rand calls a "second-hander" - an individual who has given up their selfhood, and laid himself bare to the domination of others beliefs. Primarily, Keating is pushed into a career as an architect by his mother, denying his talent in art, and instead channelling his creative abilities into a more socially appealing vocation; "You just watch my Petey from now on. I'm not one to want my boy to kill himself with work and I'll thank the Lord for any small success that comes his way. But if that boy isn't the greatest architect of this USA, his mother will want to know the reason why!".[70] Keating's mother is the first of many characters in the text to exert some influence on Peter's selflessness, and she is the instigator of his later formalised principe of always being what others want you to be - "Mrs Keating had decided, [Peter] would assume his rightful place in the world, and she had clung to this as softly, as

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[66] Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead.* (USA: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), p.5

[67] Ibid. p.7

[68] Ibid. p.12

[69] Ibid. p.714

[70] Ibid. p.6

inexorably as a leech... she had pushed him into his career".[71] Notably, at this stage in the text, Mrs Keating's belief in architecture's "respectfulness" translates into Peter's own thoughts in the next paragraph, only devoid of the link to his mother's values, "Architects, he thought, always made brilliant careers. And once on top, did they ever fail?".[72] Despite Mrs Keating's incessant steering of her son's future, Peter is represented as embodying his own belief in the importance of appearance, and, in this sense, the appropriate appearance of what others want you to be; for even at Stanton, Peter is described as possessing "a certain classical perfection" who holds his head "in the manner of one who takes his beauty for granted, but knows that others do not".[73] Peter's heightened perception of other people's opinions, and his desire to fulfill such judgements frame his ascension and his decline in the field of architecture, as well as his failed marriages because ultimately, unlike Roark, he lacks his own beliefs; "I'm never sure of myself. I don't know whether I'm as good as they all tell me I am".[74] In the same way Roark's adherence to his values aids his success, Peter's lack of self means he is unable to create architecture of any value, taking inspiration from classical designs which had been "done for him" he then "stood looking at [his designs] uncertainly. Were he to be told that this was the best or the ugliest house in the world, he would agree with either. He was not sure."[75] Ironically, it is precisely Peter's conformity, his reliance upon other peoples ideas and deigns, and his utter rejection of selfhood that denies and stunts his architectural creativity. Here again, built structures and subjectivity are interlinked, for without bodily identity, or even interior truth, there can be no exterior from which individual subjectivity can emanate and create newness in spaces. It is telling that Peter's reliance upon the expectations of others, and his mindless following and obeying of these convictions, leads him to leech creativity off of Roark:

> Keating stood watching the pencil in Roark's hand. He saw his imposing entrance foyer disappearing, his twisted corridors... he watched for a long time. "You don't need three pilasters where one will do. And take those ducks off the door, it's too much". Keating smiled at him gratefully.[76]

For Keating, it is easier to pass someone else's design as though it were his own, rather than to admit failure, and hence in seeking to conform to image and

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[71] Ibid. p.20

[72] Ibid. p.20

[73] Ibid. p.17

[74] Ibid. p.22

[75] Ibid. p.63

[76] Ibid. p.64

expectation, Keating steals, metaphorically, not only Roark's designs, but also his identity as architect.

Indeed, the use of image and appearance are central to the text, marking moments when Peter's conformity is at its most selfless. This is most convincingly portrayed by his relationship with Catherine and Dominique. Catherine is introduced as being "homely and dull" and Peter is "ashamed of Catherine's thoughtless sloppiness and of the fact that no other boy would look at her twice".[77] Yet, despite Peter's concerns, (she is "too small, too thin"[78]) he had "never been as happy as when he took her to fraternity dances... he wanted her".[79] However, with his desire to become the "image" of the perfect architect, Catherine is an ill-fitting and potentially damaging image which could fracture and even break the illusion of the ideal. As Mrs Keating remarks, "what will they think of a man who's married to a common little piece of baggage like that? Will they admire you? Will they trust you? Will they respect you?".[80] So great is Peter's reliance upon his visible signifiers of "the architect in New York" that he is willing to forgo a truthful marriage in favour of one which more adequately meets his, and therefore others' expectations of the correct image by exchanging Catherine for Dominique: "the memory of Catherine seemed heavy and vulgar in the presence of the thin white hand he saw hanging over the arm of the chair before him".[81] In abdicating his values, Peter is increasingly without a self, where nothing is his own, "He did not seem to be Peter Keating any longer. He did not ask for warmth and he did not ask for pity. He asked nothing."[82] Much like his earlier retort at Stanton, claiming that "windows are less important than the dignity of a building's facade",[83] Peter eventually comes to embody such a belief, focusing attention on glitter without substance, suave urbanity without ingenuity, and fails to see himself or even look from inside, beyond the aesthetic dignity of his own facade.

Visibility is key in understanding city bodies, and Rand's text manages to reverse notions of spatial corporeality. Instead *The Fountainhead* shows that bodies can shape structures with their own subjectivities, so that in effect, frames

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[77] Ibid. p.45

[78] Ibid. p.46

[79] Ibid. p.45

[80] Ibid. p.153

[81] Ibid. p.113

[82] Ibid. p.383

[83] Ibid. p.31

mirror bodily frames. As the analysis of Roark has indicated, his self-knowledge, his understanding and absorption of his inner being as equal to his exterior appearance, is the agent by which he creates built environments, yet Peter's insistence on conformity and his belief in facades means he has no subjectivity from which to mark buildings. Rand's "Objectivism" illustrates the inexorable mixing of city bodies and city spaces, each defining and shaping the other; each experiencing the urban environment. Essentially, cities are spaces to be experienced, and architectural structures are part of this experience, encouraging the drifting of bodies between, through, in and around built frames. Furthermore, *The Fountainhead* illustrates how Manhattan bodies can become surface selves who react to and reflect accordingly with the city's surface. Rand's urban men do not necessarily require an inner self to become exterior, but rather, to amalgamate surface with the self in the hope of being "true" to your space, and place within it. It is explicitly urban architecture which carves up the maps and street spaces of New York, forcing pedestrians onto organised sidewalks, and bounding and territorialising locales, and hence, it is the built environment which fuels bodily experiences through chance encounters, mass culture, communities and makes the Manhattan heterotopia accessible.

WANDERING AND CREATING - MAPPING THE SELF ONTO THE CITY

The flaneur emerges from this idea of bodily experience fueled by the city itself. Without a definite map or plan of his movements, the flaneur embodies the way in which urban spaces mark bodies simply through movement in and around the metropolis, where the self is open to diversion and where city culture can be revealed. For Charles Baudelaire's flaneur, the :

> city of narrow streets, labyrinthine alleys, squares, parks, cafes, windows, thresholds... became stages for dandies, but the anonymous throng could always provide cover... it was a place to immerse oneself, to gather fragmentary impressions from the surrounding multiplicity and flux and eventually to transform these images into text.[84]

Indeed, the importance of the flaneur is his ability to be both part of, and at the same time, distanced from the city as spectacle for "the flaneur's experience of distant vistas is done through the surrogate visions of the exotica of metropolitan life... whose only refuge is withdrawl into the blase mentality of.. anonymity and estrangement".[85] The flaneur's position as casual observer and passive voyeuristic body means he is able to experience aspects of city life which are normally invisible, or at least, overlooked by others. The flaneur gathers glimpses of the

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[84] William Mitchell, *Placing Words: Symbols, Space and the City.* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), p.155

[85] Keith Tester, *The Flaneur.* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.73

heterotopic urban space, and by immersing himself but remaining anonymous, the flaneur's body itself is both visible and invisible within the milieu of the metropolis. The ideology of the flaneur involves the observer-participant dialectic, exemplifying the active participation in and fascination with street life, whilst adopting a critical attitude towards the uniformity of such an urban perspective. As Deborah Parsons writes, "the flaneur by definition [is] someone who is out of place...[characterising] the wandering, subversive and marginal ambiguity of the Baudelarian flaneur".[86] He unlocks city spaces as places for investigation where individuals are transformed and can create new relationships between time and space; for his unique perspective on city life encourages the examination of streets as sites of display and, hence, places where identities are actively "performed", viewed and transgressions seen.

Whilst Baudelaire's flaneur walked the streets of nineteenth century Paris, the ideology is easily transposable to the streets of postwar New York; for here, the diversity and density of urban culture, and the visibility of street culture became as much a part of the identity of New York, as it did for its inhabitants. At a time when Manhattan witnessed the effects of the Great Migration, its accession from Paris as the cultural centre of the world, and the architectural developments of the postwar economic boom, the flaneur's exploration of New York's urban spectacles seems to fit a city space marked by great and swift change to its demographics. As Baudrillard writes in his seminal text *America* (1988), "the American street... is always turbulent, lively, kinetic, and cinematic like the country itself... where change, spurred by technology, racial differences, or the media assumes virulent forms".[87] What emerges from Baudrillard's experience of America in the 1980s is the way in which street culture increasingly assumes the identity of the city, and in doing so, usurps the cultural or historical identity the city originally held - "it is New York's streets and not its museums and galleries that are interesting".[88] Hence, New York as a Cold War space, is not defined by its being, but rather by the visibility of the bodies inhabiting it. Returning to the flaneur, an understanding of New York is therefore fostered through an "experience" of this space, where aesthetics - the viewing of the city's surfaces from the sidewalks - structure and frame city life. As Baudrillard asserts, "culture exists there in a wild state... they have not destroyed space, they have simply rendered it infinite by the destruction

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[86] Dorothy Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the CIty and Modernity.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.35 - 36

[87] Jean Baudrillard, *America*. (New York: Verso, 1988), p.18

[88] Ibid. p.100

of its centre... in doing so, they have opened up a true fictional space".[89] Whilst Baudrillard intends this statement to point to the creation of hyperspace, it could be argued that his assertion of a destructive cultural centre and the creation of a fictional space add to the idea of the flaneur's "mapping" of the city - there emerges an entirely unbounded and fluid version of urban spaces applicable to the Fifties, where there is no centre and no path, only the one made by the body who travels along their own axiom. Furthermore, the infinite nature of city culture means it is constantly open to being remade, reworked and remolded by individual subjectivities, reshaping and reinscribing the city space as they pass through it, along sidewalks of experience and viewpoints.

Whilst the experience of the city is a fundamental element in the flaneur's involvement and participation in the urban scene, it is his viewpoint which transforms spaces into spectacles, and hence through the flaneur, public sights become private experience, absorbing through vision, the city, its inhabitants and qualities as a set of images. In the understanding of postwar American culture considered thus far, surveillance and a public, visible and identifiable identity are key to upholding national identity, allowing for "them" to be clearly marked as separate from "us". Yet, it has been already noted how urban spaces are capable of marking bodies with an identity which was not their own, and equally, how city bodies were able to use visibility as a masquerade. With the flaneur, the body who is both present and absent from the street scene, New York culture was both highly visible and yet, potentially untrue. Further from the conceptualisation of public space as an extension of individual bodily space, and vice versa, emerges an understanding of citified bodies as highly visible, highly aesthetic, and highly performative objects embodying a consumerist and commodified culture which glorifies reification and visible (albeit, artificial) conformity and normalcy. Despite visibility, bodies remain unidentifiable, as vision itself relies upon aesthetic perception, perceiving identity as a set of images which signify an exterior reality of the the body's (and city's) own making. Subjectivity is reduced to visibility.

The flaneur's gaze facilitates a reading of Fifties urban street culture as one premised upon spectatorship, for it is specific engagement in observing and absorbing aspects of city life through the field of vision that highlights, "a photographic mode of seeing... that is, an art of perception in motion, a quasi filmic way of seeing".[90] The flaneur's observation of his surroundings, and the viewing of public bodies and spaces for his own experience of the city, assumes an

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[89] Ibid. p.99

[90] Anke Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flaneurie, Literature and Film in Weimar Culture.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p.41

interconnected relationship between spaces, appearance and identity. In this sense, the flaneur's reading of urban sights, and his absorption of these normally invisible images, allows for an interpretation not only of the individual bodies, but also a reading of the metropolis itself. In De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), his chapter on "Walking in the City" explores this idea of mapping New York through flaneurie, where the walker's actions enable them to read the city, and also write a subjective version of the space simultaneously.[91] De Certeau's flaneur manages to create a metaphorical transformation as they walk by altering the fixed image of the cityscape into a new and dynamic map and/or image, for their route can not be traced, emanating instead from the walker's own discourse and hence displacing the signifiers given to fixed maps and plans.[92] In this sense, the flaneur's experience of the urban landscape allows for a new "story" of city life which interferes with the accepted metropolitan frame - the flaneur's absorption of city culture through the gaze is "an elusive strategy of self-empowerment".[93]

Whilst the flaneur's quest for visual stimulus is traditionally confined to Paris, the high visibility of Manhattan's street culture, and the act of walking as experience, is almost unconsciously explored in Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City* (1952), where the autobiographical text finds both its roots and its transformation into self-knowledge through the streets of Brownsville and later, New York. As Kazin writes, despite being "of the city"[94] where his identity was "hammered into the shape of the streets"[95] his quest for adult individuality eventually leads him away from the "heartbreaking familiarity" of Brownsville.[96] The narrator gradually walks further from the area which signifies his exteriority and familial roots, where "all my early life lies open... within five city blocks"[97] in search of an alternative street space where he can "take in anything new"[98] and where "all words seemed to flow from the length of my stride and the view of the houses".[99] Much like Rand's *The Fountainhead*, where selfhood is akin to creativity, Kazin's protagonist walks into

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[91] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984)

[92] Ibid

[93] Michael Ryan, *Cultural Studies: An Anthology.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p.368

[94] Alfred Kazin, *A Walker in the City.* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1952), p.18

[95] Ibid. p.80

[96] Ibid, p.14

[97] Ibid. p.23

[98] Ibid. p.14

[99] Ibid. p.28

the city in order to find creative inspiration, and hence himself, connecting “myself and the shape and colour of time in the streets of New York”[100]. By making his untraced and unpracticed steps inscriptive, Kazin illustrates the flaneur’s use of free roaming and sight in providing an experience of previously unknown, and therefore invisible street culture. It is by viewing and identifying himself as a walker on the streets of Manhattan that the protagonist finds selfhood, “all the way down that street... the large shadow on the pavement was me, the music in my head was me, the indescribable joy I felt was me.... It was me, me, me”.[101] Hence the streets of New York are where bodies are most visible, and where public gaze is ready to identify, name and territorialise bodily images into signifying categories; yet ideology of the flaneur does manage to displace the terms of visibility and invisibility, as well as the mapped and fixed organisation of city spaces, as the image of the flaneur itself is one based on performance - “the flaneur is a masquerade, which acts out its constitutive ambivalence to others through a play of absences and presences in the sight of others”.[90] Whilst we have addressed the potential for inauthenticity in the visibility of public bodies and their enactment of city life, the gaze of the flaneur complicates this further, for he himself is without a fixed or recognisable subjectivity, and is capable of being both visible and invisible at will. Furthermore, his perception of public sights are still framed by his own cultural and social signifiers and categories so, despite his own physical re-mapping of the city space, he actively participates in the mapping of meaning and identity onto streets, objects and bodies through an identification of visible surface accessories. Yet the notion of flaneurie, that of a bodily experience of the city through the visibility of other citified bodies and the gaze of an individual directed at unknown urban spaces whilst remaining invisible, manages to unlock a reading of postwar New York texts that engages with feminist corporeal theories and views urban metropolitan bodies as searching for visibility and hence, subjectivity.

INVISIBLE MAN AND BLACK VISIBILITY IN ELLISON

New York bodies, read as signifiers of their urban location, clearly rely upon their visibility in order to be recognised as an individual. In the case of Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952), bodily visibility is the crux in the protagonists’ search for an identity other than that granted by his body - in other words, the text deals with race as a boundary of subjectivity which needs to be transgressed or broken in order to view an individual and not a black body as object. As already mentioned in

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[100] Ibid. p.154

[101] Ibid. p.144

[90] Steve Pile, *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space and Subjectivity.* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p.231

the Introduction, American politics and the ideology of the Cold War was one based upon the need to clearly identify bodies through appearance, to be able to recognise “them” from “us” through looking at others. The need for containment during the Red Scare and McCarthyism encouraged the surveillance of bodies, families, individuals and their actions and in doing so stimulated the spread of conformity and an increasing desire for American normalcy. Furthermore, by attempting to homogenize the American people, the political climate of the Cold War managed to actively exclude bodies of a particular type who did not fit the mold of the middle class white suburban family ideal. So transgressive and marginalised bodies - such as homosexuals, immigrants, Communists or Negroes - were excluded from partaking in “normal” American lifestyles. Unlike the lifestyles of the white middle classes, these marginalised individuals were unable to access the suburban dream - both economically and literally - and were instead ghettoised into small urban spaces. What is striking about the post-war exclusion of certain groups of individuals is the way in which it is entirely based upon appearance on how these bodies look in contrast to those who are included within the parameters of American identity. The fear of the nation’s penetration from Russia and Communists meant all bodies needed to look American as well as be American, and hence, bodies who failed to conform, visually, were cast aside. Black bodies in particular, were unable to escape the limitations imposed by their highly visible identity.

In Robert Self and Thomas Surge’s essay “The Power of Place: Race, Political Economy and Identity in the Postwar Metropolis” (2005), the importance of race during an era of containment is highlighted by their insistence on the creation of “two Americas”[91] where the postwar urban areas were characterised by a paradox of racial segregation and freedom. What becomes clear is how the metropolitan spaces of the Cold War, coupled with the political culture, began to create a definition of race in terms of space, so that those who were actively excluded from American society in terms of their appearance formed their sense of citizenship in the urban inequalities of Northern cities.[92] This sense of racial inequality is evident in the steady emergence of African American political movements, such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters or the Black Panther Party, whose desire for civil equality found its roots in urban areas. As Self and Surge write, “Race was coded in the language and structure of metropolitan access, opportunity and space, rather than in the paranoia of miscegenation”.[93]

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[91] Christophe Agnew & Roy Rosenzweig (ed). *A Companion to Post 1945 America.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p.25

[92] Ibid

[93] Ibid. p.32

Hence, the issues surrounding postwar race were those not only of bodies and their colour, but also of these bodies' place within the city - "cities are far more than container or empty vessels... cities are less static containers of action than constitutive historical subjects that act on and through the social and political landscape of the nation".[94] By choosing New York City in *Invisible Man,* Ellison was actively engaging in the race debate, using the contemporary issue of urban racial segregation. Invisible Man's quest for visibility could only ever take place within an urban area where the black population are both identified and rejected from American society through the frequent gazes focused on their bodies.

However, during the 1920s and 1930s, the Harlem Renaissance in New York fostered a cultural and social blurring and questioning of the visibility of racially based identity. The Harlem Renaissance focused on transforming the works of African American artists, both in literature, art and music, in order to appeal to the white elite, finding its impetus in the culture and social parameters of Harlem. Their use of African cultural subject material meant black art embodied an awareness of spatial identity whilst remaining loyal to its origins in slave narratives and folktales. The result of the renaissance in black art, literature and music was the gradual acknowledgement of black American identity, and with the awareness of the white New Yorkers heightened, Harlem's ghettoised identity was redefined and able to move toward representing the centre of black consciousness in modern America. Alain Locke's *The New Negro* (1925) speaks of this cultural shift in New York's margins, stating, "in Harlem, Negro life is seizing upon its first chances for group expression and self determination. It is - or promises at least to be - a race capital".[95] Indeed, the increased prevalence of African American art forms, and the accumulating attention granted to them by the cultural elite, began to open up the possibility of "the re-establishment of contact between the more advanced and representative classes... [promising] to offset some of the unfavourable reactions of the past, or at least resurface race contacts somewhat for the future".[96] Locke clearly hoped that Harlem would become a pivotal urban space in the remolding of African American representation, as well as the nucleus for changing American identity. Yet, the question of African Americans' identity remained, as diagnosed in DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903):

> The history of the American Negro is the history of his strife - this longing to attain self conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer

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[94] Ibid. p.37

[95] Paul Lauter, *The Heath Anthology of American Literature, Volume D, Modern Period: 1910 - 1945.* (New York: Haughton Mifflin Company, 2006), p.1494

[96] Ibid. p.1496

> self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit on by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.[97]

Here, we are reminded of the "two America's" and with this, the way in which Negroes were bound on the one hand by their bodily appearance, and therefore to their slave heritage, and also by their spatial position as American citizens, striving for individual equality and personhood. Even Locke acknowledges the inescapable framing of black identity, the inherent disposition in being objectified through the visibility of black bodies as Other:

> His shadow, so to speak, has been more real to him than his personality. Through having had to appeal from the unjust stereotypes of his oppressors and traducers, to those of his liberators, friends and benefactors, he has had to subscribe to the traditional positions from which he case has been viewed.[98]

Hence, by being defined visually, the identification of bodies by sight could mean the black body has always been viewed as a product of their history, and therefore, without the possibilities open to them to form a spatially un-biased subjectivity due again to their colour and therefore, ghettoisation, these black bodies are perpetually marginalised in New York by their inability to embody conformity.

Despite the territorialising of black bodies by their appearance there does appear to be an opportunity to break and transgress the boundaries imposed by race. Prior to the Harlem Renaissance, an art known as "passing" surfaced, where lighter skinned Negroes could traverse the limitations of their racial Othering by passing for white. By "passing", the city afforded greater opportunities where these marginal bodies could escape their spatial and social immobility, and yet herein lies a direct undermining of the Cold War ideology, where the visibility of race is blurred and the limitations of the body are broken by being something they are not. Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) tells the tragic tale of two young black women in New York who were once childhood friends in a ghettoised neighbourhood in Chicago. Now in their adult lives, Irene is married and lives a modest African American lifestyle, whilst Clare Kendry has "passed" for a white girl, married a wealthy white man and lives according to white middle class culture. The novel openly mocks the association of appearance with race, stating:

> white people were so stupid about such things for all that they usually asserted that they were able to tell; and by the most ridiculous means, finger nails, palms of hands, shapes of ears, teeth and other equally silly rot. They always took her for an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a gipsy. Never, when she was alone had they even remotely seemed to suspect that she was a Negro.[99]

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[97] Ibid. p.898

[98] Ibid. p.1492

[99] Ibid. p.1609

Larsen's text manages to undermine the use of sight as primary identity signifier.

Through the trope of "passing", her text asserts the notion of city bodies to be considered as subjects rather than objects. In the text, both Clare and Irene are products of their spatial environment, desiring the status, money and elevation of the elite rather than the social structure awarded to their race through spatial segregation. In order to move beyond their position, both women, with varying degrees of success, wear ivory masks - in the metaphorical sense - to avoid the Othering imposed on them by their visual racial identity. In this sense, "appearances... had a way sometimes of not fitting facts"[100] and bodies could in fact, be something they are not.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* confronts many of these racial issues, rooting the protagonist in Harlem and bringing the issue of blackness and American-ness to the foreground. From the opening pages of the novel we are presented with a featureless and faceless narrator, "an invisible man"[101] who has burrowed into a subterranean dwelling where he confronts his invisibility and attempts to find visibility from recalling the events of his life leading to this hibernation. Despite the gothic allusion, Invisible Man is not without a body. Instead, his body's visibility actively frames his invisibility and reduces his body to nothing more than an object. Ellison's text addresses DuBois' examination of the double consciousness, seeking a dual identity for a Negro as both black and American from within the context of urban life, where extreme fluidity and chaos can blur illusion and reality. As John Callahan notes, the protagonist seeks to "challenge the apparent forms of reality... its false faces... until it surrenders its insight, its truth".[102] Ellison's text does indeed seek to challenge accepted sights and their reality, in an attempt to find insight, for Invisible Man cannot "pass" as in Larsen's text, and the bounded nature of his identity, signified purely through the black body, means his identity is invisible, thanks primarily to the visibility of his identifiable body. Invisible Man's selfhood is repeatedly territorialised by his blackness, and objectified by the highly visible nature of his historical and racial lineage; he is frequently denied consideration as

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[100] Ibid. p.1613

[101] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*. (New York: Random House, 1952), p.3

[102] John Callahan, *Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man: A Casebook.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.39

subject by those he encounters on the streets of New York a place where “the categories of identity such as race and gender are visually articulated”.[103]

In the Battle Royal scene, a celebration of Invisible Man’s graduation where he is “invited to give the speech at a gathering of the town’s leading white citizens”[104] - an experience he foresees as “a triumph for our whole community”[105] - his blackness reduces his “success” and “progress” to an unsettling scene of blindfolded fights for the amusement of the white lawyers, teachers, judges and doctors. So intense is Invisible Man’s desire for recognition above and beyond his body, his only thought at being “told to get into our fighting togs”[106] is “I suspected that fighting a battle royal might detract from the dignity of my speech”[107], starkly contrasted to the cheers from the crowd, “bring up the little shines!”.[108] Despite Invisible Man’s academic achievement, his mind’s ability, the visibility of his racial identity denies him dignity, and Battle Royal illustrates the reducible nature of the black body as object - a toy for amusement and entertainment. The central metaphor employed in the scene is blindness , both of the protagonist in his inability to see his objectification and humiliation, and that of the crowd, blinded by the colour of the fighting bodies. It is no mistake that Ellison portrays the boys as allowing “ourselves to be blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth”[109] - the white cloth clearly standing as a racial barrier between their selfhood and social perception - and fighting in “blind terror”[110]. Ironically, Invisible Man’s fear of the darkness becomes apparent, exclaiming “I was unused to darkness. It was as though I had suddenly found myself in a dark room filled with poisonous cottonmouths. I could hear the bleary voices yelling insistently for the battle royal to begin”[111]. The darkness, a metaphor for evil, and the Miltonic fall from God’s grace, indicates Invisible Man’s descent into objectification, a clear shift away from the lightness of the school and his academic success and towards the limitations of embodying such a darkness by way of his skin colour. With the fall from grace

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[103] Kimberly Lamm, “Visuality and Black Masculinity in Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man and Romare Bearden’s Photomontages”, *Callaloo.* Vol. 26, No. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 813-835, p.818

[104] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.* (New York: Random House, 1952), p.17

[105] Ibid. p.17

[106] Ibid. p.18

[107] Ibid. p.18

[108] Ibid. p.18

[109] Ibid. p.21

[110] Ibid. p.21

[111] Ibid. p.21

begins his gradual bounding of selfhood in terms of light and dark, where he is no longer the prized orator but a “coon” a “baby or a drunken man” a “nigger” and a “black boy”, refused autonomy as an individual - “I wanted to deliver my speech”[112]. The scene ends with a further insult, producing a rug which is littered with “gold and bills” for the “sambo” boys to fight over before finally allowing Invisible Man to deliver his speech feeling “limp as a dish rag”[113]. His limpness is indicative of the deflation of his pride, delivering his prized speech amongst the dregs of ridicule - “I was so moved that I could hardly express my thanks. A rope of bloody saliva forming a shape like an undiscovered continent drooled upon the leather and I wiped it quickly away. I felt an importance that I had never dreamed.”[114] Once again Invisible Man’s blindness means he is unable to see the pitiful nature of this statement, where his importance and his identity, have been reduced to racial colour, where the slave identity, implicit in the reception of his body, frames a subjectivity beyond his control.

This same sense of racial differing is apparent in the section of the text involving Liberty Paints - a section of the novel which further underscores the nature of subordinate racial colour. Invisible Man’s job with a paint company, whose motto is “KEEP AMERICA PURE WITH LIBERTY PAINTS”[115] begins with his descent “down a pure white hall”[116] into a shed where he has to mix the paint into various colours. During his introduction to the new job Ellison casually throws in a cautionary statement from another black boy working on the paints, “aw, gawn, you slave driver”.[117] Subconsciously or not, we are already aware of just how many Negro boys are working at the plant - “six of you guys out here already”[118] - and with the mention of the base paint colour, turning from brown to - “glossy white”[119] - Liberty Paints underscore the visual metaphor of colour and sight running throughout the novel. As Randy Boyagoda writes, “if Liberty Paints allegorically ‘represents America’ then the national image is prettied above but forged below,

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[112] Ibid. p.24

[113] Ibid. p.29

[114] Ibid. p.32

[115] Ibid. p.196

[116] Ibid. p.197

[117] Ibid. p.199

[118] Ibid, p.197

[119] Ibid. p.199

white on the surface, but black underneath".[120] The implication is both an ironic title for a paint company run almost exclusively by Negros, chained to economic inequality by their visible skin colour, and also the notion of an "American" paint - a substance to decorate, to change, to paper over and to cover unsightly and unwanted sights - encompassing the Cold War cultural and political ideology of white conformity and contained normalcy. Liberty Paints also suggests a paradoxical relationship between liberty and war - in a nation which prides itself on democracy, the liberty of America is in direct conflict with the war of the civil rights movement and the then restraint of black American bodies. The role of Liberty Paints is both to underscore the mixed racial identity of America - going from white to black, transforming "Optic White" by the addition of "the glistening black drops... becoming darker still, spreading suddenly out to the edges"[121] - and to highlight the role of visibility, appearance and judgement based on aesthetic perception. The "Optic White" Invisible Man imagines to be chosen by the government is made by the black men employed by the plant - the "machines inside the machine"[122], fueling and providing the "Right White"[123] for American citizens. Despite the company's pride at producing the best white paint in the world, the accident with the paint remover highlights the possibility for white to be transformed when the visual signifier - its colour - is removed - "all were the same, a brilliant white diffused with gray".[124] Ellison makes it clear that visual identity is an illusion and a lie. To be American, is to be "gray" - an unidentifiable single colour, where visible recognition is denied, and positive blindness inferred.

Yet Invisible Man's New York does not manage to overlook discernible identity signifiers and, instead, Ellison's streets are spaces which remind us of the objectification of the body and the blindness and limitations of visual perception. Brother Jack's glass eye is one such metaphor working to suggest limited vision of those who encounter and label Invisible Man in terms of his body's appearance. The "glass eye. A buttermilk white eye distorted by the light rays. An eye staring fixedly at me as from the dark waters of a well"[125] reminds the reader of blindness - even in Brother Jack - in his inability to view subjectivity rather than purely visual

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[120] Randy Boyagoda, *Race, Immigration and American Identity in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie, Ralph Ellison and William Faulkner.* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p.63

[121] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.* (New York: Random House, 1952), pp.200 & 201

[122] Ibid. p.217

[123] Ibid. p.217

[124] Ibid. p.205

[125] Ibid. p.474

identity. Invisible Man appears to him as a black body, in the same way other bodies perceive Invisible Man on the streets - much like the blurring of sight through the “buttermilk” whiteness of Jack’s glass eye, the inflection thereof from white social and cultural boundaries - Invisible Man, whilst continually judged in terms of his body, will remain so whilst blindness plagues those who view him. Notably, without the white glass eye, Jack’s “gaze had lost its command”.[126]

If the “gaze” is the primary way of recognising signifiers - to look at a woman and to recognise her as female, for instance - then Jack’s loss of command through loss of sight highlights the importance of visual perception, and with it the way in which sight creates identities for those objects which are being viewed. In the space of the New York streets “the gaze” captures the visual field of streets as scenes where cultural differentiation is played out or performed against an ever fluid, but citified and discernible backdrop. In other words it is the gaze, conducted under the boundaries of metropolitan street spaces (their lack of interpersonal communication, their fleeting nature, the brief and momentary encounters) that works to underscore identity assumptions based on visual properties. As Daniel Weber writes, there exists “a crucial relationship between the need for a personal, subjective centre and the irresistible press of external phenomena that demand conformity to a general pattern of man”[127]. Indeed, the external phenomena - that of the city space - and its insistence on being a certain way plays a crucial part in eradicating Invisible Man’s selfhood and enforcing his objectification, where the New York streets’ culture insists on exterior as conformist (us) and transgressive (them). When he first arrives in New York Invisible Man attempts to dress himself in such a way as to “fit in” - “My shoes would be polished, my suit pressed, my hair dressed (not too much grease) and parted on the right side; my nails would be clean and my armpits well deodorized”.[128] What is most obvious is his attempt to Westernize, and Northernise his appearance - there is no trace of his racial identity in his choice of garments and his hair parting smacks of a particularly white fashion. Invisible Man’s introduction of himself to New York is one of racial blindness, but also one of visible effort in an attempt to blend with white city bodies. The irony lies not in his decision to perform whiteness, but in his adoption of racial blindness, attempting to conform to something he is not and can not be, thereby highlighting further his bodily Othering. He visibility does not conform. The city’s transient, and highly visual encounters appear to Invisible Man as animalistic, venturing onto the subway as “chickens frozen at the sound of danger” and

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[126] Ibid. p.474

[127] Daniel Weber, “Metropolitan Freedom and Restraint in Ellison’s Invisible Man”, *College Literature.* Vol. 12, No. 2, Spring 1985, pp.163 - 175, p.170

[128] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.* (New York: Random House, 1952), p.157

"crushed" and "trapped" until reaching the platform where he is "regurgitated from the belly of a frantic whale".[129]

Ellison's vision of New York is one of rough vulgarity and harsh uncouthness, where individuality goes overlooked, and bodies are lumped together in a vast mass of bustling, faceless energy. Here, people are:

> everywhere. So many, and moving along with so much tension and noise that I wasn't sure whether they were about to celebrate a holiday or join in a street fight... This really was Harlem... For me this was not a city of realities, but of dreams...I moved wide-eyed, trying to take the bombardment of impressions.[130]

Harlem appears in the text as a city of fairytales and possibilities, where selfhood might be found and possibilities are endless - a "new world".[131] New York too, appears in the text as a place of redefinition, where one could look "like those... men you saw in magazine ads, the junior executive types in *Esquire*" and where one carries a brief case with "a sense of importance".[132] Yet, the crowds' noise and tension allude to the impossibility of such a dream, and the reality of such street life is invoked in Invisible Man's idea of a "street fight". The protagonist, although part of this black culture in Harlem, is also removed from it, much like the flaneur oversees bourgeois culture, but remains distant. Invisible Man's blindness and limited understanding of his own narrow options in the city due to his racial appearance, means his subjectivity once again is overlooked in Harlem, even amongst other Negros. Whether dressed in a suit, travelling on the subway, or walking down the Harlem streets, Invisible Man's identification as a black body means he remains so in all city spaces; he remains objectified by his racial history. The unforgiving metropolis can not provide a refuge for a gaze beyond the fleeting and hence his urban location, with its facades and swarming street rhythms, means he is repeatedly recognised as an object within this environment - a fact of the city, labelled by the visibility of his colour - "here they all seemed impersonal... I felt that even when they were polite they hardly saw me... it was confusing. I did not know if it was desirable or undesirable".[133]

Yet it is precisely Invisible Man's visible colour which hinders the development of an autonomous selfhood, serving to constantly determine and bound his identity in terms of blackness and race. Hence, Invisible Man is made so because he cannot create a subjectivity beyond the identity framed by his body. In

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[129] Ibid. p.158

[130] Ibid. p.159

[131] Ibid. p.159

[132] Ibid. p.164

[133] Ibid. p.168

the opening sequence of the text, where he speaks of his invisibility - “I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me”[134] - it becomes clear that the anonymous narrator possesses a body, but cannot and does not possess a selfhood beyond the bodily. As he goes on to explain:

> that invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality.[135]

Invisibility is therefore an invisibility of persona, of the inner organising core of identity, the ego, the inner-directed man and the subject, limited and blinded from recognition by the physical sight of others on the body. He remains unseen precisely due to the creation of a false identity created by other other-directed bodies.

However, as the novel progresses, Invisible Man begins to break with convention, and fracture the defining boundaries of his racial history, moving towards a visible subjectivity and racial invisibility. The first instance of this occurs in the unlikely “plunge” of Tod Clifton and his rejection of the Brotherhood. Clifton is initially described as being “very black and very handsome”[136] and possessing “the chiseled, black-marble features sometimes found on statues in northern museums”.[137] In the eyes of the Brotherhood, and in those of Invisible Man, Clifton is the perfect embodiment of the Brotherhood’s future - he represents youth, intelligence, vitality and an appealing, westernised version of the black male body (“I saw the broad, taut span of his knuckles... the muscular, sweatered arms, the curving line of the chest... [the] Afro-Anglo-Saxon contour of his cheek”[138]). He is “the young leader” with a head of “Persian lamb’s wool”.[139] Yet, his sudden disappearance, and the seeming indifference of the Brotherhood, ignites a doubt and a questioning of their motives - after all, how could Brother Clifton leave such a forward thinking, egalitarian and race aware movement? Even before Invisible Man’s final encounter with Clifton truth begins to bubble to the surface:

> Brotherhood was something to which men could give themselves completely; that was its strength and my strength, and it was this sense of wholeness that guaranteed that it would change the course of history. This I had believed with

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[134] Ibid. p.3

[135] Ibid. p.3

[136] Ibid. p.363

[137] Ibid. p.363

[138] Ibid. p.363

[139] Ibid. p.366

> all my being, but now, though still inwardly affirming that belief, I felt a blighting hurt which prevented me from trying further to defend myself.[140]

Although unable to transgress the boundaries of his imposed role in the Brotherhood Invisible Man is increasingly aware of his own transformation:

> becoming aware that there were two of me; the old self... the self that flew without wings and plunged from great heights; and the new public self that spoke for the Brotherhood and was becoming so much more important that the other that I seemed to run a foot race against myself.[141]

Yet, the protagonist's doubts are quelled by his lack of subjectivity - his visibility as a black body and an identity he has been provided with, and would otherwise be without. It is only when he eventually finds Clifton selling Sambo dolls on Forty Third street that he is forced to question his understanding of race, for all at once Clifton's transformation into street seller of black dolls illuminates the doubleness of black American identity, and suggests the body and the self is open to remaking: "Shake it up! Shake it up! He's Sambo, the dancing doll, ladies and gentlemen. Shake him, stretch him by the neck and set him down, - He'll do the rest. Yes!".[142] Clifton's manipulation of the black doll reminds us of the "uncreated features" of the protagonist, in the way the black city body can be malleable and unfinished and open to instruction. Whilst Clifton's chant is unsettling within the context of the novel - the clear dramatisation of the control exerted over Othered bodies, and the reception granted by Invisible Man "I felt betrayed. I looked at the doll and felt my throat constrict"[143] - Clifton's "plunge" from race leader to Sambo seller highlights the doubleness of black masculine identity. The Sambo doll represents the image of the black male, and by choosing a former race leader as their seller, distances the image from bodily truth. Clifton stands in stark and clear contrast to the representational black man he holds, thereby distancing concepts of blackness, from the real and physical form. As Kimberly Lamm writes:

> Clifton's play with the external scaffolding of black masculinity, his sardonic negation of a commodified and rational image of masculinity, and his refusal to adhere to the recognisable coherence of the Brotherhood, insists on forms of recognition that are yet to be seen, uncreated features of cultural perception... [registering] moments of destablising fluidity, subversion and innovation as black masculinity makes and remakes itself.[144]

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[140] Ibid. p.406

[141] Ibid. p.380

[142] Ibid. p.431

[143] Ibid. p.433

[144] Kimberly Lamm, "Visuality and Black Masculinity in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man and Romare Bearden's Photomontages", *Callaloo.* Vol. 26, No. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 813-835, p.832

By calling attention to the "scaffolding" of black masculinity, the construction of black identity through the gaze, Clifton's transgressive behaviour subversively mocks cultural and social constructions of subjectivity and it is a performance which leads to Invisible Man's ability to view the truth of his surroundings for the first time:

> It was as though I'd never seen their like before; walking slowly, their shoulders swaying, their legs swinging from their hips in trousers that ballooned upward from cuffs fitting snug about their ankles; their coats long and hip-tight with shoulders far too broad to be those of natural western men. These fellows whose bodies seemed... distorted.[145]

The allusion to slaves is deliberate, where the snug ankle cuffs and slow walk alert the reader to the continuation of enslavement - the hundreds of black bodies in the subway appear as slaves to white capitalism and western culture, distorting their selves - their bodies - into shapes that do not fit their identity.

The elusive Rinehart also signals a shift in Invisible Man's consciousness, alerting him to the possibility of change and finally embodying, not a black, but a New York city body. The protagonist is mistaken for Rinehart on the streets of Harlem, "Rinehart, baby, is that you?" she said. Rinehart I thought. So it works"[146] and again a page later, "Rinehart, poppa, tell us what you putting down".[147] Yet, his mistaken identity proves to further illuminate the possibility of doubleness - being at once a Negro and an American:

> [Rinehart has] been around all the while, but I have been looking in another direction. He was around and others like him, but I had looked past him until Clifton's death (or was it Ras?) had made me aware. What on earth was hiding behind the face of things? If dark glasses and a white hat could blot out my identity so quickly, who actually was who?.[148]

By assuming, albeit by mistake, a new identity, Invisible Man becomes aware of the fluidity and changeability of identity within the context of conflicting racial and national identity frames. He no longer accepts bodies by gaze. Furthermore, through the guise of Rinehart, Invisible Man is at last able to address the significance of bodily appearance and with this, the recognition of his own and others, bodily performances. He acknowledges that identity is no longer a matter of the body, but originates from the individual - on contemplating adopting Rinehart's persona he admits "if Rinehart could use [sunglasses] in his work, no doubt I could use them in mine. It was too simple, and yet they had already opened up a new

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[145] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.* (New York: Random House, 1952), p.440

[146] Ibid. p.483

[147] Ibid. p.484

[148] Ibid. p.493

section of reality for me... Outside the Brotherhood we were outside history; but inside of it they didn't see us... we were nowhere".[149] Rinehart's fluid identity allows the protagonist to seek truth through inauthenticity, where New York could now promise growth into subjective possibility.

As the prologue informs us, Invisible Man eventually retreats from Ras' men into a subterranean dwelling, beneath the streets in a border area of New York. It is here, cloaked in literal invisibility, that Invisible Man finds his visible selfhood:

> I gave up all that, along with my apartment, and my old way of life: that way based upon the fallacious assumption that I, like other men, was visible. Now, aware of my invisibility, I live rent-free... in a section of the basement that was shut off and forgotten during the nineteenth century.[150]

Invisible Man, through his experiences of the city, has adopted the identity assumed by others, only on this occasion it is of his own choosing. By becoming invisible he might find himself without the influence of the city, signifiers, or other bodies - a place where he deconstructs the body through total and finite invisibility only to rebuilt a subject, no longer an object, free from cultural, social, urban and Othered inscriptions. By becoming darkness (invisible) the protagonist is able to "become", to have affects, and to be metaphorically, re-born after falling into temptation and suffering expulsion from the Eden of black mythology's making. Strikingly, his new home (the hole in the ground), is filled with light:

> Yes, full of light. I doubt if there is a brighter spot in all New York than this hole of mine, and I do not exclude Broadway... I can now see the darkness of lightness. And I love light. Perhaps you'll think it strange that an invisible man should need light, desire light, love light. But maybe it is exactly because I am invisible. Light confirms my reality, gives birth to my form.[151]

Note the allusion to illumination of mind and being - to be lit up confirms his reality - his invisibility actually sheds light onto his selfhood, and his love of light, his desire for it, symbolises his desire for reality - lightness allows him to feel his "vital aliveness".[152] By reaching into the depths, Invisible Man may be able to emerge with a rising understanding of not only his, but the whole human condition where invisibility provides acute insight, not afforded to others; "Invisibility... gives one a slightly different sense of time, you're never quite on the beat. Sometimes you're ahead and sometimes behind... you slip into the breaks and look around".[153] In a

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[149] Ibid. pp.499-500

[150] Ibid. pp.5-6

[151] Ibid. p.6

[152] Ibid. p.7

[153] Ibid. p.8

society where we are "prevented from knowing who we are"[154] the protagonists' retelling of his life experiences, his memoirs as we have read, allow him to give his own meaning to the events of his life, to make him visible and redefine himself as he re-enters the world, "Before that I lived in the darkness into which I was chased, but now I see. I've illuminated the blackness of my invisibility".[155] In a city as dense in signifiers and bodily inscriptions as New York, he must find himself in an illuminated hole, where his invisibility can be embraced and accepted, and he might finally be able to locate a truth that eludes the metropolitan bodies above him. From his hole in the ground, a protective, maternal blanket cushioning his self-awakening, he can become more than a visible black object, and his visible becoming may be lit up:

> the invisibility that has kept him under lock and key for so long has become the very affect that has allowed him to see, not only himself, not only his race, but all of the fissures and cracks that run through the world. When he emerges from his hole he will know... what transformations are just below the threshold of being.[156]

THE PLASTICITY OF SPACE AND FLUIDITY OF SEXUALITY

Visibility and sight not only affected black bodies in city spaces in the postwar period, but also other marginalised groups, such as homosexuals. Like the struggle encountered by Ellison's Invisible Man, where his marginal status is enforced by his race, homosexual bodies are Othered by the parameters of a cultural ideology premised upon conformity, the family unit and ultimately, heterosexual normalcy. However, unlike the visible racial difference of black bodies homosexuals pose, arguably, a much greater threat to the stability of the Cold War quest for containment, for these bodies are not easily recognised through sight alone. Homosexuality, as a sexual identity, is not necessarily readily worn on the body and therefore these selves are ambiguous and unterritorialised. It is precisely because these bodies cannot be bounded by visual signs of "black", "female", "elderly" that they conflate the issues of "them" and "us", and therefore fracture identity territories which would clearly define and determine inter-personal identities. There is no clear way to determine male bodies as hetero-sexed through sight alone, despite their appearance as male. As Robert Corber writes:

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[154] John Callahan, *Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man: A Casebook.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.41

[155] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.* (New York: Random House, 1952), p.13

[156] Alan Bourassa, "Affect, History and Race and Ellison's Invisible Man". *CLC Web*. Vol. 8, Issue 2, June 2006, p.8

> Homosexuality constitutes a form of sexual difference that cannot be located on the body, and thus it threatens to expose as a patriarchal fiction, the belief that the differences between the sexes are biologically determined.[157]

As a concept, homosexuality destabilises the basic principle of gender and the "normative" structure of gender-determined sexuality. In short, the recognition of the sex of an individual is no longer a means of identification and in fact, one's gender can now mask their sexuality from view. Without the possibility of categorising binary terms of identity through the gaze, bodies are able to belie their subjective authenticity. So great is the need to determine selfhood through sight, the gay male (or Dandy) was, as Corber argues, often associated with spectacle (through theatre and masquerade) in an attempt to mark the construction of a gay male identity as somehow legible on the body through the suggestion of a gender inversion.[158] Yet, as Queer Theory indicates, the very idea of sexuality as a grossly distorted version of gender - reading a gay male as being like a woman, and a lesbian as being like a man - serves to attempt to reinforce the "reading" of a body through sight, and attempts to make visible one's sexuality. As a frame to house identity, the body's legibility does not equate to selfhood, for sex, sexuality and subjectivity in a performative, and therefore visible sense, are learnt.

The anxiety homosexuality creates in society, and particularly in America during the Cold War, is a direct effect of the homosexual's invisibility. Much like the notion of "passing" during the Harlem Renaissance and as illustrated by Nella Larsen's text, where lighter skinned Negros could blend within a white society under mistaken identity, the unbounded nature of sexuality allows for the possibility of "passing" as heterosexual. Without traceable signifiers on the body, a homosexual man could be perceived by others, as something and indeed, someone, he is not. The homosexual macho skinhead is no more readily "outed" than the effeminate drag queen, for whilst the skinhead "passes" due to his bodily appearance, his sexuality subverts heterosexual mechanisms, illustrating that heterosexual signifiers themselves can be queered.

Similarly, the drag queen's transvestitism directly enters into hegemonic discourses, classifying homosexuality as a queering of the body and self through inversion; yet by naturalising sexuality and gender, and by equating the recognition of sexuality with gender codes, the drag queen further demonstrates the fluidity and plasticity of homosexual identity for despite a female appearance, the performer is male. Hence, homosexuality breaks and transgresses the hegemonic

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[157] Robert Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p.63

[158] Ibid

boundaries which seek to contain bodies within a clearly marked and visible identity. In doing so, the homosexual body's identity as Other encourages performativity, a masking of the self, which ultimately "works to conceal, if not to disavow, what remains opaque, unconscious, unperformable".[159]

Returning to Judith Butler, both her theory of performative gender and Queer Theory suggest gender can be understood as a creation, a learnt practice and reiteration of a set of norms. If gender is not biologically inherent but is rather constructed through the inscription of signifiers surrounding the body, then it seems highly probable that one's sex can be "performed", as it is malleable and fluid rather than fixed or inert. As Butler writes:

> sex is thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is; it will be one of the norms by which one becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.[160]

Sex is therefore a form of categorising bodies - quite simply, a mechanism designed to determine a form of bodily and subjective legitimacy within a cultural sphere. Considered under these simple terms gender, sex, and by extension, sexuality are all simply labels rather than authentic identities as Butler argues:

> acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance but produce this on the surface of the body.. but never reveal the organising principle of identity as a cause... [these acts are] performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs.[161]

If gender is an "act", it is naturally open to change, transformation and transgression for it is never fixed or "real", and never without spatial influences on shape and signification. Bodies are therefore in "the mode of becoming and always living with the constitutive possibility of becoming otherwise; the body is that which can occupy the norm in myriad ways, exceed the norm, rework the norm, and expose realities".[162] Whilst bodies are therefore able to "become" a sex which is not only biologically determined, the spatial and cultural markings of a hegemonic and patriarchal environment dictate the nature of the performance itself. The "norm" to be reiterated is heterosexual, leaving homosexual bodies to contest the norms of intelligibility and therefore to be considered as marginal, transgressive and perverse. Yet, when Deleuzian theory is applied to the foundations of Queer

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[159] Ibid. p.91

[160] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex.* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.2

[161] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p.173

[162] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender.* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p.217

Theory, a quite different approach to sexuality results, where difference is marked with positivity and “realness”:

> the queer self might be better thought of as a counter actualisation of the material repetitions that make up man... the conditions of the queer and the conditions of the new are the same; to counter actualise the present, to repeat the intensities and encounter that which have composed us, but not as they are for us.[163]

Queerness is therefore not necessarily a refusal of a “norm”, but rather the affirmation of bodily fluidity and gender constructiveness, where the potential of bodily effects may be realised and change can be achieved - “homosexuality truly liberates itself.. by being marginal”.[164] It may be argued that homosexuality is the acknowledgement of the multiplicity of becoming, deconstructing the hegemonic representation of the body and sexuality, and breaking the boundaries of acceptable gender performance into plasticity and experimentation. Under these terms authentic sexuality is neither homo nor hetero and can not be associated with the visibility of the body or understanding of selfhood. Indeed, sexuality appears more closely aligned to that expressed by Alfred Kinsey in his seminal work *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Female* (1953), where both men’s and women’s desires were not only alike, but also shaped by social and cultural forces, thereby demonstrating the fluidity of sexuality and the potential for desires to shift and mutate with spaces. Hence, if bodies are simply frames, whose sexuality, free from a governing sex-determined rule of gender preference (for gender is only a behaviour) is purely inter-personal, then the self is always unknowable, permanently shifting between spaces and other bodies.

During a period of anxiety surrounding masculine identity, Hubert Selby Jnr’s *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1957) depicts the cruelness and brutality of the urban, male, environment where the raw and very emotive style of narrative graphically depicts life in Brooklyn during the 1950s. Characters are repeatedly victimized through the violence of the environment within which they are trapped, cosseted by the familiarity of the brownstone neighbourhood and housing projects. Enveloped in a microcosm defined by white collar workers, factories, bread-lines, prostitution and youth rebellion, the protagonists of the text seek refuge from the visibility of their failings and inability to find themselves, free from the rot, crime and degradation housing them. Selby Jr’s prose reflects the flattening of human subjectivity and the meaninglessness of their being by consistently avoiding the use of canonical narrative styles, deliberately omitting punctuation and quotation

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[163] Chrysanthi Nigianni & Merl Storr, *Deleuze and Queer Theory.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p.20

[164] Ibid. p.27

marks, and making conscious errors in grammar and spelling. His surreal depiction of brief and temporally indeterminate interruptions into the lives of a group of seemingly unrelated individuals living in close proximity exposes a vulgar and obscene, yet tangible documentary of their world, where the blurring of their intellectually primitive and economically impoverished social options spill into depravation, lawlessness and reckless and selfish behaviour. Selby Jr's seemingly unsophisticated literary style blurs character differentiation through the employment of lengthy paragraphs, free from speech marks but replete with phonetic dialects thereby enhancing "authentic" identities. His narrative manages to encourage the translation through text of the stifling and claustrophobic nature of their entrapment. As James Giles writes of *Last Exit*, "[Selby's vision is] hostile... in nature, the world of Brooklyn irrevocably holds and perverts the people whom in produces".[165] In a text where no real individuals can be found, and only brutalised shadows of humanity emerge from the nightmare of Selby's urban landscape, it is not surprising to find his novel reflects a quest for subjectivity and authenticity, where the violent events can be interpreted as a fight and struggle for individual recognition and true selfhood devoid of the crudeness and hatred enveloping character's bodies.

Selby's choice of an urban location, albeit, one adjacent to a large city (thereby, automatically marginalising peoples and events from New York whilst also being influenced by the neighbouring cityscape) conflates the issues of concrete selfhood. As already explored with the flaneur and black bodies, city spaces encourage the visibility of surface identity as these spaces enforce a street and pedestrian culture unlike that in pastoral or suburban areas. The metropolitan space actively fosters the active viewing of bodies, repeatedly putting them on display without consideration of their subjective identity, and thereby enabling the possibility of fluid and changeable identities to emerge through the unknowable nature of the self they have encountered. *Last Exit* acknowledges this ambiguity of city identities and the text refers to several Harry's, Mary's and Mike's, all as unidentifiably similar and different from the last. There is no indication in Selby's narrative as to the identity of these Harry's and Mary's, or even if their constant appearance in the text is indicative of the same character, but the suggestion is that they are unidentifiable from each other - all are equally ineffectual, prosaic and indistinguishable. The repetition of these names further enforces the peripheral nature of Brooklyn itself, where the averageness of these Catholic and "common" names marks the entire neighbourhood's insolvent status.

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[165] James Giles, *Understanding Hubert Selby Jr.* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), pp.28-29

Two such characters who attempt to escape Selby's depraved world are Harry Black and Georgette, both of whose sexuality is deliberately transgressive and yet ambiguous. Whilst both Harry and Georgette are outside the "norms" of heterosexuality, they also manage to straddle the divide between invisibility and visibility, at once embracing sexual deviancy and rejecting it. Despite his marriage to Mary and his employment in a white collar industrial job, Harry Black veils his homosexuality. The visibility of his "normal" heterosexual props - his wife, child and "male" labour - serve to make his desire invisible by masking it with a heterosexual performance. The reader's introduction to Harry hints at his unease with his performative normalcy, as illustrated by his wife's touch causing his "stomach [to] knot, a light nausea starting"[166] and compounded by the violence of his consciousness: "He wished to krist he could take the sounds and shove them up her ass. Take the goddamn kid and jam it back up her snatch".[167] Harry's hidden anger, his veiled extreme aggression and masochistic thoughts, stand as testament to his resentment towards his wife and child, citing them for his unhappiness but never quite grasping the reason why. His behaviour seems out of place, wishing "the fuckin bitch would go tabed",[168] reflecting quite the opposite sentiment of other male characters' libidos, and Harry's sex life is not something he longs for, but something he had hoped after marriage "he would get used to".[169] In striking contrast to the constant urge for sexual gratification encountered with the gangs in the Greeks at the start of the text, Harry finds pain, despair and anguish in the act of love making:

> Harry physically numb, feeling neither pain nor pleasure... until his energy drained with the semen and he stopped suddenly, suddenly nauseous with disgust... his disgust seeming to wrap itself around him as a snake slowly, methodically and painfully squeezing the life from him... Harry just hung there his body alive with pain, his mind sick with disgust.[170]

The disgust he associates with the act of sex seems entirely discordant with "normal" emotions connected to intercourse, and perhaps even more alarming is the way his revulsion translates into extreme brutality, "the fuckin bitch. Why cant she just leave me alone. Why dont she goaway somewhere with that fuckin kid. Id like ta rip her cunt right the fuck outta her".[171] The fervor and menace of his sentiments, however, do not serve to enlighten Harry but rather to further enslave him to his misery without the possibility of seeing and finding the answer to his

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[166] Hubert Selby Jr, *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury, 1957), p.107

[167] Ibid. p.107

[168] Ibid. p.108

[169] Ibid. p.109

[170] Ibid. pp.110-111

[171] Ibid. p.109

socially unacceptable and therefore, invisible homosexuality: “The walls were there. No mysteries. Nothing hidden. There was something to be seen.... No longer afraid to look”.[172] His violence is suggestive of a battle, a fight, and whilst he wars with his wife, in truth, Harry’s conflict lies in his acceptance of his true identity. Harry’s purported masculinity, as indicated by his performance of the married industrial worker is ultimately inauthentic and he uses heterosexuality as a mask cloaking his sexual perversity in a time when sexuality is ideologically contained, identifiable and conformist. According to Queer Theory, homosexuality poses a more subtle threat for hegemonic heterosexuality for it exposes “that of its own contingency, and open endedness, its own tenuous hold over the multiplicity of sexual impulses and possibilities that characterise all human sexuality”.[173] Homosexuality then is marginalised precisely because it is liberated from the mapped boundaries drawn up by hegemonic social law. Yet in the case of Harry Black, his sexuality must remain invisible in order to protect the image he has created and bought into; he strives to conceal his desires with the heterosexual male he has performed up till now as he fears being cast out from society and plunged into purgatory. His nightmare captures this intense fear of the self’s destruction where Harpies tear pieces of his flesh from his body and pluck out his eyes - “all he could do is lie still as they once again, and again, over and over started ripping the flesh from his belly and chest, scraping his ribs and once more plucking the eyes from his head”.[174] The Harpies destruction of his body alludes to his unease with his sexuality, immersed in deep and inescapable self-loathing, whilst the highly symbolic plucking out of his eyes once again suggest the importance of sight and vision where he loses the ability to see clearly his own desire and impulses and even, as the next line implies, that upon finding his sexuality he will be blinded by his transgression - “he was alone on a street looking, turning slowly around in a circle, looking, looking at nothing... he eyes rolled and bounced up the hill and Harry stumbled after them trying to find them”.[175] The act of trying to find his eyes, but always finding stones, pebbles and burrs in their place suggests his inability to locate an inner selfhood and his inability to acknowledge and accept his sexuality; for all the mistaken objects he places in his eye sockets (his marriage, his machismo, his son as the pebbles, stones and burrs) cause his lids to rip, “and he screamed louder and louder as he twisted the burrs trying to get

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[172] Ibid. p.113

[173] Joan Copec, *Supposing the Subject.* (London: Verso, 1994), p.152

[174] Hubert Selby Jr, *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury, 1957), p.114

[175] Ibid. pp.114-115

them out, his bloodied hands preventing his from getting a firm grip on them and his screams were louder and louder until he finally did scream".[176]

Harry's job is another prop he employs in order to produce a visible hetero male image projecting a labour intensive, and therefore hard masculine performance premised upon power, machismo, strength and muscularity. By relying upon traditional aspects of masculinity Harry's job validates his visible performance of heterosexuality by being both physically demanding and granted responsibility - "he was the worst lathe operator of the more than 1,000 men working in the factory".[177] The factory space is clearly associated with rough male vigour, and it is within this space that Harry's performance is at its most convincing, adopting the language and conversational content of the other men around him:

> he always started with a couple a quick shots and a beer... he talked with some of the men, listening to their jokes, their stories of dames fucked, following each story with one of his own about how he bagged some dame and threw a fuck intoer and how she thought he was so great... and Harry would continue making the rounds of the bar... laughing, slapping the guy on the shoulder.[178]

Harry's performance seems grotesque and almost comical in light of his invisible sexuality, for he appears to be performing a caricature of maleness, a creature so vulgar and oafish that he could only ever be male, for his vulgarity, beer guzzling and gesture of friendship seem entirely scripted. The creation of this hypermasculine behaviour serves to make his heterosexual performance and persona highly visible to others, and this is enforced by his body's appearance being "bigger", muscular, and with it, highly aggressive "he could see himself crushing heads and bodies and heaving them from the windows".[179] Harry's hypermasculinity, his reliance upon visible machismo, serves to undermine the purported effect, for, as Yvonne Tasker argues in her examination of action heros in the 1980s, "as signifiers of masculinity, muscles present a paradox since they bring together the terms of naturalness and performance"[180] and by viewing the highly visible representation of masculinity on the body, Harry's now recognisably hypermasculine performance is exposed as such, and is no longer considered a physical attribute but "a sense of acting a part, playing out a male persona on a public stage".[181] Furthermore, hypermasculinity lays itself bare to feminine

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[176] Ibid. p.115

[177] Ibid. p.116

[178] Ibid. p.117

[179] Ibid. p.126

[180] Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema.* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p.119

[181] Ibid. p.123

influence, for whilst the muscular body of the factory worker is decidedly male, his fashioning of the body in a way which insists on being looked at, demands the gaze, renders it as a signifier of traditional femininity. In another sense too, the appreciation of the male form, its display of machismo through signs of phallic power (as suggested by the body's hardness), promises to undermine the naturalness of this form of masculinity, for it is a body which has been strained and resisted in order to be achieved, it has been made and shaped. Far from being natural, the highly visible macho body is manufactured, thereby once again questioning the authenticity of the maleness on display and also suggestive of eroticism, where the male body is rendered an object to be looked at by another male. As Steven Cohan writes, on hypermasculine bodies, the notion of manhood conveyed "can only be described as performing the male... they are simulacra of an exaggerated masculinity, the original completely lost to sight".[182] Hence, for Harry, whilst he seeks to validate his performance of heterosexual masculinity with hypermasculine body and behaviour, he undermines the naturalness of such acts, and exposes himself as an impostor and impersonator with an invisible selfhood. Even when Harry finds himself at his most visible during the strike, he is still unable to avoid the cracks which appear in his performance - "in a few hours Harry started to panic with so many men around. Something inside his arms, his stomach, legs, seemed to be tightening and caused him to grind his teeth".[183] It is though at his most powerful moment, when the daily purposefulness granted to him as shop steward of local 392, creates such unfamiliar happiness that his contentment threatens to expose the secret he keeps locked within. Yet again, the power seems misplaced, for Harry is part of a strike, which by its very nature is passive rather than active, and hence his involvement in the strike, as a shop steward providing stamps, beer and somewhere to collect signs, is entirely removed from any encounter with the protest at hand. In fact, it could be argued that Harry's hetero performance within this space is entirely misplaced, for his lack of action and his idleness during a violent and turbulent protest constitutes a decidedly feminine act in contrast to the angry men surrounding him.

Perhaps then it is no mistake that during this period of the text we encounter the first glimmer of Harry's interest in homosexuals:

> what attracted him to them was a high pitched feminine voice. It took a moment or two for him to realise that one of the guys standing near him as a fairy. He looked at him, trying not to be too obvious, lowering his eyes everytime

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[182] Steven Cohan, *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema.* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.232

[183] Hubert Selby Jr, *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury, 1957), p.134

> somebody moved his head toward him, slowing raising them again to stare at the fairy.... Harry continued to stare out the door after they drove away.[184]

Harry's interest itself is depicted as feminine, his coquettish lowering of his eyes and avoidance of being noticed, and his longing look towards the door long after the group had left, all manage to allude to his suppressed lustful desire. The strike grants Harry both time away from his home and time spent in the Greeks, both of which may well have a part to play in Harry's shift towards happiness and experimentation, yet his own deep rooted prejudices remain - his label of "fairy" is derogatory, despite his own interest, and when wanting to appear macho Harry's insults of other men follow the same pattern of inferred homosexuality "that punk Wilson. I'll show that fuckin fairy, that queer punk".[185] Even when Harry has the opportunity to explore his desires he still treats his enquires with caution, asking Vinnie "who that fruit was that was with them the othernight" and when asked if he wants to meet with her, "naw... what the fuck I wanna meet a fuckin fruit for... Im strickly a cunt man myself".[186] Despite Harry's own marginalised desire he is unable to break from the oppressive social structure of the Brooklyn environment, demeaning the object he lusts after; as James Giles writes of Harry's world, "it pretends to be and even believes itself to be, an ethically 'white' and 'black' world in which there is nothing darker or more unforgivable than homosexuality".[187] In attempting to create as much distance as possible between his projection of himself and the invisible Harry, he continually reverts to hypermasculine props in the hope of validating his heterosexuality without any doubts from those other males surrounding him:

> last night I had ta chase one away, a good looking bitch too, but I promised the old lady Id throw a fuck inner... Harry couldnt stop: he soliloquised about the babe who picked him up a few weeks ago... and how many more women who damned near fucked the ass offim, but they never could do that, he could out fuck any woman around and he never did like queers.[188]

Harry's performance of a virile and lecherous heterosexual male does nothing but undermine his creation of a "normal" masculinity, for his clearly embellished and preposterous accounts of sexual conquests attest to his inability to conceal his true

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[184] Ibid. p.137

[185] Ibid. p.142

[186] Ibid. pp.144-145

[187] James Giles, *Understanding Hubert Selby Jr.* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), pp.34-35

[188] Hubert Selby Jr. *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 1957), p. 145

yearnings - something Vinnie and Sal are evidently aware of when they introduce him to Ginger.

The scene with Ginger is one of contemptuous mockery, poking fun at and ultimately testing Harry's purported sexuality through a drink-fueled game. Vinnie and Sal's interest in Harry is one of personal gain, abusing his position as both the bookkeeper for the strike and as a lonely and lost individual they use him for his free beer and take advantage of his eagerness to form homosocial bonds. Yet, in this scene, having already become aware of his interest in the "fairy", they include Ginger, a brick layer turned "prick layer".[189] Despite Ginger's gender, replete with arms containing "a large appleshaped muscle"[190], she performs according to recognisably feminine actions, curtsying and walking "daintily" across the room. Harry's interest in her is clearly more meaningful than those of the other men in the room, for he attempts to appear more sexually appealing by posing as important, powerful and as a man with purpose -"its a bitch of a job, but I get it done. Im pretty big in the union yaknow".[191] With beer and 'bennies' gradually clouding his mind, Harry lets his mask slip momentarily:

> [he] watched Ginger as she danced lightly around the room, the excitement that had started when he awoke increased as he looked at the picture and continued to grow... Ginger whirled around the room shaking the tight cheeks of her ass and Harry caressed his beer glass and licked his lips not knowing exactly what he was doing, his body reacting and tingling, aware of nothing but a lightness, almost a giddiness, and a fascination... things would be different now. He was Harry Black.[192]

Notably, Harry's new sense of self appears for the first time, and it is only at this stage - watching Ginger - that his body reacts, or one could say, has effect. It is a moment of true awakening, in stark contrast to the pain, anguish and nothingness of the time spent with Mary and his son. Perhaps still unaware of his homosexual impulse, Harry seems taken aback by his reaction to Ginger's dance - he does not know what he is doing - but this again enforces the validity of such a reaction, one which is entirely unconscious and yet has the power to create a truth. However, this scene ends with mockery and it becomes clear that Ginger is merely exposing Harry's "freakishness": "Ginger roared hysterically inside herself... she put her arms around him and started dragging him around the floor, stamping heavily on his toes and lifting her knee up into his groin from time to time".[193] For all the scene's

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[189] Ibid. p.166

[190] Ibid. p.166

[191] Ibid. p.166

[192] Ibid. p.167

[193] Ibid. p.168

cruelty, it does permit Harry a moment of truth and clarity, and alerts him to the existence of a club in Manhattan on 72nd street called “Mary’s”, that is “just filled with freaks like you”.[194] Whilst Harry becomes a victim in this scene, subjected to Ginger’s contempt for men like him, he is left with the promise of being Harry Black - at last accepting and fulfilling his own urges.

Harry’s eventual embrace of his sexuality is made possible by the fluidity of New York street spaces, for it is between Brooklyn and Mary’s on 72nd, that Harry is able to be both invisibly homosexual and visibly so, for this shift between city territories permits a doubleness of identity where he can both reject his homosexual desire and appropriate it at will. In Mary’s, Harry’s original uneasiness is lost on entry, “Harry was able to lose himself in the chaos and his self-consciousness faded before he finished his first drink”.[195] Once again, there is a sense of acceptance and embrace in these new spaces - a space where the women are men dressed like women. Selby Jr deliberately applies the same name to the bar as he does to Harry’s wife, thereby suggesting Harry’s doubleness further, finding a home in two entirely different places, and a wife in two entirely different bodies. The multiplicity of the bar, with “big, muscled, truckdriver[s]” kissing other men and drag queens fondling each other under the table but never “certain of their sex”[196] manages to dissolve hegemonic associations of homosexuality and squash the binary terms applied to homosexuals as feminine “fairies”. As a man who fashions himself under the law of machismo, Harry’s homosexuality is validated and sanctioned by the plurality of bodies on display. It is in Mary’s that Harry “came a little closer to.. a real smile”[197] enforcing his newly realised success in such marginalised spaces.

Selby’s narrative employs the same ambiguity and fluidity of bodily gender he describes, constantly referring to the drag queens as “her” and during Harry’s love affair with Alberta, its sensuousness almost manages to eclipse the reality of the proceedings. As readers we are caught up in the pleasure Harry feels, in the delight and lust he is able to give and receive, and we too begin to break down the codes of hegemonic sexuality, for the continuous referral to “she”, “her” and the words applied to their love making, “smooth”, “sliding”, “caressing”, “unfolding” are momentarily broken by the abrupt reality “his hand grabbed her cock”.[198] We are

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[194] Ibid. p.169

[195] Ibid. p.175

[196] Ibid. p.176

[197] Ibid. p.179

[198] Ibid. p.182

given a stark reminder of the transgressive nature of these actions, and of the strange and alien quality of a women with a penis, we are jolted back into patriarchal codes and boundaries and once again highly aware of Harry's homosexuality and no longer the naturalness of two bodies coming together. And for all Harry's happiness in these moments when he awakes he is jolted with the sudden realisation of the night before, "the entire evening jammed itself into Harrys mind and his eyes clouded from his terrible anxiety and confusion".[199] His happiness is repeatedly shadowed by his unease with his homosexual identity, "still fearing the consequences of having someone find out" and needing Alberta to reassure him so he does not find himself "alone and vulnerable".[200] Despite having created a space of freedom and liberation, in contrast to the containment of Brooklyn and his other identity, Harry is still plagued by cultural inscriptions of wrong and right, of hetero and homo sexuality. Even within this new space, on 72nd street where he is Harry Black in his entirety, he is unable to shake off the markings of his society, deeply inscribed by the factory, his wife, Vinnie and Sal, the Union bosses and his neighbours. Yet, Harry does continue to entertain the doubleness he has created, for in contrast to his time in Brooklyn where he avoids contact with his wife and child, and loiters at the shop or the Greeks, in Manhattan and with Alberta he:

> went to a movie in the afternoon; ate when they came out; then sat for a few hours in a bar. When they got home Harry made love to Alberta then they sat drinking and listening to music.... they sat for hours on the couch, drinking, vaguely aware of the music from the radio, holding hands and kissing.[201]

The contrast between Harry's hatred, violence and aggression in Brooklyn and his tenderness and peacefulness on the upper streets of Manhattan again suggest the possibility of becoming two subjects in one body between varying spaces. Harry is not able to "be" in Brooklyn, for there he must face a forced reality - that he must once again become invisible.

Eventually, however, Harry's invisibility does collapse, leaving his homosexuality unmasked. Intentionally coinciding with the end of the factory strike - a time when he will have to return to the monotony and ennui of his job and life with Mary and no longer able to finance his double life with Union funds - and the abrupt rejection by his lover Regina, Harry finally seems unable to uphold his mask of normalcy. Slowly being devoured and plunged back into the life he tried to escape from, Harry begins to lose himself in his despair, "he walked to the corner, slipping several times, finally having to crawl to the lamppost to help himself stand.

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[199] Ibid. p.184

[200] Ibid. p.185

[201] Ibid. p.186

He clutched the post for a few minutes catching his breath".[202] Feeling his hope for happiness, acceptance and peace dissolve, and fearing the inevitable smothering of his desires in Brooklyn, Harry breaks into insanity, cracking his mask of visible conformity with heightened depravity as he sexually abuses a 10 year old boy:

> Harry clutched Joey by the legs and put Joeys small warm cock in his mouth, his head being tossed from side to side by Joeys attempts to free himself, but he clung to Joeys legs, keeling his cock in his mouth and muttering please... please.[203]

Perhaps it is no less surprising that when we find Harry resign himself to his marginal status, that it is Vinnie and Sal who take pleasure in beating him to death, quickly and unfeelingly turning on someone well known to them for the sake of sexual codes "they twisted his arms behind him almost tying them in a knot and when they let go he continued to hang from the bar... the guys watched Harry Black as he slowly descended from the billboard".[204] Selby's narrative is deliberately emotive, and quite clearly alludes to the crucifixion, stabbed by a piece of bark and "hung" on the bill board; blinded by blood on his face, Harry cries out "GOD O GOD... GOD GOD".[205] Equating sight with sexuality once more Harry's death, persecuted by his allies and hung, forgotten, before falling into the dirt, Harry's personal insight comes at the cost of his own physical invisibility, his figural death, but a death which comes at the point of personal acceptance and truth. His blindness during his execution is almost redeeming, allowing him the possibility of purity and possible forgiveness of those who are socially blinded by his sexuality. His Christ-like death also implies Harry's innocence and the ultimate misunderstanding and wrongful punishment at the hands of others. Harry is left at the foot of the billboard, and Brooklyn continues in its madness, whilst Vinnie and Sal return to the Greeks to revel in such a good "kick" that was, whilst ordering coffee. All these bodies are ultimately powerless and victimised by the spaces and objects governing the streets that in turn, rule them.

Similarly, in the case of Georgette, Selby's tragically misguided homosexual transvestite, she too is forced to render her sexuality both visible and invisible within Brooklyn's nightmarish discourse. Whilst Harry veils his sexual desires in a cloak of macho poses, Georgette wears her homosexuality on her body and embodies her feminine maleness in her movements, appearance and even thoughts. As Selby's introduction of her indicates, "[she] took pride in being a

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[202] Ibid. p.212

[203] Ibid. p.213

[204] Ibid. p.214

[205] Ibid. p.214

homosexual"[206]; and this confidence and openness in her sexuality is marked by her ease in flawlessly performing femininity:

> with the wearing of womens panties, lipstick, eye makeup (this including occasionally gold and silver - stardust - on the lids), long marcelled hair, manicured and polished fingernails, the wearing of womens clothes complete with padded bra, high heels and wig.[207]

Georgette's evident embodiment of her sexuality starkly contrasts with Harry's homosexual invisibility; yet her femininity is as performative and inauthentic as Harry's machismo. Georgette's gender, as male, renders her feminine poses and behaviour as performative, a series of a reiteration of norms, and hence her "act" belies her bodily sex. Whilst her body is visibly transgressive by wearing "woman", her natural masculinity renders this performance as an inauthentic form of subjectivity, and one which actively supports and validates the acceptance of homosexuals within hegemonic discourses. If sexual difference can be labelled as "male" or "female" in nature, patriarchal intelligibility succeeds in marking sex by gendered binary terms, and hence once again, prevents sexual difference from being expressed and explored. As Butler argues, drag:

> implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself, as well as its contingency... gender parody reveals that the original identity offer which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin... the performance is effected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary forms.[208]

Hence, whilst Georgette is clearly visible as a homosexual, her performance is one which maintains the structure of gender performance and is therefore not representative of her own identity; a selfhood which remains masked by women's clothes, feminine acts and "normative" female desires. It is through her stylised bodily acts, that the vigorous regulation of compulsory heterosexuality is enforced.

Foucault however suggests another interpretation of drag, claiming that "camp performance actually brings that subject into being"[209] and Georgette does indeed find a version of selfhood from within the boundaries of an alternative subjectivity into which she can escape, and ultimately be viewed. Drag performance is one which expressly invites the gaze; demanding observation and visibility in order to be recognised. Drawing on the influences around the body in New York, from magazines, movies and by viewing other women's bodily movements, Georgette clearly mimics what she sees "she bought him coffee and

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[206] Ibid. p.15

[207] Ibid. p.15

[208] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.175 & 179

[209] Tamsin Spargo, *Foucault and Queer Theory.* (New York: Totem Books,1999), p. 60

sat on his lap and asked him to go for a walk... Georgette would wiggle on his lap, play with his earlobes feeling like a young girl on her first date. She looked at him coquettishly".[210] These are not the inherent movements of the male body, but rather a performance, deliberately styled through poses and gestures from gazing at other female bodies. Inverting Laura Mulvey's theory of scopophilia, where the gaze implies a male eroticizing the object on view, Georgette gleans her own erotic performance, her own way of expressing and making visible her sexuality and desires, from gazing at women's bodies as objects to be copied, "thinking herself a heroine... looking tenderly as a lover taking irrevocable leave".[211] Georgette's creation of a subjectivity which marks her sexuality thereby embraces the diversity of the city space, and in the same way Harry was able to shift his identity between urban environments, Georgette's translation of city sights, the gaze of city bodies, and the diversity of city experiences means she comes to embody these sights and spaces. Georgette remains permanently marked by her surroundings, for her performance is entirely manufactured by the city itself.

Yet despite her sexual visibility and reliance upon traditional associations of femininity, Georgette is transgressive, for drag, by its very nature, highlights the violation of normative gender. Her brother and mother both represent cultural and social opinion, and Selby changes the pronoun of "her" to "him": "her mother looked up and noticed first the strange look on her sons face, the staring eyes; then the blood on his slacks and as she ran to him she collapsed on Mothers shoulder".[212] Abruptly, the reader is aware of Georgette's Othering, and the feminine label previously applied to her dissolves when faced with the reality of her sexual perversity in the eyes of others; "you disgusting degenerate... Hes my son...and I love him and you should love him".[213] Notably, Georgette's own thoughts during this scene continue to blur the divide between visible gender and discourses. Having destabilised the image of Georgette as female and asserted her male sex, her reaction is to apply a similarly indistinct label to her brother and mother calling them "the bitches. The dirty bitches".[214] The scene plays with two conflicting hegemonic notions, for, on the one hand, the events described reveal the irregularity of Georgette's appearance and non-conformist nature of her sexuality, whilst, on the other, serving to underscore the insignificance of gender categories, where "his", "her", "son" and "bitches" are used to apply to all, without specifying an

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[210] Hubert Selby, Jnr. *Lat Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 1957), p.16

[211] Ibid. pp.22 &23

[212] Ibid. p.27

[213] Ibid. p.30

[214] Ibid. p.30

individual. Selby's narrative conflates the possibility of fluid identity a remaking of subjectivity without the frame of bodily gender, where queering allows the subject to come into being, to "be put in flight, and their desire liberated.. the homosexual who has been labelled abnormal can now invent their flight".[215]

As Georgette's story continues however, we are reminded of Selby's Brooklyn - the space where bodies are repeatedly victimised and subjected to violence and aggression. During the scene at Goldie's apartment, Georgette and the other drag queens are forced to acknowledge the stark reality of their marginalised position, brutally demeaned and degraded by Vinnie, Sal, Malfie and Harry. The scene's narrative successfully builds momentum and expectation, beginning with Camille's rigorous priming of herself for display:

> Camille filled one of the tubs in the kitchen and laid out her brushes: one for her back, one for her legs, one for her feet, one for her toe-nails, one for her hands, one for her fingernails, and a special jar of cream for her face. She lined them up, handles facing her, and started from the left with the back brush.[216]

Whilst we are aware these brushes serve to make females feel more attractive to the opposite sex, we are also aware that their use in this context is a means of covering up, papering over and creating an illusion of femininity, thereby hinting at Camille's performance from the outset. Much like Georgette, these queens rely on visual representations of womanhood in order to fashion their "acts": "taking a quick Bette Davis like drag on her cigarette... she looked like one of the show girls you see in some of the magazines".[217] Rather than validating their sex, their parody underscores their inauthenticity further. As the scene continues, the pathos gathers, desolately contrasting Georgette's romantic conceit with reality:

> dont worry chippy, nobodys gonna hurtya. Maybe fuckya a little... she wanted them to think he was her lover, but more than that she wanted him as her lover... not as man and woman or two men, not as friends or lovers, but as two who love.[218]

Georgette's feminine desire - her need for love, companionship, romance and ultimately, truth - signal the normative feminine nature of her identity, as Eve Kosofsky Sedwick argues, "drag is inscribed not just in dress and its associated gender codes but in the body itself... not just on the body's clothed and most socially negotiable and discretionary surfaces".[219] What we glimpse in this scene then, is a version of Georgette which is quite naturally effeminate without the use of

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[215] Chrysanthi Nigianni & Merl Storr, *Deleuze and Queer Theory.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p.30

[216] Hubert Selby Jr. *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 1957), p.36

[217] Ibid. p.37

[218] Ibid. p.41

[219] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies.* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.220

visible props, momentarily exposing her subjectivity as vulnerable and in contrast to her nonchalant performance,:

> Would Rosie feel anything? Did she ever think of it? Did she ever long for love??? An analogy started to form and Georgette had to fight it, she had to fight before it defined itself or she would not be able to ignore or deny it. She popped more bennie and gulped gin.[220]

The queen's fastidious attempts to refine their visible femininity, to perform and therefore, in the hope of becoming, "female", are broken as the scene descends into chaos, and Georgette's hopes are mocked by debasing acts: "She listened to Lee screaming and the guys slapping her and cursing as they ripped her dress off... (No! No! No you fucking bitch . VINNie VINNie... VINNIE!!!! Not with Lee. I love you Vinnie. I love you. He will see my red spangled G string. Please Vinnie. Vinnie..).[221] Lee's rape at the hands of Vinnie, Malfie and Harry undercuts Georgette's invisible selfhood, once again asserting the visible sexual perversity associated with the queens, where their Othering denies dignity, love or even tenderness. Vinnie and Harry's aggression during the rape, and their utter removal of feeling, their disorder and debasement of Lee - "Harry took a slip from a drawer and wiped his cock. I bet yaknow youve been fucked! Harry and Malfie laughed and Lee watched Vinnie as he mounted her then closed her eyes"[222] - enforces the marginal status of the queen's performance, for it serves to render them as selfless, lacking in meaning and merely objects to be used and then rejected. Yet, despite the brutal reality of the rape, Georgette continues to escape into fantasy:

> they would go out together. A movie and hold hands or go for walks and he would light her cigarette.... We will defy them all, and love... Love. And we will be loved. And I will be loved. And the bird will come in high blowing love and we will fly.[223]

As Georgette's health deteriorates at the end of the scene, her escape becomes clearer, filled with "lakes", "swans", "cellos", "grace" and "moonlight", where her sex and sexuality no longer conflict with hegemonic law, "love me. Just love me".[224] Georgette's honesty and bravery in expressing her sexuality are in stark contrast to that of Harry, choosing to create an identity that denies aspects of external reality, gender and sex. Her embodiment of her homosexuality through drag, however, is nevertheless an attempted escape from her environment; an escape into an alternative reality which is destined to fail. Georgette's failure to escape her surroundings, her inability to control an environment which constantly inscribes not

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[220] Hubert Selby Jnr. *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 1957), p. 42

[221] Ibid. p.63

[222] Ibid. p.64

[223] Ibid. p.68

[224] Ibid. p.69

only herself, but the attitudes and bodies of others under patriarchal structures, mean she can never find subjectivity free from Othering or marginality, and as such, her reliance upon a performance of identity in order to escape based on the sight of others and the sight of other culturally inscribed bodies, ultimately renders her selfhood - her tenderness and desire - as invisible.

GANGS, YOUTHS AND CATCHER IN THE CITY

Both Harry and Georgette are exposed to a surreal world defined by hatred and cruelty within which they are trapped, but it is the street gangs of youths in *Last Exit* who fuel and elicit this profanity. As James Giles writes of Vinnie, Sal and Malfie, "[they] are predators of the wasteland of urban America hating everything and devoted to nothing. Lacking a spiritual component in their personalities, they seek no redemption".[225] It is the youth of the text who both goad Harry into dancing with Ginger and then beat him to death when his homosexuality is exposed; and it is their uncaring attitude towards Georgette, carelessly stabbing her in a game of mockery, before their display of male sexual dominance shatters Georgette's hope of finding peace within her self. The street gang is the sharp end of Brooklyn's spatial inscriptions, seeking recognition and therefore, selfhood in a world currently beyond their adolescent grasp. In order to be visible, defined and in this instance, assert their manhood, the youth of Selby's text express themselves through a public display of violence, strength, stamina and territoriality. By premising their adult subjectivities on a demonstrative identity and delinquency, urban youths rely upon an exaggerated performance of selfhood and high visibility (such as the Zoot Suit) in order to become and have bodily effects. In the same way the characters in the texts explored thus far have sought to "pass" as white, heterosexual or even merely as subject, youths seek to "pass" as adults - as bodies with a definitive and recognisable selfhood. As Joel Foreman writes:

> in passing as a given identity, even one you believe yourself to 'be' you must assert a stable, already categorical identity in order to be visible, to be representable, while passing would seem to defy categories, it must adhere to categories as a concept, as well as a means of social and political organisation.[226]

A youthful body's attempt to pass as an adult is therefore one which is both performative (belying their status as children) and a highly stylised series of poses

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[225] James Giles, *Understanding Hubert Selby Jr.* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p.40

[226] Joel Foreman, *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p.227

gleamed from observing adult bodies in New York. Hence, whilst their adulthood is inauthentic, their visible reiteration of a set of norms on the body is “passable”.

Much like the props - gender specific objects and stereotyped performances - used to validate heterosexual masculinity by Harry Black, youthful bodies adopt the use of certain “adult” objects to allow them to pass. Helen Gurley Brown’s *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) suggests the employment of objects within the domestic space can transform the “miserable” single girl into an adult sophisticate. As she writes in the chapter entitled “The Flat”:

> if you are to be a glamourous, sophisticated woman that exciting things happen to you, you need a flat, and you need to live in it alone!... a chic flat can tell the world that you, for one, are not one of those miserable pitiful single creatures.[227]

Brown juxtaposes the purported glamour of the female flat owner with the worthless inadequacy of the have not’s. She continues to list further items needed for the happiness of the heterosexual young woman, such as “lots of pictures... Travel posters... Television.... Hi Fi... [and] a Sexy Kitchen”[228] all of which are designed, ironically, not to permit the young woman to live in happiness as a single girl, but rather for her to snare a husband - provided of course, her performance within this manufactured space is successful. The contradiction within Brown’s argument is that whether they possess a chic space of their own or not, the young women remain the same in social status - single girls. But what the text does foster is the notion of an imagined, and perhaps better than the real, identity for young bodies purely based on the affective power of their performance, pose and the purchasing of specific objects. Thus, to “pass” as an adult is a concept entirely accessible to youths, for it promises the achievement of selfhood through the heightened visibility - and hence inauthenticity - of their performances.

Identity, as understood through the theoretical ideas of feminist corporeality, is inscribed by spatial signifiers surrounding the body and performative identity is an act which repeats visible normative poses, then young bodies are inscribed and perform according to street spaces. As children, they draw on the spaces which root their physicality. In this instance, New York’s streets frame children’s play and their formative years, thereby moulding their perception of adult identity through urban spaces. For this reason, because performance is based on the observation of another body, or a series of other bodies, youths draw on the bodies of street culture - bodies more prone to marginalisation, who have been left homeless, or pose a threat to familial togetherness -in order to construct their

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[227] Helen Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl.* (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1962), pp.125 -126

[228] Ibid. pp.140-143

enactment of an adult identity. Whilst the street gang of *Last Exit* display a remarkably detached attitude towards their own corrupt actions, and take pride in their terrorism, their performance is one inscribed by the other bodies inhabiting Brooklyn and, therefore, their subjectivities have effects precisely because they depend on other bodies and not their own, for their definition. Vinnie and Sal's vicious attack on Harry and their impervious state thereafter, illustrates this theory - they feel no remorse for what they have done as they do not have individual selfhoods by which to feel anything; instead they are agents of Brooklyn, perilously turning on their friends under the hegemonic social codes by which they style their performances.

Youthful bodies enact a manufactured subjectivity, for their identity is one which is "conceived as the product of self defining and self affirming acts".[229] This product results from a performative reiteration not from an inner identity, and in this sense, youths[230] - then a growing cultural group and subject of interest for contemporary sociological research- marginalised by their social ineffectuality and their status as children can only be defined by a set of actions designed consciously to be viewed and therefore to provide recognisable individuality. In order to become an "individual" in the same way granted to adults by cultural boundaries (married, single, professional, housewife), youths are characterised as subjects through self conscious enactments of marginality, subjects whose "self transformation... detaches itself agnostically from the coerced expectations of society".[231] It is the quest for truth, visibility and authenticity - a search in essence for themselves - which marks the advent of the rebel in Fifties culture; a body attempting to pass into self determination. As Leerom Medovoi argues, "the adolescent self generates his or her identity through a process that must be at least partially agnostic, refusing 'roles' and 'self images' offered up by others, and challenging... subject positionings".[232] The rebellious youthful body is one which acts out a self made identity premised upon the rejection of conformist signifiers, rejecting traditional models of subjectivity viewed in parents, other family members or even in their peers. Youth identities are therefore, by their very manufactured nature, marginal and transgressive by way of their attempt to distance themselves

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[229] Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p.5

[230] See Nash, Ilana. *American Sweethearts.* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2006; Breines, Wini. *Young, White and Miserable.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001; Shary, Timothy. *Teen Movies: American Youth on Screen.* Columbia University Press, New York, 2006; Commacchio, Cynthia. *The Domain of Youth.* Wilfred Laurier University Press, USA, 2008

[231] Ibid. p.5

[232] Ibid. p.23

from the cultural and social associations deemed to be unautonomous. In this way, the “rebel” is both an identifiably visible and individual identity and one entirely composed through bodily demonstration and performative poses.

City spaces are also invaluable to youths who wish to be associated with a particular identity, for it is a space where youths will be seen most frequently, where their actions will have a greater impact and where their performances are most likely to gain recognition as “adult”. As well as the male street gang, Selby’s *Last Exit* depicts the crude and demeaning downfall of Tralala, a fifteen year old Brooklyn-ite who commodifies her adult body, accepting her sexual objectification by “exploiting society’s dehumanization... [as a way] to survive”.[233] Tralala’s performative identity is one based on the visibility of her sexual availability, posturing the body in a way which accentuates her “adult” femininity - “Tralala was 15 the first time she was laid... Getting laid was getting laid. Why all the bullshit?”.[234] Her frank attitude towards sexuality and ultimately, the part she plays in being “laid” (as a body) underscores the lack of understanding inherent in childhood - the child’s occasional inability to comprehend their actions as significant or meaningful results in Tralala’s uncaring attitude towards her own body. Her body is granted this position as sexual object by way of her appearance, her ability to “pass” as a woman and not a girl - “she was built like a woman. Not like some kid. They preferred her”[235] and, whilst Tralala is happy to “get something out of it”,[236] she seems unable to realise the part she plays in the purchase of goods - the selling of her mature body for a chance to go to the movies, buy cigarettes or eat a pizza. Even Tralala’s choice of traded items are indicative of her child status. Her objectified body becomes increasingly useful for others, not only by way of sexual satisfaction, but also for financial gain, regularly providing the bait for the street gang’s muggings “they hit him until their arms were tired. Good kicks. Then a pie and beer. And Tralala. She was always there.”.[237] By “always being there”, Tralala does not only become an essential part of the gang’s criminal activity, but also part of the Brooklyn street itself, for there is never any suggestion of Tralala’s home or parents, and instead she drifts through Brooklyn, in and out of

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[233] James Giles, *Understanding Hubert Selby Jr.* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p.26

[234] Hubert Selby Jr. *Last Exit to Brooklyn.* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 1957), p.83

[235] Ibid. p.83

[236] Ibid. p.83

[237] Ibid. p.84

the Greeks with Vinnie and Sal, dressing well and "push[ing] her chest out"[238] before moving with the Army officers into Manhattan in search of better money.

Much like the city streets, Tralala too is capable of indifference, displaying spiteful violence when her clandestine intentions are exposed: "Tralala stomped on his face until both eyes were bleeding and his nose was split and broken then kicked him a few times in the balls. Ya rotten scumbag".[239] The rapid switch from whoring to beating highlights her performative identity, by suggesting the unsuccessful adhesion of either mask, her visibility and lack of subjectivity, as well as her spiteful childishness, kicking and screaming when she is denied her prize. Her overt sexuality, or at least her visible openness to the prospect of sleeping with men - "she told him she would show him the time of his life"[240] signifies a rejection of Fifties ideology, rebelling against the image of the suburban marriage and chastity as "ideal". Instead Tralala defines a transgressive version of the self through visible action which denies and resists hegemonic female domesticity. Yet, Selby seems to suggest the commodification of Tralala's body, her projection as only a "body" and not self and her acceptance of this contributes to her denial of selfhood. When talking to the Officer, she thinks "about her tits and what he had said and how she could get anybody with her tits and the hell with Willies and those slobs, she'd hang around here for a while and do alright".[241] Tralala seems to fully accept and embrace the voyeuristic nature of her body, and her refusal to consider herself by an alternative definition other than that granted to her through use of her "womanly" body, actively contributes to her downfall. This is enforced by the departure of the Officer - the only man who seems genuinely interested in her as an individual - for when he boards the train, she hopes to receive a large sum of money. So tainted is she by the visual perception of her body, that she anticipates "payment" for her services. But the Officer leaves her a letter; one which is never wholly revealed to the reader for Tralala "ripped the envelope apart and turned the letter over a few times. Not a cent.... Shit.... She dropped the letter and rode the subway".[242]

Her rejection of the letter heralds her demise, and the prospect of her finding identity beyond visibility is lost. Tralala falls from beauty to disarray and her

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[238] Ibid. p.85

[239] Ibid. p.87

[240] Ibid. p.91

[241] Ibid. p.92

[242] Ibid. p.94

desperation grows - “she pulled her dress tight but didnt think of washing”[243] before concluding “the honeymoon was over and still she pulled the sweater tight but there was no one there to look”.[244] Notably, her moment of possible escape with the Officer takes place in Manhattan and not in Brooklyn, whilst her rejection of love and honest subjectivity gradually removes her from the city and pulls her back to a marginal neighbourhood where brutality reigns. Much like Harry’s shift from heterosexuality to homosexuality between the city and Brooklyn, Tralala momentarily shifts from child to adult, but her dismissal of the letter’s possibilities diverts her route back to marginality, and she returns to the Greeks at the end of the chapter. Only, Tralala has been debased by her transition, arriving back to the Willies “muttering and cursing, sweat streaking the dirt on her face”.[245] Selby’s narrative style enforces the gathering momentum of the final scene. From her arrival in the bar, there is a breakdown in grammar and punctuation, and instead, all sentences and paragraphs flow into one long descriptive sentence which runs to the end of the passage, creating a sense of the unstoppable flow towards destruction and chaos. Determined to be deemed sexually appealing, Tralala desperately objectifies herself - she “asked Fred how he liked her tits”, and she “opened Jacks fly and smiled”, before finally, in the face of rejection, she “pulled her sweater up and bounced her tits on the palms of her hands and grinned and grinned and grinned and Jack and Fred whooped and roared... exhibiting her pride to the bar”.[246] With her sexual advances rebuffed, Tralala’s identity and ultimately her power, is threatened, destabilising her reliance upon a visible selfhood, and hence her desperation increases as she seeks sexual advancement to validate her identity:

> she was dragged down the steps tripping over someones feet and scraping her ankles on the stone steps and yelling but the mob not slowing their pace dragged her by her arm.... to a wrecked car in the lot on the corner of 57th street and yanked her clothes off and pushed her inside and a few guys fought to see who would be first.[247]

In the final pages of Tralala’s chapter, she is repeatedly gang raped in a parking lot, overseen by children, drunks and seamen, whose enjoyment of her as “entertainment”, passing round beers and “taking turns” and their disregard of her results in the brutal shattering of her body, literally and figuratively breaking her commodified beauty and bodily subjectivity:

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[243] Ibid. p.97

[244] Ibid. p.98

[245] Ibid. p.99

[246] Ibid. pp.100 -101

[247] Ibid. p.102

> somebody shoved the beer can against her mouth and they all laughed and Tralala cursed and spit out a piece of tooth and someone shoved it again and they laughed and yelled and the next one mounted her and her lips were split this time and the blood trickled to her chin.[248]

Even when Tralala loses consciousness, the mauling of her body continues when the children tear "her clothes to small scraps put out a few cigarettes on her nipples pissed on her jerkedoff on her jammed a broomstick up her snatch".[249] The unsettling scene shatters Tralala's body, and in doing so, shatters any refuge of selfhood, for her visible identity has now been destroyed, scarred and marked by the volatility of Brooklyn streets, rapidly passing her over from childhood to death, dying as she lived - "a wasted and embittered receptacle of the material and the savage".[250]

A similar case of a youth "passing" as adult through visible bodily signifiers occurs in Nicholas Ray's film *Rebel Without A Cause*. As discussed in the previous chapter, James Dean's character Jim Stark attempts to become visible through an identity based on an independence expressed through the body in order to counter his father's effeminate male domesticity. By removing himself from the domestic setting, and in order to be successful in his attempt to distance himself from all associations of domesticity (including that of childhood), Jim's body must reflect an identity devoid of normative categories; one which visibly signifies individuality and an autonomous selfhood. It is for this reason that Jim wears the red jacket, a colour chosen to reflect his masculinity through aggression, and therefore project a form of masculinity based upon traditional attributes of strength and power. Furthermore, the cinematic depiction of Dean is such that he is objectified as sexually desirable, in much the same manner as the female protagonists Judy and *Last Exit's* Tralala. He is admired by both male and female characters in the film, and Ray's choreography enforces a voyeuristic gaze onto Dean's rebellious male body. In doing so, the equation of the visibility of youth with sexuality reconfigures the parameters of masculinity, so that the erotic male body may now encompass both heterosexual and homosexual desires, eroticising "new" manhood in contrast to suburban domesticity. Yet, Dean's appropriation of a visible 'adult' male identity through objects and a performance on and around the body once again destabilises the parameters of gender discourse, for Jim's "passing" into adult individuality and Tralala's sexuality both manage to highlight the performative nature of visible subjectivity; both "adult" identities are entirely manufactured in

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[248] Ibid. p.103

[249] Ibid. p.103

[250] James Giles, *Understanding Hubert Selby Jnr.* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p.31

order to appear as something they are not. Their momentarily successful transition into society as identifiable bodies fosters the notion of performance and visibility passing as "real" with their highly visible versions of selfhood akin to identity in the adult world. Both characters embody the object world of mass culture, a space where:

> commercial consensus [dictates an identity through] social conformity, which signifies precisely the absence of an authentic identity since mass consumption/ incorporation precludes the possession of psychoanalytical autonomy.[251]

Despite their ability to perform believable identities, both Tralala and Jim's youth, rooted in mass culture, denies them access to true rebellion, instead rebelling from within the frames of conformity as dictated by their spatial environment.

J.D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) exposes a similarly fraught struggle between youth culture's desire for rebellion and selfhood, and their entrapment within the world of consumption. Salinger's protagonist, Holden Caulfield addresses the reader throughout the text by way of a first-person narrative, providing us with both a highly insightful account of American Cold War teen experiences, but also a sense of forging the self from the writing of such a reflexive prose. The same is true of Ellison's text, where Invisible Man can rebuild subjectivity through the formation of his own narrative, but Holden, as a young boy provides quite a different perspective on the world he sees, and rather than framing his experiences in a paradoxical movement from dark to light, Holden ventures deeper into a world neither he, nor we can understand, blinded repeatedly by his abhorrence for "phoniness". As Medovoi asserts:

> [in *Catcher*] America appears as a 'lonely crowd' of other directed people, a landscape of characters who have fully internalised a mass cultural logic of mutual equivalence, commerce and sign exchange. It is them who allow Holden to stand out as an identity figure, against a nation that has become phony because it caters or prostitutes itself to a system of commerce.[252]

Indeed, Holden's increasing dislike for the other directed world he is expected to enter into as an adult moves the events of the text in an altogether unlikely direction, shifting from youthful visibility towards adult invisibility at the novel's close.

Holden's "rebellious" qualities are established early in the text through both his rejection of parental figures, implicitly marking Holden as an individual, and also his loathing of anything which isn't "real"; "if there's one thing I hate, it's the movies.

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[251] Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p.94

[252] Ibid. p.78

Don't even mention them to me".[253] Holden's youth is also emphasised at the start of the novel, where his encounter with Mr Spencer highlights his difficulty in accepting the concept of old age, "I used to think about about old Spencer quite a lot, and if you thought about him too much, you wondered what the heck he was still living for".[254] Old Mr Spencer, whilst making Holden uneasy about age and bodily deterioration, also serves as a the voice of hegemonic conformity, expressing "life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays according to the rules".[255] Holden's response is telling - "game, my ass. Some game"[256] - and thus sets up the parameters for a character who seeks truth in a world he finds "phony", searching for a visible selfhood that need not conform to the "man in the gray flannel suit", but instead might simply "become" visible. Yet, Holden's own narration is flawed by the phoniness of the world he criticises, for he too is victim to a culture premised upon sight and surface - "I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life"[257] - casting doubt onto not only the world depicted, but Holden's ability to find truth. And perhaps, for this reason, Holden searches for a visible adult self in the all the wrong places, inextricably marked by the spaces of New York (such as the misplaced "deer stalker" hat worn in a city not pastoral space); a city space we already understand to be marginal, transgressive and interwoven with the signifiers of mass culture.

Holden pays particular attention to the appearance of others, and his undercutting of their performance with his own antithetical opinion highlights the performative nature of visible identity - one he ironically seeks to perfect: "He never cleaned it or anything. He always looked good when he was finished fixing himself up, but he was a secret slob anyway, if you knew him the way I did".[258] Holden clearly recognises the performativity of appearance and the importance of surface identity as a mask, and whilst he seems to begrudge this kind of 'phoniness' in others, he too is guilty of such behaviour: "I hate the movies like poison, but I get a bang imitating them.... All I need's an audience. I'm an exhibitionist".[259] Holden's quest for truth and selfhood seems destined to fail, for he too is subjected to the

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[253] J. D Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye.* (London: Penguin, 1951), p.1

[254] Ibid. p.6

[255] Ibid. p.7

[256] Ibid. p.7

[257] Ibid. p.14

[258] Ibid. p.23

[259] Ibid. p.25

inscriptions of mass culture and consumerism, and he too performs a role within the structures of patriarchal discourse.

His choice of New York for his escape from Pencey emphasises this point. His inability to rid himself of cultural signifiers, for his choice is marked by his domestic home and his love for his sister - both decidedly child-like impetus for running away from school. Yet, Holden sees this as a break for freedom, “all of a sudden, I decided what I’d really do, I’d get the hell out of Pencey.. So what I decided to do, I decided I’d take a room in a hotel in New York”.[260] Whilst Holden sees this as a chance to do what he “really” wants, his decision to hide from Thurmer’s letter by going to a hotel, is not one of adulthood, but rather childhood - seeking to avoid the wrath of his parents until it had been “thoroughly digested”.[261] Yet Holden’s voyage to New York is intended, at least for him, to provide some selfhood, for much like Dean’s worn rebellion (his red jacket), Holden sets out with “my red hunting hat on, and turned the peak around to the back, the way I liked it”[262] marking his journey with a visibly rebellious and independent act.

However, Holden’s quest begins with a telephone call, immediately refuting his purported independence and autonomy. Instead he appears reliant upon others to validate his being - “The first thing I did when I got off at Penn Station, I went into this phone booth. I felt like giving somebody a buzz... I couldn't think of anybody to call up”.[263] Here, despite his desire for adult truth, Holden reveals the child he is, underscoring this point during his conversation with the cab driver, “you know those ducks in that lagoon right near Central Park South? That little lake? By any chance, do you happen to know where they go, the ducks, when it gets all frozen over?”.[264] Holden’s question seems entirely childlike and idiotic, thereby restoring his identity as child rather than adult. Furthermore, his disgust for the sights he sees from the other hotel window adds to this establishment of Holden’s status as child, and not adult, for he reacts in a remarkably disinterested way for a young boy:

> I saw one guy... walking up and down the room, taking these very small steps, the way a woman does, and smoking a cigarette and looking at himself in the mirror. He was all alone too... I saw a man and a woman squirting water out of their mouths at each other.... I’m not kidding, that hotel was lousy with perverts. I was probably the only normal bastard in the whole place.[265]

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[260] Ibid. p.45

[261] Ibid. p.45

[262] Ibid. p.46

[263] Ibid. p.53

[264] Ibid. p.54

[265] Ibid. p.55

We might expect this scene to herald interest or excitement in a youthful boy, where sexual voyeurism might signal the passing into adulthood, only Holden seems indifferent and aloof. When he considers sexual activity, he promptly voices "I don't like the idea. It stinks... Sex is something I really don't understand".[266] Holden, this time, manages to reveal himself to be inexperienced and therefore, childlike, and this is compounded by his attempt to pass into adulthood by calling Faith, the prostitute he met in Princeton "You sound a little on the young side... we'll. You're very sweet."[267] Her rejection of Holden illustrates his inability to pass, and therefore the ineffectuality of the performance he seeks through his city escape.

Holden continues however on his quest for visible adulthood, going to the Lavender Room bar for a drink, where, despite his criticism of the other drinkers, "they were mostly old... you knew they didn't really live in New York", it is he who is Othered by his age "I'm sorry sir.. but do you have some verification of your age? Your driver's license perhaps?".[268] Whilst the city promised to offer him truth, selfhood and "becoming" adult, Holden finds the city increasingly capable of destruction, eradicating the self he had previously known as well as the one he desires: "New York's terrible when somebody laughs on the street very late at night. You can hear it for miles. It makes you feel so lonesome and depressed. I kept wishing I could go home and shoot the bull for a while".[269] Rather than providing distance between childhood and adult independence, the space of New York - its ambiguity and density of bodies - pushes Holden towards the domestic unit once again, seeking refuge from a world he feels incapable of understanding, or even liking; "sitting there all by myself. There wasn't anything to do except smoke and drink."[270]

Notably, it is at this stage in the narrative that Holden begins to regress into childhood memories, drawing on the togetherness of domesticity in contrast to his alienation in the city space, remembering a story about his yellow gloves, which, although representative of childhood, is firmly rooted in the same city space "when I was a kid, I used to walk all the way up to our apartment very frequently. Twelve

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[266] Ibid. p.56

[267] Ibid. p.58

[268] Ibid. p.62

[269] Ibid. p.74

[270] Ibid. p.78

stories".[271] The mention of the height of the building, and its nature as an apartment, not a house, firmly locates Holden's childhood within the city space he is attempting to escape into, further undermining his ability to dislocate his past identity from his prospective future version. Holden's quest seems futile, for if bodies are inscribed by their location, then Holden will be unable to find a passage into adulthood from within the same space he has associated and been moulded into from childhood. The two concepts interrupt and destabilise each other, and Holden is left confused; trapped between a desire for an adult New York of his making, and the happiness of his childhood New York. The scene where Holden visits the Museum of Natural History enforces this further, a place he knows "like a book".[272] Here, the Indians and Eskimo models symbolise familial harmony and, by extension, the nuclear family of Cold War ideology - a sight Holden finds comforting in its stagnation: "the best thing, though, in the museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be fishing... Nobody'd be different".[273] Holden finds reassurance in sameness and conformity, marking his ineffectuality to pass as symptomatic of his fundamental conformity; for Holden no longer seems eager to "become", but rather to stay the same.

It is for this reason that his attempt to persuade Sally to elope with him fails "you can't, that's all. In the first place, we're both practically children"[274] and why Luce (the virile version of maleness Holden looks up to) chastises him "when in the hell are you going to grow up?".[275] Belittled by Luce and rejected by Sally, Holden is faced with his ineffectual passage into adulthood, ultimately revealing the antithesis of the truth he seeks to unearth - he is a child. Having been confronted by his inability to find a visible version of selfhood which contrasts with phoniness, Holden has to embrace the truth and physicality of his body as youthful, and it is at this point in the novel that New York turns on him and alienates him further. He is suddenly, in a place he has lived "all my life", lost, "I knew right where it was - it was right near Central Park South and all - but I still couldn't find it... I kept walking and walking, and it kept getting darker and darker and spookier and spookier".[276] There is a sense of vulnerability and fear emerging from a space he had previously

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[271] Ibid. p.80

[272] Ibid. p.108

[273] Ibid. p.109

[274] Ibid. p.119

[275] Ibid. p.131

[276] ibid. p.139

known “like the back of my hand”,[277] yet Holden’s sudden loss of bearing may be indicative of his loss of possible adult selfhood, for now accepting his bodily state as child, he is no longer capable of performing in a way which might mask his fear, susceptibility and exposure to the wilderness of the adult world.

Holden’s childlike body too becomes highly visible from this point on as well, for his visit to the home of Mr Antolini exposes his vulnerability further. After seeking a place to stay for the night with a trusted family friend, and a former teacher, Holden becomes the subject of Mr Antolini’s homosexual desire:

> I felt something on my head, some guys hand. Boy, it really scared hell out of me. What it was, it was Mr Antolini’s hand. What he was doing was, he was sitting on the floor right next to the couch, in the dark and all, and he was sort of petting me or patting me on the goddam head... I’m simply sitting here, admiring.[278]

Unable to fully comprehend the situation, Holden feels uneasy. His inability to gauge the sexual intention of Mr Antolini and the very fact that he chose to put himself in such a situation, once again underscores his inability to pass into adulthood, failing to accurately view himself as homosexually desirable in the same way he fails to find pleasure in his hotel room voyeurism. His lack of fluidity, his need for permanence, and his desire for truth are all defeated by New York itself, for it is the marginality of other bodies, the ever changing space and the high visibility of surface representations which confront him here, refusing access to a solid and identifiable authenticity. Holden is a product of his time, he is the ultimate censor of culture - a misanthropic, nihilistic, melancholic youth whose attempts to transgress the bounded space of identity paradoxically creates a willing acceptance of modern culture. His disillusionment springs from his forced embrace of a “phony” American culture. As Holden himself concludes:

> You can’t ever find a place that’s nice and peaceful, because there isn’t any. You may think there is, but once you get there, when you’re not looking, somebody’ll sneak up and write ‘Fuck you’ right under your nose.[279]

Ultimately, this is the “truth” of New York; it is always changing and it is always restless, shifting boundaries and frames with shifting fluid bodies. Whilst Holden’s quest was initially for the anti “phony” in adult life, a way of “becoming” where you could be yourself, what he unearths is his inability to shift, his inability to “become” New York, for the truth he seeks denies the permanence he longs for. It is for this reason that Holden eventually inhabits the non-space of the asylum, a place unmarked by the outside world, where mental instability might permit a world of

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[277] Ibid. p.139

[278] Ibid. p.172

[279] Ibid. p.183

your choosing to exist only for you, without frame, without boundary and without structure; a deterritorialised space of one's own.

Through Holden, Tralala and Jim we encounter a world which blurs the divide between visibility and invisibility. Whilst Invisible Man attempted to fracture the boundaries of bodily visibility into a visible subjectivity, and Harry and Georgette manipulated their surface appearance in order to be either visible or invisible, youth inhabit an entirely different space. Unlike the fluid concept of sexuality, or the density of black bodies in the metropolis, young bodies are contained within the frame of domesticity by their position as youths. Whilst the adults of Selby's and Ellison's texts find a passage through their environment in order to become a visible version of the body with effects, Holden's failure to pass is a direct reflection of his inexperience and hence, his age. Contained within a young frame, he straddles the divide between the desire for visibility and the safety of invisibility, restlessly battling within himself between adult selfhood and a child's role. Unable to find the "realness" of society he hoped to find, he is no longer compelled to age, no longer desiring visibility and hence, he retreats into the marginal space of the psyche. Above all, these texts highlight not only the importance of vision in cities, but also the shifting and changeable nature of cities, and in particular, New York itself. We recognise bodies are shaped and moulded by the city - Holly, the Beats, Harry Black - but what does this shift imply for a body who itself must shift between spaces? How is a city body effected by a physical shift between city and suburbia? City bodies, as this chapter illustrates, are capable of transformation - from light to dark; invisible to visible; hetero to homosexual; child to adult - and this transformation is facilitated by the signifiers of the city itself, promoting and aiding a fluid, transitional identity. Masculinity in particular, is shown to be manufactured rather than inherent - Harry's machismo can be performed at will; Georgette and the other queens' femininity belies their masculine bodies; Jim's father is cuckolded; and Holden has to force himself to engage with sexuality. This underscoring of the iterative nature of identity, the performativity of maleness, points to the reliance of the subject on its material environment to give it shape, coherence and function. When the subject moves between different material environments - between urban centers and ghettos or city edge spaces or between city and suburbia - the shift or transition in that subjectivity, becoming other to itself, as Tralala becomes object, Harry becomes homosexual, Holden becomes insane and Holly becomes fictional.

ESCAPE FROM THE CITY INTO SUBURBIA?

The contemporary ABC series *Mad Men* (2007-) develops and illuminates the representation of Cold War gender identities through depicting the home lives of suburban corporate men and the role played by their wives (at home) and young children. *Mad Men,* depicts the world of heteronormative conformity, upholding the surfaces of Cold War ideology. The advertising executives depicted in *Mad Men*, whose central male characters routinely move between suburban and city spaces, generate and perpetuate a type of culture which informs suburban spaces by governing a media sphere which emphasises cultural visibility. As advertising executives, they actively sell visions of the good life, proscribing a form of identity based on visual signifiers through images, and therefore, despite their urban working environment, it is these city bodies who shape suburbia from within the metropolitan frame. The male bodies of *Mad Men* are citified by their reliance and belief in visibility, but suburbanised by their invisible private lives. Indeed, all the characters are modern caricatures of fifties figures:

> the mildly eccentric conservative Republican Bertram Cooper is an evident devotee of Ayn Rand's Objectivism, just as Joan Holloway is the living embodiment of Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl,* and Betty Draper suffers daily from what Betty Friedan called the "problem that has no name".[280]

Yet, in the same way these fictional characters operate as nostalgic reminders of Fifties ideologies, they also, more subtly, convey the era's reliance upon surface as "real". Don Draper may be a powerful advertising executive with a beautiful family, but he hides behind this mask - as do his family - and the show's visual emphasis on mise-en-scene, and the preoccupation with surfaces, directly enforces the invisibility of selfhood and reinforces the notion of surface as defining substance.

Cities clearly foster relationships between urban bodies and the metropolitan space itself, reflecting inscriptive elements onto and into each other, demonstrating the theories of Grosz and Colomina on object and subject interplay. The texts explored here demonstrate these flows and exchanges as well as suggesting the potential for slippage between conformity and individualism. Much like the object/subject interplay explored here, suburban spaces becoming increasingly commodified during the Cold War, suggesting a reading of the self through domestic technologies, as well as the architecture and environment at large. The next chapter develops this notion in suburban spaces, and explores the slippage between visibility and invisibility and the limited transgressional possibilities.

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[280] Gary Edgerton, *Mad Men; Dream Come True TV*. (London: IB Tauris, 2011), p.xxiv

CHAPTER TWO: TECHNOLOGY IN SUBURBIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

In a study of identity in postwar American spaces, suburbia is filled with a plethora of paradoxes. It is an ideologically formed landscape, one which is "contained" and purpose-built with domestic roles in mind. The suburban landscape is comprised of identical housing units each constructed for the single married family, where communal spaces are the architectural focal point, for it is the space itself which "embodies a new ideal of family life, an ideal so emotionally charged that it made the home more sacred to the bourgeois than any place of worship".[1] This chapter aims to delve into these nostalgically remembered child-centric spaces, unearthing the malaise beneath the surface in works from Updike, Nabakov, Wilson and Yates, whose texts reinforce notions of the disunity between surface, vision and substance, examining the role performativity plays in these spaces and on these bodies.

Suburbia is centered around enabling and proscribing a certain way of life - that of a utopia, an imagined and entirely unobtainable model of perfection maintained through surveillance and visible conformity. This utopian ideal sprang from the landscape itself, one which "emphasized the prospect of perfectibility through its precise, meticulous plotting and architecture"[2]. As illustrated by *Mad Men*, suburbia is a community which is inextricably linked to the urban, public sphere (through transportation) but also isolated from it, and left in its own sphere, an environment unlike any other where trasngressional possibility is seemingly limited. Intended to provide male breadwinners with easy access to their city jobs, and an impressively grand home for the homemaker, suburbia is at odds with all other living spaces and is rarely envisioned without allusions to a dispiriting, alienating and dense space where identity is debilitated. It is a place which is "nowhere" - removed from public spaces of the city, and distanced from the landscape surrounding it. In essence, suburbia is its own socially constructed and contained space, where domesticity, the family and homogeneity are paramount.

Contemporary Cold War Studies frequently develops the idea of pernicious suburban spaces, and underscores the relevance and supremacy of domesticated

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[1] Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias; The Rise and Fall of Suburbia.* (New York: Basic Books Ltd, 1987), p.3

[2] Robert Beuka, R. *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American Film and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.5

gender roles therein. Nadel's *Containment Culture* (1995) and Breine's *Young, White and Miserable* (1992) are studies which highlight the force of conformity, homogeneity and conservatism in white, middle-class America. Whilst some accounts of Cold War American culture have traced a gradual transgression from individual conformity towards a culturally "authentic self", very few have explored the relationship between the spaces and boundaries within which selves are created and/or manipulated, and I would argue that these architectural spaces - the very same ones designed to homogenize society - can be used, not only as indicators of gender performativity, but as also enabling heterogeneity and the rejection of conformity. It is useful to consider a prototypical example of this paradoxical culture: Tupperware. With its obvious relationship to domesticity, Tupperware functions on one level as an indicator of the containment of women within the domestication of the home, both literally driving them away from leisure and towards the kitchen, and metaphorically confining their gender identity to the kitchen and domestic appliances. Yet, Tupperware brought with it a new social arena; a sense of belonging removed from the family "togetherness", and brought women from separate homes into an alternative public space by connecting individual kitchens to one another.[3] Similarly, despite the "containment" of private, domestic spaces, television - an object owned by 42 million Americans in 1958[4] - created an ambiguous flow between public space and the privacy of the home by bringing the outside world into the living room.

Both *SuburbiaNation* (2004) and William Saunders' *Sprawl and Suburbia* (2005) present suburban space as responsible for the creation of homogeneity and hegemonic "normalcy". As Saunders states, the architecture of these manufactured communities follows a pattern where:

> individual expression is applauded in consumer design but not in architecture - individuality must not undermine a development's familiarity, its buyer's loyalty, and its house's utility for showcasing other commodities.[5]

Hence, the living spaces of suburbia are designed to eliminate individuality, and instead must remain "familiar" to the buyer and producer of commodities. If suburbia embodies the ideal of family life, a middle-class utopia, then those who inhabit these buildings unrelentingly and automatically act out these ideals in their everyday life and if all buildings, structures and interiors are the same, then all inhabitants carry out the same roles. The artificial nature of suburbia is highlighted

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[3] See Alison Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America.* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2001)

[4] Nina Liebman*, Living Room Lectures; The Fifties Family in Film and Television*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995)

[5] William Saunders, *Sprawl and Suburbia: A Harvard Design Magazine Reader.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p.79

in Robert Beuka's *SuburbiaNation*, which explores the dystopian inversion of the American dream through suburban spaces. As he argues, suburbia is "the mirror (or perhaps, better put, the picture window) through which middle class American culture casts its uneasy reflective gaze upon itself",[6] and it was the homogeneity of the suburban buildings themselves which elided "the very notion of difference among suburban residents".[7] Suburbia then, is about similarity, a shared set of ideals, standards and most importantly, a communal ideology firmly rooted in the conformity dictated by Cold War culture. Most notably, suburban living created a sense of suffocation, particularly for women: "the women of suburbia had become so enveloped within a shifting domestic sphere as to have lost perspective on or access to the world beyond the walls of the home".[8] Indeed, women's principal role in this community was to be confined to the home and estranged from the public world, while their primary duties included the maintenance of a clean home and contented family unit. As Beuka notes in a reading of *The Stepford Wives* (1972), suburban living itself marked the breakdown in female subjectivity, and it was the *spaces* of suburbia (the picture windows, manicured lawns and commodity fetishism) that created "a dehumanizing environment for women".[9] In short, no "real" women can live in the artificial environment created by the men in Stepford.

Suburbia was widely understood to be the site of "containment" both in theoretical terms (as a division between marginal and conformist identities and ideals) and physically (as the creation of privately owned spaces, designed to homogenize and domesticate both genders). In order to develop my theory relating to architectural spaces as facilitators and negotiators of the self, the notion of "private" and "contained" spaces needs to be addressed. As Deborah Nelson notes, female Cold War identity was closely bound to the feminine space of the home, where gender roles were "metaphors of a highly unstable border between public and private.. to defend the boundaries of home and nation".[10] In essence, the containment of Fifties' identity meant the containment of homogenous identity, particularly with regard to gender, within the privacy of the home. The home emerges as the main site of an imposed gender role, enforced through an emphasis on domestication, and therefore influenced an increasing fear of effeminate men and the child-centrism of these environments. In terms of public

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[6] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.4

[7] Ibid. p.5

[8] Ibid. p.150

[9] Ibid. p.172

[10] Deborah Nelson, *Private and Public Spaces: Pursuing Privacy in Cold War America.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p.114

and private spaces, surveillance suggests more troubling implications for gender identities. Whilst traditionally female spaces are private and domestic, the use of suburban architectural structures which blurred the distinctions between inside and outside created a domestic sphere which was permanently visible. For women, this meant an effort to "keep up appearances" both in the home and on the body. As Nelson argues, women's bodies functioned as unstable and unbounded spaces permanently visible through picture windows and on suburban sidewalks.[11] Female bodies in Fifties' suburbia were highly visible, and this visual objectification implies a system of masculine control. This notion arguably inspired Ira Levin's 1972 horror novella, *The Stepford Wives* where women are murdered to give way for manufactured versions of themselves who function solely as aesthetically pleasing and subservient domestic servants. Clearly aligning domestic female identity with the imaginary, the suggestion here is of a suburban perfection which is only attainable at the price of female subjectivity. By extension, Levin's novel gives way to the idea of a commodified space so heavily conditioned by gadgetry and artifice, that no real women can survive, and instead the public sphere is one which is self-consciously fashioned to reflect appearance rather than reality.

DOMESTIC TECHNOLOGY FOR DOMESTIC WOMEN

For women, magazines and cookbooks proved to be particularly influential, directly influencing the domestication of femininity. As Nancy Walker notes, magazines provided more than mere reading material, rather:

> the magazines' essential function as guidebooks and how to manuals (how to dress, set a table, raise healthy children, stay on a budget, improve a marriage) meant that they inevitably presented a level of ideality to which women might aspire.[12]

Indeed, an examination of women's magazines during the postwar era illustrates how women were expected to behave in modern society, and therefore function as an object within suburban spaces which serve to mould domesticated femininity. What becomes apparent from *The Ladies Home Journal* and *Coronet,* for example, is the level of anonymity and inauthenticity involved in domestic perfection. Repeatedly, the woman's place is secondary to that of her husband, as seen in Clifford Adams' "Making Marriage Work" (*Ladies Home Journal,* January 1948, 26)) and Mrs Dale Carnegie's "How to Help Your Husband Get Ahead" (*Coronet,* January 1954), where a woman's unhappiness translates into a wrongdoing on her behalf:

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[11] Ibid

[12] Nancy Walker, *Women's Magazines: 1940 - 1960. Gender Roles and Popular Press.* (Boston: Bedford/St Martins, 1998), p.15

> Has she learned to play Bridge, a game Bill enjoys? She's done none of these things. Perhaps Alice can be shown what is wrong. To attain the happiness she longs for, she must face her needs and try to satisfy them. If she can accept this idea, she will begin to enjoy life - and so will her husband.[13]

And this regrettable situation requires a boost to your husbands business in order to make a marriage work, "She must adjust herself to hours of loneliness and fill up the gap with activities of her own. If she fails to make this adjustment, part of the man's necessary concentration on his studies will be clouded by uneasiness over his wife's unhappiness".[14] In both examples above, the use of terms such as "shown" and "adjust" imply, not only a mode of suburban femininity devoid of individuality, but also one which is inessential and manufactured. Rather than concentrating on forming happiness from personal pursuits, women's magazines continued to instill an almost mechanical approach to being female in domestic spaces: "To enable a man to work at top efficiency, his home must provide him with certain basic elements; relaxation... comfort... order and cleanliness".[15] As this quotation reveals, women's roles were invisible, for domestic success was about putting other members' needs before theirs. The homemaker's role was to provide a man's home ("his" home) with "basic" elements in order for him to succeed. At no stage is there a suggestion of a level of communication beyond that associated with the home, for the homemaker merely "provides" elements for the happiness of other bodies. Women's roles were so tightly bound to that of the home, as the language used in women's magazines illustrates, that women's subjectivity *was* the home - domestication is equal to a woman's voice. Hence, as repeated by the editorial content of the contemporary women's magazines - *Good Housekeeping, Coronet, Ladies Home Journal* - a woman can only find herself through domestic chores, for it is only in this capacity that she becomes purposeful, or gives her body "an event". Yet, there is something troublesome in the nature of these highly proscriptive texts, as Nancy Walker argues:

> In many ways the women's magazines reinforced the search for housekeeping perfection. Typical is an article in the April 1950 issue of *Good Housekeeping* that equates a pretty efficiently organised kitchen with the skills necessary to make a perfect lemon pie. Yet it is also clear from the magazines that women needed a great deal of help to become domestic engineers, and they set out to provide it; lists of utensils that a bride needed to set up her first kitchen, menus and schedules for weekend entertaining, and articles on how to dust, shop and budget time and money.[16]

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[13] Clifford Adams, "Making Marriage Work", *Ladies Home Journal*. January 16, 1954

[14] Dale Carnegie, "How to Help Your Husband Get Ahead", *Coronet.* January, 1954, Issue 65.

[15] Ibid

[16] Nancy Walker, *Women's Magazines: 1940 - 1960. Gender Roles and Popular Press.* (Boston: Bedford/St Martins, 1998), p.145

Clearly women's magazines helped to domesticate women in the private sphere, and, by doing so, begin to suggest something unnatural in this process. But again, this serves to illustrate the influential nature of suburban objects, for if it is unnatural for women to be associated with the home, and this role has been culturally fostered, then by extension, there must exist an ideological force ensuring femininity remains de-limited.

On the whole, American subjectivity in suburban spaces cannot function autonomously and independently, as subjectivities are informed and shaped by this suburban landscape in order to continually enforce homogeneity. Suburbia, certainly through its architecture and literary depictions, fosters ambiguous boundaries between public and private spaces, and rather than creating distinct spheres of individuality, leaves areas of the home and community open to surveillance. In an area characterized by homogeneity and a sense of collective identity, the threat of surveillance safeguards the environment and its inhabitants against transgressive behaviour and thereby actively works towards creating a landscape marked by conservatism and hegemonic values. Consider the picture windows, identical housing and manicured lawns, so distinctive of suburbia, and how these impact upon individuals. Essentially, by maintaining a particular public appearance, the suburban landscape turns all private spaces into those of a public spectacle, and, in doing so, opens these spaces up to scrutiny from the outside world. Furthermore, the idea of surveillance ties neatly into the ideology of the Cold War by enforcing a heterosexual community with "American" family values. By extension this also suggests a suburban system of appearance maintained through control, discipline and power. As Bennett Berger writes, the landscape and inhabitants of suburbia function as "an image of a way of life for the nonsuburban public."[17] In effect, the omnipresence of surveillance suggests suburbanites are nothing more than a collection of symbols, each acting out the American way of life in order to create a unified cultural identity. This artificial and aesthetic aspect of suburbia is clearly identified in *The Truman Show* (1998) where the protagonists' life is played out as entertainment for a television audience and his relationships are formed unknowingly with actors. As Robert Beuka argues:

> [The Truman Show leaves] behind at the end of the film.. a vision of the suburb as not only an artificial byproduct of television culture but indeed a prison, a (nearly) inescapable grid of preprogrammed behavior... [suburbia is] not only an

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[17] Bennett Berger, *Looking for America; Essays on Youth, Suburbia, and other American Obsessions.* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc, 1971), p.158

> artificial reconstruction of small town America, but also more tellingly, a landscape of imprisonment and control.[18]

Indeed, there is something troublesome about the way in which this text is viewed through the lens of television programming, suggesting suburban life is both an imagined fantasy and an artificial way of life. Whilst this gestures toward the nostalgic views of Fifties' suburbia as warped and inaccurate, it also serves as testament to the way in which the suburban milieu displaces reality and reinforces fabrication as ideal.

Judith Butler argues in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), that gender can be understood as a social construct; a categorizing of actions rather than being. To be male, for example, is to act masculine, and therefore to *perform* a male role according to hegemonic rules. For Butler, this performative gender is, "not a singular act for it is always a reiteration of a norm or a set of norms... [and to be performative, is to create] an 'outside', a domain of unlivability and unintelligibility".[19] Hence, gender is something we repeatedly create and act out, belying the inner organizing core of our autonomous identity. Understood in this way, suburbia can be seen as something which directly influences the way in which subjectivity is acted and performed for it is never authentic and always merely a matter of performing the "norm". In the same way that suburbia is a social construction, so too are the gender roles within its boundaries, for "there is no subject prior to its construction".[20] Whilst this may be limiting in such a constructed space as suburbia, it can also allow for the possibility of escape.[21]

Gender and suburbia are, in effect, intertwined with one another. This is an environment where the landscape and built environments enforce homogeneity and sameness - hence, gender falls into a pattern of normalcy and containment as dictated by the spaces surrounding subjectivities. It is where domestic gender roles

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[18] Robert Beuka, *SuburbiaNation; Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American Film and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.13 & 227

[19] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex.* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 12 & 22

[20] Ibid. p.124

[21] See Confessional Poetry. For example the works of the Confessional movement (Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton and John Berryman) played with subjectivity through multiple plausible selves. Whilst the Confessional movement appeared to be autobiographical in subject matter, often laying bare emotions, intimate knowledge and ideas borne out of personal conviction, poets created poetic personas to alternately mask and make known their identity. The poetic employment of the self as subject created an expression of *aspects* of personality rather than a direct exposure of themselves, thereby playing with the boundaries of public and private subjectivity and its visibility.

are actively and persistently prescribed - inescapable and central to the spaces themselves where uniformity renders them as “placeless... a place and non place, a paradox”.[22] Whilst female gender roles are clearly informed by the domestic spaces of suburban areas - where women are regularly contained within one private space - this theory casts masculinity into a realm of uncertainty. Fifties male gender roles were shrouded in a fear of “momism” and effeminate fathers (as seen in the Introduction), but perhaps their primary role as breadwinners, with a constant shift between the spheres of public and private, causes this alienation from traditional masculine identity. Unlike women, whose job involved remaining within suburban structures, male roles were consistently undermined by their departure and return to the home on a daily basis. As Beuka notes:

> there was something in the very uniformity of the new suburbs that contributed to the erosion of masculine power and self determination, the familiar box... contributes toward the father’s becoming inadequate, money terrified neuter, instead of helping him to accomplish the American dream of the male.[23]

However, understanding the ways in which suburbia was a proscriptive gendered environment merely insinuates the aesthetic issues at the heart of Cold War Studies, and whilst many literary historians and critics have assessed the impact of these communities on gender roles, very few have asked why such spaces seem actively to create and enforce a distinctly domestic identity. Thus, this present analysis of the contemporary literature and culture seeks to address how certain spaces can create specific gender performances.

Literary and filmic depictions of suburban gender roles appeared throughout the Cold War. For women *I Love Lucy* (1951 - 1957) and *Peyton Place* (1956) offered two very different ways of approaching feminine duties. Lucy, the strong, redheaded comedienne, whose inability to follow her domestic role routinely ended in slapstick comedy routines and transgressive gender-bending personas, abided by, but also in doing so subversively challenged, the hegemonic gender role of women. In the 1952 episode, “The Amateur Hour”, Lucy takes a traditionally feminine and domestic job as a babysitter to fund the purchase of a new dress. Much of the humour of the episode is derived from both her husband’s and her neighbour’s belief in her ineffectuality as a “fellow businessman” and as a byproduct of her entering into the public sphere, she neglects her housewifely duties. Upon being tricked into babysitting for twins, Lucy ultimately fails to control the domestic scene, and is bribed by their mother to enter an amateur competition. Having already rejected the feminine world of children and the home, Lucy’s

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[22] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.20

[23] Ibid. p.108

performance ends in a gender-bending dance routine performed in drag, once again transgressing her traditional feminine role. Having failed in female duties, she succeeds with a drag stage act. However, what is most noteworthy in Lucy's performance is her inevitable return to the kitchen at the end of each "adventure" in the public realm. For Lucy, domestic containment is clearly intended to be her punishment. By contrast, *Peyton Place* offered a starkly realistic version of female transgression; a place where "everyone hides behind plain wrappers and betokens a dark and cold emptiness in American society".[24] For the inhabitants of Peyton Place, and in particular for Constance, suburbia is about the maintenance of a certain appearance, and therefore to exist in this environment is to create an illusion of normalcy. Constance's affair with a married man results in her seeking refuge in the containment of suburbia - a place where her secret can be covered with a false persona, and where her punishment is domesticity:

> there were two kinds of people; those who manufactured and maintained tedious expensive shells, and those who did not. Those who did, lived in constant terror lest the shells of their own making crack open to display the weakness that was underneath.[25]

Both texts embrace the blinkered options open to the female in the Fifties: by accepting the repressed life of the suburban housewife, the confused modern woman could find the antidote to her troubles.

"REAL MEN WASH THE DISHES"

Masculinity in suburbia is treated in a similar fashion. As considered in Chapter One, as a construction, masculinity might be subjected to the same child-centric mirroring of femininity in these surroundings. Examples of male suburban gender roles can be seen in *My Three Sons* (1960 - 1965), David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) and William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956), all of which argue for the dispiriting nature of the social environment. Whilst *My Three Sons* addressed the importance of the father's role in raising a family, it also harked back to the effeminate and dysfunctional father figure in *Rebel Without A Cause*, where the effects of "momism" had left men in an ambiguous position with regard to sexuality and power. Despite Fred MacMurray's cheerful depiction of patriarchal authority in Bryant Park, there was the nagging feeling he assumed this role because he *had no other choice.* Equally so, Whyte's and Reisman's scathing look at the new conformist man overturned the pristine image of the breadwinner, expressing concerns over the hyper-commercialized nature of home life, and seeing the homogenized suburbs as an extension of the corporate world. These

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[24] Murray Pomerance, *American Cinema of the 1950s.* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p.179

[25] Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place.* (USA: Julian Messner Inc, 1956), p.231

dysfunctional aspects of home life could translate into feminized husbands and rebellious children, as well as causing health complications and even death. As Michael Kimmel notes:

> the 1950s American men strained against two negative poles - the over-conformist, a faceless, self-less nonentity, and the unpredictable, unreliable nonconformist... men had to achieve identities that weren't too conforming to the march of the gray flannel suits lest they lost their souls; but they couldn't be too nonconforming lest they leave family and workplace responsibilities behind... while men sought to define a normal masculinity, they situated themselves in a vast sprawl of normalcy.[26]

Indeed, much like suburban roles proscribed for women, suburban masculinity was based on sameness and the celebration of the family. But what linked these types of gender performance? What encouraged Cold War bodies to become "suburban"?

GROSZ, DELEUZE AND SUBURBAN GENDER PROSCRIPTION

In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (2001), Grosz transposes her theory of spatially rooted subjectivity onto architecture itself, and theorizes how built, physical spaces can limit the possible modes of corporeality - in essence, how the spatial environment can house bodies and allow them to become real, lived and effectual. Architecture is highly influential in the creation and manipulation of both conformist and transgressive selves in postwar America - and nowhere more so than in the ever-popular suburban areas of middle-class America. John Updike's *Rabbit, Run (*1960), Grace Metalious' *Peyton Place* (1957), Jacqueline Susann's *Valley of the Dolls* (1966), Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961) and Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (*1955) are all texts which depict the increasingly artificial and stifling nature of suburbia and its physicality. The theme of conformity recurs through the texts of Cold War suburbia, and despite the work of Medovoi, Hoberek and Castronovo, the obvious questions surrounding their spatial location remain unanswered. Suburban space, and indeed, the architecture which marks this space as "distinctive" from the rest of America, and separated it from the public realm of the city, has a central relevance for the creation of these seemingly conformist characters . If identity is spatially dependent, then the lived environment of Fifties' suburbia inscribed some part of conformist gender patterns onto those who inhabited them. As Grosz writes, "bodies are absent in architecture, but they remain architecture's unspoken

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[26] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.155

condition... a mapping and remapping of corporeal alignments and intensities".[27]

Clearly spaces, and the influence they bear on the bodies within them, are hugely significant in the suburban landscape of Cold War America. Grosz's thesis on feminist corporeality provides the most useful argument on the relevance of spatially-rooted subjectivity - in her words, "bodies are not inert, they function interactively and productively. They act and react. They generate what is new, surprising, unpredictable".[28] According to Grosz, subjectivity can be understood as spatially dependent; in essence, our understanding and creation of the self is inscribed not only by external social pressures, but these markings on the body are the products of our positioning within built and bounded/established spaces, for it is:

> not simply that the body is represented in a variety of ways according to historical, social and cultural exigencies which it remains basically the same; these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type.[29]

It is through Grosz that my understanding of Cold War bodies is given validity, as these bodies come to signify composite images reflecting relations between other bodies, surrounding spaces and other objects so that, in effect, the body is the "condition of the subject's access to spatiality (including the spatiality of the built environment)".[30] Grosz's theory develops the way in which identity is entirely based upon the relationship between subjects and objects, so that a subject (or subjectivity) uses objects (or spaces) as a central organising perspective, and hence the body within any bounded entity becomes "the very condition of our access to the conception of space".[31] Spaces, whether built or manufactured, are the most influential constructions when determining a subject's access to their identity, and are thus "crucial for defining the limits and shape of the body image; the lived spatiality of endogenous sensations, the social space of interpersonal relations, and the objective or scientific space of cultural representations".[32] With these ideas in mind, alongside Butler's account of performative gender roles, is it possible to reconsider the way in which spaces mark bodies with a specific subjectivity? If traditional femininity is domesticated, and women of Fifties' suburbia

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[27] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside; Essays on Virtual and Real Space.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), pp.14 & 47

[28] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.xi

[29] Ibid. p.x

[30] Ibid. p.85

[31] Ibid. p.91

[32] Ibid. p.80

were required to “wear” this identity as a result of the domestic-centered architecture of the home, how could transgression, or even authenticity be achieved? That these identities were manufactured by both hegemonic cultural ideology and architectural structures, it is possible that a fractured boundary from within the very bodies bounded to suburban space might permit escape. As Guiliana Bruno writes: “corporeality... is itself a passage, a door... in this field of moving forces, the architecture of the body is designed in a transitory space of traversing sites, one does not end where the body ends”.[33]

In *Space, Time and Perversion* (1995), Grosz expands her methodology further in order to suggest a relationship between space-dependent identities and the objects surrounding them; here it is not only our sense of self which is created by the space it inhabits, but the space inhabited is marked by our subjectivity: “the representation of space is thus a correlate of one’s ability to locate oneself as the point of origin or reference of space; the space represented is a component of the kind of subject who occupies it”.[34] Identity, then, is not a passive receptacle of its spatial location, but rather bears an influence on the objects positioned within and around it, so that:

> our positioning within space, both as the point of perspectival access to space, and also as an object for others in space... gives the subject a coherent identity and an ability to manipulate things, including its own body part in space.[35]

Hence, it is not only the spatiality of landscapes or environments themselves which anchor subjectivities, but also the surrounding objects, ephemera and the milieu of other informing entities and bodies which allow a subject to locate itself as a body in such a space. Thus the “anchoring of subjectivity in its body is the condition of coherent identity and moreover, the condition under which the subject has a perspective on the world, becomes the point from which vision emanates”.[36] This notion of the origins of perspective and subjectivity, allows for the possibility of embodied Cold War identities marked by their containment in suburbia, where “the outside is the transmutability of the inside”[37] and where the landscape not only inscribes itself into the being of subjects, but these subjects reflect aspects of the self onto it - “the outside insinuates itself into thought, drawing knowledge outside

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[33] Guiliana Bruno, “Bodily Architectures”. *Assemblage*, No. 19 (Dec 1992), pp.106 - 111

[34] Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.90

[35] Ibid. p.92

[36] Ibid. p.89

[37] Ibid. p.132

of itself, outside of what is expected, producing a hollow it can then inhabit - an outside within or as the inside".[38]

For Grosz, architecture poses the most interesting anchoring of subjectivity as she examines the way in which the built space of the home and architectural environments, such as the city or suburb, can create differing modes of corporeality. Here, it is architecture which moulds the body, providing a set of:

> highly provisional solutions to the questions of how to live and inhabit space with others. It is a negotiation with one of the problems life poses to bodies, a spatial question raising that subjects itself as all questions and solutions do, to the movements of time and becoming.[39]

By creating an environment which is formed by laws of boundaries, frames and territories, architecture is the means by which bodies within these spaces can be regulated, produced and structured, where:

> the limits of possible spaces are the limits of possible modes of corporeality; the body's infinite pliability is a measure of the infinite plasticity of the spatiotemporal universe in which it is housed and through which bodies become real, and lived and have effects.[40]

Drawing on the works of Deleuze, Grosz argues for the use of frames as a constructive force on territorial space, and thereby suggests that these frames have the potential for either allowing or refuting the emergence of bodily activity, performance and sensation, for architecture is "the constitution of interlocking frames, frames that connect with, contain and be contained by other frames... the frame separates. It cuts into a milieu or space".[41] Put another way, as a sequence of frame upon frame, bodies exist within territorialised spaces and hence, bodily subjectivity is marked by architectural structures:

> The frame is thus the first construction, the corners, of the plane of comparison. With no frame or boundary, there can be no territory, and without territory there may be objects or things but no qualities that can become expressive, that can intensify and transform living bodies. Territory here may be understood as surfaces of variable curvature or inflection that bear upon them singularities, eruptions or events.[42]

Grosz's argument for the creation of a bounded subjectivity and a territorialised corporeality is achieved through the understanding that all forms of architecture and built environments are highly organised structures which engage objects within

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[38] Ibid. p.133

[39] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), p.148

[40] Ibid. p.33

[41] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p.13

[42] Ibid. pp.11-12

the anchoring of the body. Hence a home is no longer a place of domesticity, but rather a force which actively creates and moulds subjectivities into domestic bodies, for “framing is the means by which objects are delimited, qualities unleashed and art made possible”.[43]

Grosz’s thesis is complimented by the writings of Beatriz Colomina, who in *Sexuality and Space* (1992) extends the theoretical analysis of architectural spaces and the creation of identity and sexuality therein. Colomina’s methodology relates to the way in which interior and exterior spaces complicate identity, playing with the associated ideological themes of “them” and “us”, a theme pertinent to the exploration of suburban boundaries where the space homogenizes white middle classes. Colomina notes the use of architecture as a vehicle for splitting the:

> outside, the realm of exchange, money and masks [from] inside, the realm of inalienable, the non exchangeable, and the unspeakable... [where] the exterior of the house should resemble a dinner jacket, a male mask; as the unified self, protected by a seamless facade, the exterior is masculine. The interior is the scene of reproduction [dividing] the subject from the outside world.[44]

As suggested, the architecture of the Cold War was intended to create division in a multi-faceted way - a division between the outside and the inside; them and us; private and public; domestic and leisure; male and female - and these divisions are marked, not only by the house itself, but also by the objects and subjects within it. Cold War spaces were significantly informed by the ideological values of the political climate, and Colomina argues that certain postwar objects, such as plastics, toys and aluminium, were directly influenced by the contemporary cultural values.[45] With reference to suburbia, Colomina argues that suburban spaces mirrored the era’s ideology, where:

> the well designed domestic interior, whose configuration is culturally determined by the norms of behaviour assigned to each member of the household according to gender and age, couples with the dominant position of children within the hierarchy of spatial needs, now extends beyond the building envelope to fully encompass the backyard as well. By 1950, child centric suburbia had produced explicitly child centric architectural design.[46]

Furthermore, the conformist, hegemonic nature of this paradigm allows for the possibility of, not only influential spaces, but also influential and therefore body-anchoring objects. Combining Grosz and Colomina’s methodologies suggests the

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[43] Ibid. p.17

[44] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p.94

[45] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004)

[46] Ibid. p.140

possibility for spatially-rooted subjectivity, and also for the interplay between these subjectivities and the objects surrounding them. A reading of Cold War literature which highlights the influence of suburban spaces, as well as the architecture of suburbia itself, opens up a fundamental reworking of identity parameters in terms of gender and sexuality.

In order further to develop my thesis, it is necessary to engage with the Deleuzian theories of corporeality, where "folds", "becomings", "lines of flight" and "territorialisation" carve out identifiable and individual subjectivities. For Deleuze, subjectivity is a manufactured concept derived from our need to label and categorize in order to distinguish ourselves as individual and autonomous, and therefore to allow our bodies to serve a social function. Yet, all forms of categorization take place against the same spatial background, and therefore it is not our being which is autonomous, but rather our doing. For Deleuze, if all subjectivities are governed by social boundaries, then it is only when we go beyond the obvious territories of acceptability that we can be deterritorialized and in these new spaces, give sense to a new body, no longer pinned down by social significations in social spaces. In his text, *The Fold* (1993), Deleuze begins his examination of subjectivities by arguing for the way in which "folds" designate the deterritorialised space of authenticity:

> I am forever unfolding between two folds, and if to perceive means to unfold, then I am forever perceiving within the folds... A body is not realised but what is realised in the body is currently perceived in the soul. The reality of the body is the realisation of phenomena in the body... what is realised is the fold of these two levels, the vinculum or its replacement.[47]

For Deleuze, all bodies are "bodies without organs", for we are all frames and shells upon which space and objects within space make their mark or fill the void in order to create an individual; it is not individual identity, but an object that provides bodies with functions and a sense of selfhood, for it is the object which "is manneristic, not essentialising; [and] it becomes an event".[48] Understanding that bodies are not defined by form, but rather "a body is defined only by... the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential",[49] enables a reading of all bodies as vehicles for a spatially-dependent subjectivity:

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[47] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), pp.93 & 120

[48] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), p.19

[49] Gilles Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.287

“Bodies are not defined by their genes or species, by their organs or functions, but by what they can do, by the effects of which they are capable”.[50]

When this theory is applied to architecture, Deleuze, much like Grosz, recognises the way in which built structures create a territory of subjectification, in effect, a bounded space where labels can be applied to a body without organs and allow individual identity to take place, for architecture is the process of “severing of the facade from the inside, of the interior from the exterior, and the autonomy of the interior from the independence of the exterior”.[51] As explained in *Dialogues* (1987), by creating a bounded, or territorialised space through a built environment, the parameters of subjectivity are set up, and it is through such frames that bodies can become animated and can have effects: “This is what being identified, labelled, recognised is; a central computer functioning as a black fold, and sweeping across a white wall without contours”.[52] Hence, our ideas relating to subjectivity are directly influenced by our relationship with built spaces, as it is almost entirely through territorialised spaces that we are able to “fix” our sense of self and react to events and actions as an individual:

> A wall on which are inscribed all the objective determinations which fix us, put us into a grille, identify us and make us recognised, a hole where we deposit - together with our consciousness - our feelings, our passions, our little secrets which are all too well known, our desire to make them known.[53]

Yet, Deleuze makes us aware of the fact that all notions of selfhood and identity are constructed or assembled, and much like Grosz and Butler, we must begin to understand identity as a construction, manufactured to allow formal distinctions to be made on a social and cultural level. The identity created by our spatial location, then, is never our “real” self, but rather the assembled, performative version as inscribed by the surrounding objects, walls and landscapes: “subjectification is simply one such assemblage and designates a formalisation of expression or a regime of signs rather than a condition internal to language”.[54] How then, does a body escape from signifiers of subjectivity when all spaces mark bodies with modes of behaviour?

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[50] Gilles Deleuze & Claire Parnet, *Dialogues.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.60

[51] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), p.28

[52] Gilles Deleuze & Claire Parnet, *Dialogues.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.18

[53] Ibid. p.44-45

[54] Gilles Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p. 144

Deleuze argues that the “real” can be found in in-between spaces - in the fold itself, in the territory that has been deterritorialised and reterritorialised, in the fractured movement between interior and exterior - for it is only between spaces that autonomy, or “becoming” can be free from the contouring walls of naming, “things do not begin to live except in the middle”.[55] As Deleuze writes, “it is never the beginning or the end which are interesting; the beginning and end are points. What is interesting is the middle... one begins again through the middle”.[56] Grosz also notes this space, arguing that:

> when there is becoming, when the social systems and the subject systems deterritorialise into flows of desire, and the body becoming... such becoming will come from one of two directions; from within or from without... as an outsider, as deterritorialised, becoming is possible.[57]

For both Grosz and Deleuze, “becoming” refers to the movement along a path where a concept might transform into something else - in essence, a “line of flight” is where actions give way to “real” being:

> the great and only error lies in thinking that a line of flight consists of fleeing from life; the flight into the imaginary or into art; on the contrary, to flee is to produce the real, to create life, to find a weapon.[58]

As previously explored in the Introduction, it is through movement, or a line of flight, that Kerouac’s Sal Paradise can escape spatially rooted subjectivity, constantly evading domestic manhood through travel, and James Dean’s *Rebel Without A Cause* can remove himself from the domestic influence and emasculating suffocation of an effeminate father. Yet, if we accept that all social spaces are bounded by signifiers of subjectivity then lines of flight, especially in suburban spaces, might have to emerge from elsewhere, and not just involve the physical movement of a literal escape from built environments. Might it be possible for a line of flight to come from within a body, where a departure from spatially rooted subjectivity involves the breaking of a established territory and the creation of a relationship with the outside? If lines of flight directly enable becomings, and all spaces and objects inscribe aspects of subjectivity, suburban identities in the Cold War are undeniably complex. How can authenticity be achieved when interiors and exteriors mirror each other, and suburbia as a whole (buildings and landscapes) instills conformity and outward displays of hegemonic culture? Can the architecture of suburbia produce gender identities that challenge domesticated roles?

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[55] Gilles Deleuze & Claire Parnet, *Dialogues.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.55

[56] Ibid. p.39

[57] Elizabeth Grosz, *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory and Futures.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p.116

[58] Gilles Deleuze & Claire Parnet, *Dialogues.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.49

COOKBOOKS AND THE CREATION OF DOMESTIC WOMEN

An examination of postwar culture reveals a plethora of artifacts which actively instilled and in some cases rejected traditional suburban gender roles where women were, undoubtedly, contained in the private sphere through cultural ideology, and were therefore subjectively limited. Yet, it is astonishing to consider the level at which domestic perfection equated to moral and ideological fabric, firmly rooting women within the separate sphere of the home - and it was the magazines which helped to create "the portrait of the American homemaker during the war.. [as] a curious amalgam of the public and the private, as women were continually praised as patriots for work accomplished in their kitchens and living rooms".[59] Perhaps even more startling is the way in which women's work was praised in terms of domestic achievements, likening homemaking to patriotism, and therefore directly linking domesticity to cultural ideology. Whilst it cannot be argued that many magazines actively sought to create domesticated women, the act of reading such publications did serve to encourage certain types of distinctly domestic action and the frequent inclusion of product advice in "living" editorial categories - "Appliances and Home Care" in *Good Housekeeping* and "Home Equipment" in *Women's Home Companion* - marked the equation of household appliances with quality of life. Food also played an important part in equating domesticity with security. The use of cookbooks in imposing a domestic identity for women also highlights the way in which women were expected to embody a role as selfless provider to all other bodies in the home. By assuming the role of provider, women's roles are equated with domestic architecture, a functional and serviceable product, providing a private space for bodies, but negating her own space. Women's bodies become an extension of the domesticity of the home itself. Both Meta Given's *Modern Encyclopedia of Cooking* (1947) and Betty Crocker's *Picture Cookbook* (1956) employ highly influential rhetoric, and the constant allusion to domestic work as vocation creates a sense of duty in homemaking, and therefore reestablishing the provisionally private space as a working sphere. Such texts worked to underscore further a woman's position in the home (or kitchen) by relating themselves to individual homemakers, "where Betty Crocker lives is just like home - the furniture comfortable and charming - the colours bright and gay - the atmosphere pleasing and restful... Through the wide view window straight

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[59] Nancy Walker, *Shaping Our Mother's World: American Women's Magazines.* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), p.xiv

ahead, you look into a bright yellow kitchen".[60] They also present food preparation as distinctly artificial yet "homely":

> From the beautiful cake for the announcement party - to the triumphantly towering wedding cake - and children's birthday cakes, blazing with candles - to the proud cake celebrating the silver or golden wedding - cakes play an important role in the most significant moments in our lives.[61]

Here, cakes are integral to the experience of living, they are an "important" and "significant" part of domestic life, suggesting the failure to produce a "proud" cake prevents children, loved ones and family members from experiencing these moments in their lives. Furthermore, cookery books solidified women's roles as carer and provider by suggesting that traditional values were at the heart of domestic work:

> some of the sweetest memories of home are bound up with mother's cookie jar. Long after the spicy fragrance of her ginger cookies baking has faded into the years... the thought of that ample cookie jar on the shelf will bring back vividly the old time peace and comfort and security of home.[62]

Home and food are interwoven, connected by memories of tradition ("mother's cookie jar"), and baking becomes symbolic of "peace" and "security" at a time of political unrest. Clearly the home is where the real Americans are. However, these books also manage to underscore the unnaturalness of domesticated femininity, in much the same way as magazines, by revealing themselves to be 'how to' manuals for the modern woman: "A good cookbook is like an extra pair of hands to help you with you cooking, a personal shopper, to direct your buying, and a friendly dietician to guide your meal planning".[63] By actively constructing a way of being for suburban women, these texts managed to reveal the inauthenticity of female identity, where every aspect of their being should reflect domestic perfection:

> The Meal Planner's Creed - the health of my family is in my care, therefore I will spare no effort in planning meals, containing the right kinds of food in the right amounts. Spending the food dollar to get the most for it is my job, therefore I will choose foods from a wide variety, variously priced to save money without sacrificing health. My family's enjoyment of food is my responsibility, therefore I will increase their pleasure by preparing a variety of dishes attractive in colour and form and pleasing in flavour and texture. My family's health, security and pleasure depend on my skill in planning meals, therefore I will treat my job with the respect due it.[64]

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[60] Betty Crocker, *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook.* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1956), p.2

[61] Ibid. p.129

[62] Ibid. p.187

[63] Meta Given, *Meta Given's Modern Encyclopedia of Cooking.* (London: Waverley Book Co, 1947), p.xii

[64] Ibid. p.xvii

Again, the allusion to “security” embodied in good homecare is reiterated, and domesticity is notably not a natural role, but rather a “job” which is due “respect”, underscoring the way in which domestic roles are performed. Cookery books were no longer simply a vehicle for recipes, but rather manuals on how to behave and conduct yourself beyond the kitchen. Thus *Betty Crocker’s Picture Cookbook* describes:

> Happy Families and Guests. When the door is opened to welcome either family or guests, the homemaker with a plan has good food to serve, has had time for some interesting activity during the day, has a home that is tidy but with a lived in look. She has a relaxed spirit. She welcomes those at the door with a happy smile and cheerful attitude. The spirit of warm hospitality and graciousness prevails. There is good food and good cheer for the gathering of the family and friends at mealtimes.[65]

The opening of the “door” heralds a domestic performance, where the perfect balance of “warmness” and “graciousness” puts others at ease, but women were not entitled to a subjectivity beyond the door, beyond the boundaries of the home. A further example of the absolute necessity for domestic perfection is provided by Meta Given’s 365 day menu from breakfast to dinner which, if followed correctly, will ensure the correct diet, and therefore health of the whole family. Cookery books did not require a woman to engage with the reading material and adapt the advice, but rather to follow it to the letter for the good of her family. Yet again, this problematizes the role of women in postwar suburban spaces, as it reinforces the idea that women needed a manufactured role and had to be told what to do and how to be, rather than performing this role instinctually. As Nancy Walker notes in the context of magazines, editorial content mirrored this recognition of a performative version of femininity, and the women interviewed in the articles “tacitly acknowledged that their real selves were not quite worthy of being publicly displayed and furthered an ideology of self improvement”.[66] This fostering of a particular type of femininity did not translate into performative masculinity in men’s magazines. Instead, men’s magazines addressed an aspect of masculinity, and not the entirety of their male role. For women, magazines and cookbooks addressed the totality of their femininity, so that their, “needs or wants [can] be instructed, rehearsed, or brought up to date on the arts and skills of femininity... women’s magazines teach women to be women”.[67] The suggestion is that of a bodily addition in the form of the cookbook - a vital prosthetic addition which allows women to become whole.

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[65] Betty Crocker, *Betty Crocker’s Picture Cookbook.* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1956), p.34

[66] Nancy Walker, *Shaping Our Mother’s World: American Women’s Magazines.* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), p.122

[67] Ibid. p.53 - 54

Figure 1 - Crocker, Betty. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook.* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1956)
Note the figure of the woman is central to the use of the cooker, and there is a flow between herself, the baked goods and the oven, further implying her centrality.

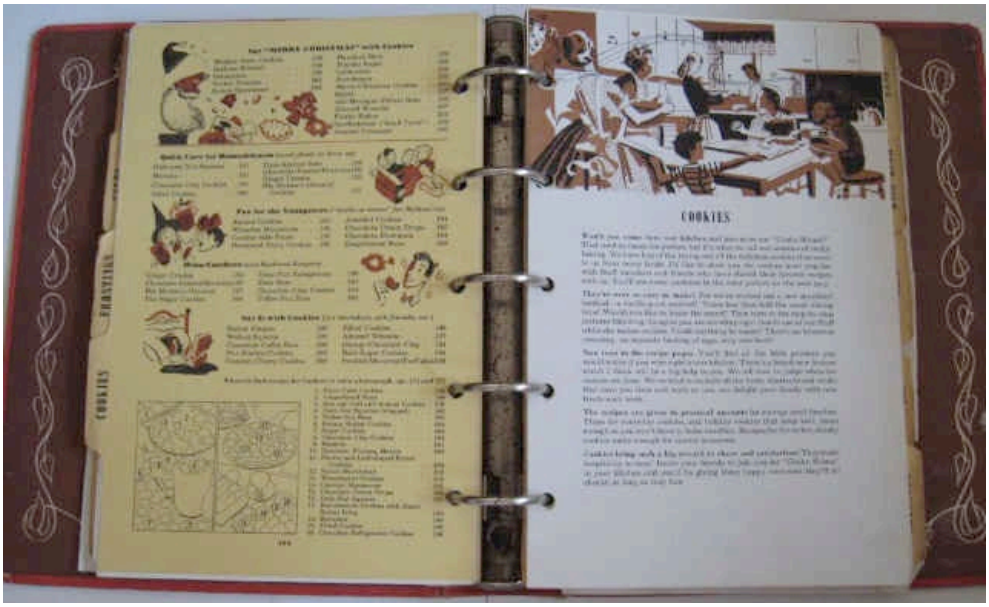

Figure 1.2 - Crocker, Betty. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook.* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1956)

MASCULINITY AND MEN'S MAGAZINES

Unlike women's roles, masculinity was expected to embody a plurality of identities - the breadwinner, the corporate suit, and the father. Whilst women's magazines and

domestic artifacts instructed women to behave in certain bounded ways, and kept their subjectivity firmly rooted within, and produced only by the confines of the home, men's magazines encouraged men to escape space-bound subjectivity and find another aspect to their gender. As Steven Cohen writes, unlike femininity, masculinity is always only a concept to be moulded and shaped through various masculine masks:

> viewing masculinity as a masquerade helps to articulate more precisely why a hegemonic representation ... could dominate the culture and yet be subject to change... why such a normative standard of masculinity is never stable or coherent or authentic.[68]

Returning to Judith Butler, masculinity is something that men "do" or "perform", and whilst the spaces and objects of suburbia told women to do certain 'female' duties, the construction of men's roles were frequently ambiguous, and contradictory, and shored up a version of maleness that was merely a position or mode. As Bethan Benwell writes:

> masculinity has usually been conceived of as the neglected or invisible gender... [because] of the way in which men's lives and experiences have, for social and historical reasons, tended to stand in for general or universal experience... masculinity is both backgrounded as common sense and foregrounded as a construct. In the magazines themselves, a thrusting and overt self presentation marking out a clear, differentiated territory coexists with an inscrutable elusiveness a representation of the bodily, a claim to ungendered humanity, so that a dialectic between superhyperbole and self abolition is played out at the heart of masculine identity in and around men's lifestyle magazines.[69]

As a construct then, masculinity, as represented by men's magazines becomes fluid, enabling male roles to straddle traditional and manufactured modes of gender. What remains is a concentration on bodily forms, yet unlike women, men's magazines actively instilled a sense of bodily creation - allowing the body to represent a self-made and self fashioned persona. What we find in the contemporary magazines is an attempt to remove masculinity from traditional gender significations and instead allow for the creation of a liberated identity, premised upon what the modern man lacked - individuality and sexual prowess. By focusing on masculine consumption and rejecting established masculine codes relating to the family, the men's magazines of the Fifties oscillated between defining maleness and evading the naming of male gender identity. As David Earle writes, men's magazines:

> pandered to fantasies that opposed [domesticity]. They relied on codes of behaviour that were opposed to the domestic sphere by emulating the bachelor lifestyle defined by gadgets, style and the bachelor pad itself. In this sense, the masculine persona was a commodity that was sold and bought; you are what

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[68] Steven Cohen, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.xi

[69] Bethan Benwell, *Masculinity and Men's Magazines.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p.12

> you wear, where you live and how you relax... the fantasies of desire... these magazines both pandered to the need to escape and provided an avenue to do so, exposes of masculine role models offered ways of looking in on another's life as a possibility for your own.[70]

Indeed, what emerges most prevalently in these artifacts is the way in which they actively created an alternative role for men - the anathema of the equivalent for women. First published in 1953, *Playboy* magazine epitomises the way in which masculine editorial content aimed to remove itself from association with family roles by standing in stark contrast to the emasculating responsibilities of fatherhood and suburban standards. Whilst *Playboy* managed to remain true to the middle-class tradition of consumerism, its emphasis on play and possession subverted the image of the suburban breadwinner by removing him from leisure activities reliant upon space and place. Here, masculinity became defined by the single man (the bachelor) and his unbounded heterosexuality, where an alternative male utopia was constructed to parallel that of the family man:

> *Playboy* represented the bachelor figure whose overactive heterosexuality could resolve the ambivalence with which the culture viewed the unmarried male... [calling into] question the naturalness of one form of straight male sexuality (the bachelor) as opposed to another (the breadwinner).[71]

Playboy, as Bill Osgerby argues, was one of the many male-oriented magazines which represented masculinity as "imagined", and its offering of a model of masculinity which prized reification meant that it both embraced suburban values and remoulded them. Much like Deleuze's theory of the fold, these cultural artifacts influenced male gender roles by way of deterritorialising the built space, and reterritorialising it as one based on autonomous subjectivity:

> [the middle class suburbanite] made a vocation of consumption, elaborating their distinctive cultural identity through a lifestyle oriented around the satisfaction of materialist and hedonistic desires... the breadwinner's commitment to family life and the home was increasingly challenged by a masculine ethos of conspicuous consumption and personal pleasure.[72]

Masculinity is represented as a tangible performance (potentially even, a queered one) where the boundaries of acceptability are positioned much further apart than those of women, and rather than finding ways to instill a definitive masculine role, the magazines recognised that no such one mode of maleness exists. The position of the man within the parameters of Fifties' cultural ideology is one where he automatically fits and is moulded, but also shifts and is unbounded. What *Playboy*

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[70] David Earle, *All Man! Hemingway, 1950s Men's Magazines and the Masculine Persona.* (Ohio: Kent University Press, 2009), p.10

[71] Steven Cohen, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.268

[72] BIll Osgerby. *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure Style in Modern America.* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p.82

managed to do was open up the possibility for a reworking of maleness by way of a meaningful imagined identity - a persona which harked back to the traditional defining masculine parameters:

> there evolved in the figure of the swinging bachelor a form of masculine identity more appropriate to the demands of a society grounded in consumption... within this developing world of male consumer pleasures, more over, gender relationships remained structured in terms of masculine, heterosexual dominance... in the development of the 'playmate of the month' centerfold, the magazine significantly extended and naturalised the sexual objectification of women.[73]

Hence, whilst women's magazines taught women to be women, men's magazines offered the chance to redefine themselves as masculine within a shifting space, allowing the suburban breadwinner to find a rooted subjectivity within an alternative space which, although still marked by traditional structures, freed itself from a singular performance. *Playboy* promised individuality through consumption, and a reterritorialising of space: "Against this gendered division of territory, *Playboy* would claim the necessity for men to regain the space of the home."[74]

[73] Ibid. p.145

[74] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2004), p.233

Figures 1.3 & 1.4 - *Playboy Magazine.* (New York: Playboy Enterprises Inc, 1954) - both images feature a domestic space which has been freed from bodily subjectivity - the ideal home for the bachelor is an empty frame.

PICTURE WINDOWS AND SURVEILLANCE IN *REVOLUTIONARY ROAD*

Yet there exists an even greater force on bodies in suburban spaces - that of the architecture itself, for it is the home, the built structure of domesticity, that wields the greatest power when proscribing gender identities through the ideological ethos of "containment". This sense of a regulated and disciplined space is evident in Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961) through the insistent reiteration of remembering one's identity and the parallelism of "jobs" against "homes":

> Intelligent, thinking people could take things like this in their stride, just as they took the larger absurdities of deadly dull jobs in the city and deadly dull homes in the suburbs. Economic circumstance might force you to live in this environment, but the important thing was to keep from being contaminated. The important thing always, was to remember who you were.[75]

Indeed, as Catherine Jurca notes, "the suburb requires external and exhausting vigilance to preserve one's integrity against it... the suburb is treated as a living space that is constant danger of contaminating you, of turning you into someone

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[75] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.20

you're not - someone who belongs there".[76] In *Revolutionary Road*, April Wheeler's desperate attempt to escape the conformity of suburban ideals is voiced in her plea, "it's your very essence that's being stifled here. It's what you are that's being denied and denied and denied in this kind of life".[77] As Breines asserts, "home meant women with their children, safe, domestic and dependent on their husbands"[78] and this form of femininity is a dominant theme in Yates' text - April, having given up her aspirations as an actress, functions as a protagonist whose individuality and desires are muted by the role she has to adopt in order to fit her spatial location:

> be good consumers and have a lot of togetherness and bring our children up in a bath of sentimentality - Daddy's a great man because he makes a living, Mummy's a great woman because she's stuck by Daddy all these years.[79]

Indeed, the very lay-out of suburban spaces meant family space and family "togetherness" functioned as a form of containment, where private spaces (the home) served only one purpose - to protect from outside (the public space) and therefore segregate any outside influence, in effect containing the inhabitants. For Medovoi:

> suburbia became a place where the bourgeois experience of modernity repeatedly found itself torn by its own self ambivalence. It became, in short, a place from which one might also wish to escape.[80]

Furthermore, Alan Nadel enforces this idea with the suggestion of a societal containment: "American community became the agency of the policy of containment, embedded in courtship narratives of other and same, rival and cohort, the erection always of new divisions, new walls".[81]

Revolutionary Road, accepts these notions of containment, but does not excuse them, and the highly ambiguous and ironic title frames the gradual fall from family ideals, undermining the postwar containment enforced by the space inhabited. As the closing lines of the text suggest, the estate agent Mrs Givings' discovery of the dead plants in the cellar ("do you know what I came across in the cellar? All dead and dried out? I came across an enormous box of sedum

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[76] Catherine Jurca, *White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth Century American Novel.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.148

[77] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.115

[78] Winni Breines, *Young, White and Miserable. Growing Up Female in the Fifties.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.49

[79] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.66

[80] Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p.96

[81] Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p.35

plantings"[82]) creates a mirror between the emptiness of the architecture and the hollowness of the Wheeler's gender, and this highlights, not only the ultimate failure of adhering to these domestic gender roles, but also the failure of the architectural influence on their proscriptive identity. Ultimately this alludes to the possibility for a broken or fractured boundary entity where subjectivity can move beyond its container.

According to Colomina, suburban architecture was developed in order to respond to the demands of "each member of the household according to gender and age, coupled with the dominant position of children within the hierarchy of spatial needs... child centric suburbia had produced explicitly child centric architectural design".[83] Whilst this fact ties in with aspects of suburban containment, it does not explain the design of the picture window - a highly complex architectural device in *Revolutionary Road* which creates both a barrier between inside and outside, and a transparency between interior and exterior - in effect, picture windows serve no "child centric" or "gender" designed function, but instead, create a troubling fluidity and mobility of surveillance. From the beginning of the text, the picture window dominates the space of the Wheeler's home, being both "outsized" and "staring like a big black mirror",[84] underpinning its centrality to the architecture of the home and its use as a device for surveillance. It is worthwhile to revisit Grosz's ideas relating to aspects of the self reflected onto spatial objects, and the fluidity of spatially dependent identity - if the picture window is an object of surveillance, its mention here as a mirror already creates a paradox; the window informs the self of the outside world, informs the outside world of interior subjectivity and also reflects subjectivity back onto the self in a fluid cycle of reflections. For instance, after his affair with Maureen, Frank returns to the house to find "the curtains were drawn in the picture window"[85] thereby cutting him off from surveying the family unit within the home and distancing himself from family togetherness, but also offering him a reflection of his own subjectivity (a blankness) - a constant site of tension for his character. During an early ineffectual incident in home life, he is depicted as wanting to pick "up a chair and throwing it through the picture window",[86] and following April's death he is seen reading her letter in front of the window. This clearly sets up a site of tension between object and subject,

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[82] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.337

[83]Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.140

[84] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.29

[85] Ibid. p.102

[86] Ibid. p.57

where Frank's subjectivity is destabilized by the reflected self seen in the window, reminding him of his ineffectuality and failure to transgress the boundaries of suburban conformity. April's death too, is a failed attempt at transgression, seeking to escape her imprisonment in suburban status quo through self-aborting their third child. Her subsequent death, demonstrates the inability for those incarcerated by suburban mores to alter the intended as dictated by their surroundings. Furthermore, the picture window serves as a reminder of this suburban homogeneity, a staple of the suburban architectural design of the period, and his desire to break it, but never committing the act further illustrates his inability to realise an authentic identity. April's reflection, however, never appears in the window, perhaps suggesting her emotional and metaphorical absence from the familial setting or even her inability to find subjectivity within the space of the home. Yet the picture window functions as a fluid interaction between public and private life, transforming the lived environment into a domestic spectacle, as Lynn Spigel argues, "the house itself was designed as a space for looking".[87] This idea underpins the very notion of divided private and public spaces, bringing the public space into the home. On the one hand this means subjectivity is influenced not only by the interior of the home but also by the suburban landscape as a whole, yet on the other, allows for the possibility of a fractured boundary across which marginal selves could be created.

The frames of the home influence the way in which conformist ideas of masculine and feminine selves are performed, and Yates' text further enforces this ideal. April spends a day doing "a kind of work she had always hated and lately allowed herself to neglect: cleaning the parts of the house that didn't show"[88] suggesting the necessity of conforming to domesticated ideals of womanhood. Yet the inclusion of the word "neglecting", implies April's inability to conform, as already noted in her character, and her occasionally masculine attire (mowing the lawn in trousers). This suggests either her constant attempt to escape suburban gender roles, or her failure to adhere to the role expected of her. Either way, the protagonists of Yates' text continue to attempt to respond to their spatial setting - cleaning parts of the house which are unseen, creating the stone pathway leading away from the back door, and working in a routine job in order to perform as the patriarchal suburban husband. I use the word "perform" in a deliberate attempt to highlight the performative nature of, not only suburban gender proscription as a whole, but also the characterisations of the Wheelers. As John Givings proclaims in the text, "a feminine woman never laughs out loud and always shaves her

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[87] Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Postwar Media and Postwar Suburbs.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p.2

[88] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.205

armpits... I get the feeling you're male. There aren't too many males around, either".[89] Implicit within these lines is the performative nature of masculine and feminine identities within *Revolutionary Road*, as illustrated by the conventional expectations of what it means to be a feminine woman, or a real man. Furthermore, John's words also suggest the failure of these roles - the last line "there aren't too many males around" works both to undermine the masculinity proscribed by suburban spaces, and also to suggest the "worn" nature of conformist maleness. Indeed, Frank is, on more than one occasion, consciously performing his masculinity:

> these moments were not always quite spontaneous; as often as not they followed a subtle effort of vanity on his part, a form of masculine flirtation... he paid scrupulous attention to endless details; keeping his voice low and resonant, keeping his hair brushed and his bitten fingernails out of sight; being always the first one athletically up and out of bed in the morning, so that she might never see his face lying swollen and helpless in sleep.[90]

Frank's attention to his performance (the conscious effort undercut by the swollen reality) undermines his masculinity, illustrating his inability for autonomy and individualism, but also reaffirming his position within the suburban space as a domesticated or feminised man. His performance of masculinity, albeit manufactured, conforms to the space surrounding his subjectivity, and therefore, his public performance as male is rendered authentic by public spectators. As Judith Butler writes, "performativity is thus not a singular act for it is always a reiteration of a norm... it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition".[91] Furthermore, in terms of public and private divisions, Frank's performance of gender, as performed in and out of the home, renders his private space as public; by belying his inner organising core of identity, Frank's exterior masculine "worn" identity is now "the production of an 'outside'; a domain of unlivability". [92]

Arguably, without the performative quality of proscribed identity, bodies, and therefore sexuality, could exist in an unbounded and fractured space. In a time of surveillance - of "them" and "us" and containment - it seems necessary to restrain "such bodies [which might] contest the norms that govern the intelligibility of sex".[93] In Yates' novel, the Wheelers are ultimately ineffectual but must be seen

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[89] Ibid. p.190

[90] Ibid. pp.218-219

[91] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex.* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.12

[92] Ibid. p.22

[93] Ibid. p.139

to respond to their spatial location, therefore their performance of gender is worn so extensively on the outside so as to be visible as a constant reminder of their entrapment within a bounded spatial environment. However, towards the end of the novel, April proclaims “I don’t know who I am”[94] which complicates this theory. If performative gender is a response to the spatial environment and, to be inauthentic is to allow the body to perform according to the influence of suburban architecture, then a complete loss of self, a creation of a non-self, is in effect a break into authenticity. As Butler notes, without a name to secure a character’s gender, the body’s identity cannot be sustained, and instead “body parts disengage from any common centre, pull away from each other, lead separate lives, become sites of phantasmatic investments... refuse to reduce to singular sexualities”.[95] Hence, despite lamenting her loss of identity through a suburban rooting of the body, April is breaking boundaries of subjectivity, losing a sense of self within the codes of suburban identity. Her absence of self suggests the possibility of a flight out of bounded subjectivity. For Catherine Jurca “the suburb is defined in this novel, as in many others, as an environment that must be resisted but where resistance is what binds you most closely to it... the suburb is destined to be the place from which one tries to escape”[96] and indeed, much like the protagonists in Capote’s and Kerouac’s texts, the Wheelers are in search of a non-space in which to form their sense of self. Whilst the influence of the suburban landscape and architecture firmly entrenches their identities in a proscriptive and performative pattern, so do other domestic settings, binding their formation of the self to a mapped entity. For as long as the Wheelers remain contained by walls, picture windows, apartments and kitchens, their identities can never escape the fixity of object/subject interplay, and therefore their exteriority will always be inscribed by the spaces they inhabit. It is only through mobility or at least the promise of a fluid motion between spaces that identity can be authentic, where “[a] counter space [can] challenge the rigid boundaries between high and low, normal and pathological, interiority and exteriority”.[97]

However, *Revolutionary Road* is not the only text to explore architecturally informed subjectivities. Returning to space and body theory, it becomes apparent that the home has repeatedly been conceived as a site of identity proscription. The

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[94] Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road.* (London: Vintage Books, 1961), p.262

[95] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex.* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.140

[96] Catherine Jurca, *White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth Century American Novel.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.158-159

[97] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.206

American home has regularly been advertised as a woman's space, as developers argue for the consideration of women's needs when planning dream houses and dream apartments, including gourmet kitchens, romantic master bedrooms and elaborate formal entrances. Dolores Hayden makes an argument for the gender specificity of housing, where:

> suburban homes [are] filled with gender stereotypes, since houses provide settings for women and girls to be effective social status achievers, desirable sex objects and skilful domestic servants, and for men and boys to be executive breadwinners, successful home handymen and adept car mechanics.[98]

From this emerges an understanding of how housing can be read, not only as a mere built structure, but also as a symbol of the body, for as Hayden continues to argue, the home is primarily a female space, prescribing a domestically informed gender identity. Furthermore, by associating a woman's work with the central domesticity of the home, domestic settings create a feminine public space whilst also fostering a child or male private space. The home is a man's castle, and a child's sanctuary, but to be a woman in this environment is to give up the possibility of any private space, for in these spaces, "the homemakers role is to service, not to claim autonomy and privacy".[99] As seen in the Wheeler's dislike of visibility and surveillance in the domestic setting, the popularity of open living plans and picture windows continues to complicate the notion of private environments in suburbia. Colomina's evaluation of open plan architecture engages with the idea of a public gaze where the high visibility of windows, for instance, suggests a house built to frame a view. This questions the ability for a member of the house to inhabit the space autonomously: "inside and outside cannot simply be separated... what is being framed is the traditional scene of everyday domestic life".[100] This sense of the architectural framing extends into Grosz's work on Deleuzian theory, where objects within the framed building regulate bodily function:

> within the built frame, as a frame within a frame within a frame, our bodies and their bodily supports, furnishings coexist to make of our bodies an abundance of sensations and actions. Furniture brings the outside in, but only to the extent that it itself is extracted and transformed from this outside, stripped down, reworked, refined, in short, an outside now constructed, regulated, inside.[101]

Hence, interiors are no longer understood as mere decorations, but rather a process of bringing the outside world into the domestic setting, It is no longer the

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[98] Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream: Gender, Housing and Family Life.* (New York: W.W Norton and Company, 2002), p.34

[99] Ibid. p.84

[100] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p.86

[101] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p.16

individual's gaze from behind the picture window that informs the self, but rather the window itself which informs subjectivity of the public world. Put another way, "the inside is an effect of the outside: the inside is a fold or a doubling of the outside, a contortion of the exterior surface".[102]

Architecture then, is the framing of our subjectivity, it forms matter in conformance with its associated meaning, offering bodily experiences and modes, bounding our performativity to its walls. Having accepted this, selfhood in this setting appears to be wholly constructed in domestic terms, yet if we recall the ideas of Deleuze and the fold, a built structure can hold the potential for breaking boundaries of signification: as Grosz argues, if we accept buildings hold the possibility for varying uses, then a structure can alter gender performance depending on how the space is used. As Coleman's reading of Edith Wharton's use of feminine and masculine spaces describes:

> even though the house seems expressive of a woman, she only inhabited it as an inscribed figure... architecture, specifically the home, becomes a vessel of a woman's position; she is locked into the house but thereby gains a power within it.[103]

Furthermore, according to Roberta Rubenstein's examination of selfhood and culture, it is through a relationship with the outside that subjectivity comes into being.[104] It is our ability to define and categorise ourselves as distinct from others that allows for the creation of individuality, and therefore, despite the territorialising of domestic selves in built environments, it is precisely the visibility of these frames which harbours the potential for breaking into individualism. Read in this way, an experience of the interior as depicted through the Wheelers in *Revolutionary Road*, becomes the site of an enclosure, where "rooms, walls, houses, including the more emotionally saturated meanings associated with 'home' - are tropes for inner experience as imprisonment, escape, flight and homelessness".[105]

BEYOND THE GREY FLANNEL SUIT - CORPORATE BODIES IN SUBURBIA

As Rubenstein and Coleman's arguments suggest, it is possible for bodies to transgress the boundaries imposed by the spatial environment, despite the

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[102] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), p.148, p.68

[103] Deborah Coleman, *Architecture and Feminism.* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), p.135

[104] Roberta Rubenstein, *Boundaries of the Self: Gender, Culture, Fiction.* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1987)

[105] Ibid. p.234

enforcement of a specific gender role therein. Catherine Jurca's argument above highlights the centrality of resistance in dislocating bodies from their bounded subjectivity. Unlike the Wheelers, whose ineffectuality in resisting the contamination of the space is their downfall, the Raths in Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), continuously fight against their suburban location, refusing to conform to the identities bound to their private space. From the outset of the novel the family dislike their home: "By the time they had lived seven years in the little house on Greentree Avenue in Westport, Connecticut, they both detested it".[106] There is a sense of hostility directed specifically towards their own home, being "too small [and] ugly."[107] Whilst in Yates' text the Wheelers experience an utter sense of disappointment in their home, they still attempt to fit themselves into its walls – here, the Raths not only loathe the Westport home, they also cannot fit within its frames for, as suggested earlier, the home not only reveals itself through a marking on a body within it, but the bodies contained within the space of the home mark the architecture. The Rath's dysfunctional and unhappy lives have resulted in a house of which they are no longer proud, a house that reveals too much of them by way of discrediting their conformity:

> the house had a kind of evil genius for displaying proof of their weaknesses and wiping out all traces of their strengths… the interior of the house was even more vengeful. In the living room there was a big dent in the plaster near the floor, with a huge crack curving up from it in the shape of a question mark.[108]

The house clearly takes on its own identity, being "an evil genius" and having the ability to thwart the Raths' good intentions. The personification of the home continues to undermine the familial aesthetic, being "vengeful" in its display of the reality of family life. Perhaps what is most interesting to note here is the question mark carved into the wall as it cracks. A result of an argument over Betsy's spending and Tom's consequential aggression, the crack comes to symbolise a questioning of their place within the home. There is a sense of the home examining their subjectivity within its walls, constantly asking them –where are you? For their lack of conformity ultimately undermines their position within the domestic setting of suburban living. The crack is "a perpetual reminder of Betsy's moment of extravagance, Tom's moment of violence, and their inability either to fix walls properly or to pay to have them fixed".[108] Furthermore, the Raths' inability to fix the crack reveals Betsy to be an imperfect housewife and Tom, a failed DIY man. Yet the crack is not the only indicator of their failure to fit their surroundings, "an ink

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[106] Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit.* (London: Penguin Books, 1955, this ed. 2005), p.1

[107] Ibid. p.3

[108] Ibid. p.1

[108] Ibid. p.2

stain" commemorates the "only time Betsy ever lost her temper with [Janey] and struck her"[109] and the linoleum which "was beginning to wrinkle"[110] was one of "a thousand petty shabbinesses bear[ing] witness to the negligence of the Raths".[111] Whilst Tom and Betsy cannot conform to the identities determined by their location, their continued attempt to appear to be like their neighbours is undermined by the mirroring of domestic failure worn on the home.

By extension, Tom's subjectivity complicates the ideal of the breadwinner father so common, and so widely accepted, as the hegemonic masculine identity in suburban areas. His "uniform for the day",[112] the gray eponymous flannel suit, registers his corporate selfhood. Tom's position alters as the text develops, shifting towards a new career in public relations at the United Broadcasting Corporation. Here, Tom's interview illustrates his ability to wear a certain uniform, self consciously fashioning an attractive image of himself in the written test in order to sell himself to the company, "the most significant fact about me is that I...".[113] This shift is worn on his body through the image of the flannel suit – a signifier of his position as the breadwinner and corporate suburban family man. However, the grandeur he had hoped to achieve through his new position is slowly undermined as he finds himself working as a ghostwriter for the head of the organisation. Hence, even in this new, more financially empowering career Tom is an anonymous shadow behind the company image, rendering his uniform as another extension of the masquerade that covers his inauthenticity. The notion of a "uniform" suggests the suit is more appropriate to his position than he is, and it is this uniform that signals a change in Tom – a change in social status alone rather than a shift in his selfhood. Tom's altered selfhood displays all the identifiable aspects of a performative subjectivity, using his new "worn" persona to attempt social elevation, and even the possibility of finally fitting their domestic setting. Yet, this further compounds the inability of Tom and his family to fit their environment. The re-working of the corporate approach to being translates into an inauthenticity of gender, and rather than elevating their domestic identities, it merely serves to undermine any refuge they seek in a real subjectivity from within the home; "the

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[109] Ibid. p.2

[110] Ibid. p.6

[111] Ibid. p.3

[112] Ibid.p.7

[113] Ibid. p.12

postwar home is the double of the office, a site of, not a relief from white collar work".[114]

Keith Booker's work on American science fiction during the Cold War develops a Marxist reading of Wilson's text to suggest Tom's devotion of himself to the world of capitalism and corporations is to blame for his inauthenticity, his inability to be more than just the suit. Whilst it is true to say that Tom's inability to view his subjectivity as selfhood and not as a measure of corporate success is key to the text, it does not translate straight forwardly into the politics of capitalism. Tom's inauthenticity is a symptom of his extension of this public self into the area of the home, but his lack of any autonomous selfhood stems from a domestic issue. Tom is a character who, far from being enamoured with work and consumerism, seems to remain a hollowed self, ravaged by the destructiveness of the war. During the second half of the book, we begin to read Tom's ineffectuality and his "uniform" as one of the many armours he employs in order to protect his identity from the truth of his infidelity – the suit and the domestic home function as a way to preserve his aesthetically conformist identity. Beyond the flannel suit, Tom is tortured by barbaric and morose memories and conceals, arguably his only real experience of love:

> this, of all he had done, would be the one deed which could lead to a court-martial… divorce, a very bad name, instead of medals… How to the despair of the chaplains is the inclination of the young soldiers to forget their job of killing and to run off and make love!.[115]

Tom's real experiences of subjectivity are found not only beyond the home, but also across the borders of America, and hence, it is Tom's constant performance which renders any reading of slippage between Tom's corporate and domestic selves as redundant. Rather, it is Betsy who intends to make an enterprise from the suburbs. It is Betsy who instigates the move from the charity organisation to the PR job: "[Betsy] How much does it pay?... It would be wonderful to get out of this house".[116] Tom, on the other hand, seems increasingly removed from the situation, juxtaposing his words with his thoughts: "it's good to get home"… "the little house looked more monotonous than ever".[117] Tom appears, rather to make active decisions and to base his performance on the acceptable form of normalcy – his

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[114] Catherine Jurca. *White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth Century American Novel.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.137

[115] Sloan Wilson *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit.* (London: Penguin Books, 1955, this ed. 2005), p.83

[116] Ibid. p.6

[117] Ibid. p.5

cynicism for instance is undercut by the narrative in the opening sequence, remarking "it was fashionable to be cynical about one's employers".[118]

Booker's argument fails to recognise Tom's absence from every aspect of his life – he fails at being domestic in the home, fails as a husband through infidelity, fails as a corporate man realising his ineffectuality can no longer be concealed by his suited appearance. Therefore, Tom's masculinity is not so much corporate as it is an attempt at conformity. Betsy is the character who stresses the importance of corporate position above selfhood, and therefore, whilst capitalism and consumerism spatially influence bodies in Wilson's text, they are firmly rooted in the home and suburban architecture. It is, in the end, Betsy who instigates the development of the new suburban housing project, and it is she who makes an enterprise out of suburban dissolution:

> the development suburb is a breeding ground of alienated houseowners who need only to capitalise on their dissatisfaction to move up and out… discontent is, in fact, the driving force of the Raths subdivision, a place not to settle in but to escape.[119]

Much like the Wheelers, the Raths seek to escape the suburban landscape, feeling trapped by the walls and furniture in the home, "they both began to think of the house as a trap, and they no more enjoyed refurbishing it than a prisoner would delight in shining up the bars of his cell".[120] What is interesting is how both texts align the suburb to a prison with its own personal attributes – and in both cases the city does not figure in the same way. Instead, it is the suburb and only the suburb which becomes a contaminating influence and a prison cell, suggesting an area and built environment which diminishes individual autonomy and ultimately poisons the body. However, the Raths' awareness of their inability to conform, powerfully conveyed through the question mark embedded in the wall of the living room, illustrates how disillusionment with the good life automatically victimizes the family, and it is arguably this level of awareness that allows Wilson's protagonists to move beyond the gender roles dictated by the suburban space. Their sense of self comes from an ability to define themselves by way of difference, gaining a sense of value from their position as malcontents in corporations and suburbs, and it is this which serves as an instigator of mobility, moving them away from the constraints of the middle classes.

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[118] Ibid. p.4

[119] Catherin Jurca, *White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth Century American Novel.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.145

[120] Sloan Wilson,*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit.* (London: Penguin Books,1955, this ed. 2005), p.3

In Wilson's text the sense of impending repetition, and the continuation of the cycle of suburban discontent is clear. Upon learning of Tom's infidelity and his son in Italy, Betsy's behaviour is unrealistically forgiving: "He should have a good education and everything he needs...we should find out what he needs and send it. We shouldn't just send money".[121] Her desire to support Tom's son seems indicative of her position as a married woman of a certain social standing in a suburban environment, and her casual forgiveness of his misdemeanours are a symptom of her desire to belong. Betsy conforms in terms of appearance and rather than separate publicly, her loyalty to maintaining a public identity comes at the price of real marital experience. Furthermore, with the creation of a new suburban living development at the end of the text, and its promotion of fresh suburban mobility, Betsy and Tom engage in the selling of the unobtainable dream at which they failed. Much like Tom's PR job, they engage in selling an image of life which is false, and given their discontent and loathing for their own home environment, it seems unlikely that a new enterprise will be able to produce a more favourable version. This cycle of suburban dissatisfaction is perpetuated as the opening chapter mirrors the final pages; the crack and ink stains cannot possibility put an "end [to] their personal road"[122] as Betsy's desire, but also ultimate failure to be thankful and 'grateful' for her life, continues into the closing pages: "we're not going to worry anymore. No matter what happens, we've got a lot to be grateful for".[123]

THIEVES, POOL PARTIES AND RADIOS AND THE WORKS OF JOHN CHEEVER

John Cheever's short stories also convey an image of suburban living based upon disillusionment among the middle classes, and set against a backdrop defined by a plastic existence. Cheever's "The Housebreaker of Shady Hill" (1958), portrays an alienating experience, suggesting that whilst upholding suburban values, selves are provoked into transgressive action. As Beuka notes: "[Cheever's] works offer compelling evidence of the heterotopic nature of suburbia, the manner in which the suburb has come to reflect the phobias and insecurities of American culture".[124] Indeed, the Hakes share the Raths' and Wheelers' sense of inferiority compared to their neighbours; their competitiveness marks their unease in these surroundings,

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[121] Ibid. p.272

[122] Ibid. p.3

[123] Ibid. p.273

[124] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.19

whilst the tone of the narrative disapproves of the topics of affluence and wealth in conversation: “The Warburtons are always spending money, and that’s what you talk about with them. The floor of their front hall is black and white marble from the old Ritz, and their cabanas at Sea Island are being winterized”.[125] Yet, the Hakes are very much a part of their suburban landscape, and much like the Wheelers and the Raths, are drawn to this wholesome environment: “I took the regular train home, looking out of the window at a peaceful landscape and a spring evening”.[126] There is no escaping the Hakes’ participation in the conformity of their neighbourhood, attending the Warburtons’ dinner party, and Johnny, recognising his family as “the pain and sweetness of life”[127] and being grateful for “a nice house with a garden and a place outside for cooking meat, and on summer nights, sitting there with the kids and looking into the front of Christina’s dress as she bends over to salt the steaks”.[128] The Hakes are a unit within the fabric of suburban normalcy, functioning as a symbol of conformity against “a landscape of fear”.[129]

And yet, Johnny does not entirely fit the mould of subjectivity intended for him. His disillusionment with the domestic landscape is evident from his dreams which herald a better world: “in my sleep the idea had seemed to me like a good one; it had cheered me, and it was a letdown to find myself in the dark bedroom”,[130] and the constant reminder of domestic spaces as “dark” and lifeless: “the house looked like a shell, a nautilus, shaped to contain itself”.[131] As the narrative progresses, Johnny begins seemingly to transgress the boundaries of the conformist man, escaping into an alternative persona as a thief and stealing Carl Warburton’s wallet after breaking into his neighbour’s home. Having considered the darkness that pervades the homes, it is noteworthy that once he descends into the cellar with the wallet, he “turned the light on”[132] signalling a moment of true bodily realisation. Johnny, however, seems to almost be unaware of his actions, filled with self-reproach and sadness, his guilt is later “worn” in a “twitching in my eye [which] spread over my cheek”.[133] Whilst his character’s identity is inscribed by the stolen

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[125] John Cheever, *Collected Stories.* (London: Vintage Books, 1977), p.332

[126] Ibid. p.341

[127] Ibid. p.329

[128] Ibid. p.329

[129] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.21

[130] John Cheever, *Collected Stories.* (London: Vintage Books, 1977), p.333

[131] Ibid. p.335

[132] Ibid. p.336

[133] Ibid. p.340

wallet through a facial “tell”, the action itself instigates a break in the language associated with the suburban area, and instead begins to link Johnny to the city, where the next morning he expects to see, “the evil smelling ruin of some great city” and likens himself to “a common thief and an impostor”.[134] His attempt to associate himself with the “common” man through “common” actions, not only normalises his misdemeanours, but also serves to dislocate his identity from suburbia. As already explored, the containment of suburbia involves the containment of “us” against the threat of “them” - thieves included. The commonness of Johnny’s actions therefore separates him from both traditional masculine responsibility and the conformity of his surrounding spatiality, and instead relocates him within an individualistic and urban environment.

This dislocation is marked in Cheever’s narrative, which registers a shift from interiors to exteriors: “It sounded like a dawn wind - the air was filled with a showery sound - and felt good on my face”[135] and following an argument with Christina, Johnny sees:

> the FOR SALE sign that had been hanging on the house when we bought it long, long ago. I wiped the dirt off the sign and got a nail and a rock and went round to the front of the house and nailed the FOR SALE sign onto a maple tree.[136]

The fact that the Hakes house still wears its “FOR SALE” sign indicates the erasure of a permanent rooting in this environment, and whilst this might be the facilitator of Johnny’s transgression and attempted escape, it also undercuts this, and serves as a reminder of their position as upwardly mobile middle class suburbanites. Cheever pays attention to the fracturing of the structure of suburbia, highlighting the importance of appearance over substance through his representation of the suburban environment as, “a pale imitation of the real thing, a place where nature itself is subsumed under zoning considerations and becomes merely another element of maintaining visual evidence of dominant class status”.[137] In “Housebreaker”, Johnny’s neighbour Maitland, sits at the edge of his pool, dabbling his feet in the water, before justifying his dipping; “I don’t know how to swim’, he said. He smiled and looked away from me then to the still, polished water of the pool, in the dark landscape”.[138] There is something ridiculous about a man owning a pool when he does not have the skills necessary to use it, and again, we find

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[134] Ibid. p.336

[135] Ibid. p.334

[136] Ibid.p.346

[137] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.90

[138] John Cheever, *Collected Stories.* (London: Vintage Books, 1977), p.347

Cheever remarking upon the melancholia of this situation with the dark landscape coming back to haunt the reader. Similarly, appearance functions as the real in the description of the church, where the markings of religious piety are undercut by the stained glass window being made from “the butts of vermouth and Burgundy bottles”[139] and as the congregation offer up Christian values, the “rat went on scraping away at the baseboard”.[140] There is something deeply unsettling about the church, a symbol of white middle-class American values, rooting its subjectivity in a building made from discarded alcohol and infested with rodents. Here, both the un-usable pool and the church indicate how surface value is read as substantial and real value in this environment. The fact that Johnny cites sentimentalists as devoid of identity because, “they are always ready to be disappointed for the rest of us, and they will build whole cities, whole creations, firmaments and principalities, of tear-wet disappointment”[141] indicates how futile substance, morality and belief are in an environment built upon the principles of a self-fashioned drive for mobility, status and facade. As Beuka suggests:

> Cheever creates in his suburban settings [a] decidedly dark, ... corrective revision of the fantasy image of suburbia promoted by real estate developers and television... he positions his characters in a landscape whose commodification [continues their part] in the culture game of the suburbs. Trying to maintain their place in the social landscape.[142]

Perhaps nowhere else is this darkness and bleak view of suburbia more evident than in “The Swimmer” (1964), which charts the dreamlike voyage of Neddy Merrill as he attempts to cross the suburban landscape with the use of his neighbours’ swimming pools. This short story offers a vision of suburban environments which positions swimming pools as a key feature of the mapped area. Whilst the emphasis is certainly placed on leisure, “his own house stood in Bullet Park... where his four beautiful daughters would have had their lunch and might be playing tennis”,[143] the focus of Cheever’s scathing look at suburban life is that of the pools - an object so popular, Neddy “seemed to see... that that string of swimming pools, that quasi-subterranean stream that curved across the country”[144] could map his route home. So synonymous is the swimming pool with the image of this landscape, that Cheever refers to the “domestication of swimming” as

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[139] Ibid. p.342

[140] Ibid. p.343

[141] Ibid. p.344

[142] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.76

[143] John Cheever, *Collected Stories.* (London: Vintage Books, 1977), p.777

[144] Ibid. p.777

"customary".[145] Indeed, what is particularly striking about Neddy's voyage home across this watery landscape is the encounters with his neighbours, where every pool traversed signals another pool party to be crashed:

> he swam the length of their pool and joined them in the sun and was rescued, a few minutes later, by the arrival of two carloads of friends... After leaving the Howlands' he crossed Ditmar Street and started for the Bunkers', where he could hear, even at that distance, the noise of a party.[146]

The narrative makes the reader highly aware of the importance of social interaction centered around the pool, and therefore reminds us of the influence of appearance and "normalcy" in an environment defined by your visibility and your neighbours. However, halfway through, the positivity and partying fade and when Neddy encounters a pool without water, drained of life, he experiences the beginnings of a downward spiral of dislocation and alienation; "he was disappointed and mystified... the bathhouse was locked. All the windows of the house were shut, and when he went around to the driveway in front he saw a FOR SALE sign".[147] At this point, the sky becomes "overcast" and the air "cold", and the implication is that a drained pool is equal to absent subjectivities; or put another way, the use of a pool in suburbia gives life and identity to its inhabitants. From here on, Neddy's movement along the "Lucinda River" enables him to experience suburbia in previously unknown ways, and the narrative is increasingly filled with a sense of malcontent. He is initially ridiculed, "laughed at, jeered at, a beer can was thrown at him, and he had no dignity"[148] and later pitied by an old man who lets him cross the highway. Neddy seems unable to engage with his neighbour's parties as he had previously, and now sees the Bunkers' soiree as "louder, harsher and more shrill" and recognises the "regimentation"[149] of the puerile pool party. His delight in swimming turns to a "bitter" shower, and he enters the water "scowling with distaste".[150] Suddenly, it is as though his encounter with the empty pool has, perhaps unconsciously, deterritorialised his suburban identity, and there is a realisation of the frivolity of place bound subjectivity within this landscape. He becomes disorientated and momentarily dislocated from the scene, failing to remember recent events "why, we heard that you'd sold the house...",[151] and finally ends his voyage half-naked slumped outside the entrance to his home: "he shouted, pounded on the door, tried

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[145] Ibid. p.777

[146] Ibid. p.778

[147] Ibid. p.781

[148] Ibid. p.781

[149] Ibid. p.782

[150] Ibid. p.782

[151] Ibid. p.784

to force it with his shoulder, and then, looking in at the windows, saw that the place was empty".[152] Cheever ends the story with Neddy's rejection both from society, and by way of the empty house, rejection from his own family. By suggesting suburban identity lies in artifice, Neddy's voyage uncovers the unknowability of his neighbours and therefore Cheever unmasks suburban bodies as non-selves, filled with all the consumerist markings of the good life but emptied of substance. Neddy's demise stands as testament to the punishment for nonconformists.

Cheever's characters do recognise the discontentment which stems from the maintenance of a certain mode of artificial appearance over reality, and whilst Johnny Hake momentarily deterritorialises his subjectivity through transgressive, and typically urban acts, the stress placed on superficiality serves to entrench Johnny's conformity as he ultimately continues to uphold these values, firstly, by finding refuge for his actions in an increased salary, making Fifth Avenue, "become so sweet [that] the sidewalks seemed to shine",[153] and, secondly, by evading the police by claiming to be "walking the dog"[154] - a pertinently suburban activity. Instead, Johnny's real moment of flight comes in the form of a dream which marks the end of his thieving activities: "I dreamed I was sailing a boat on the Mediterranean... I stepped the mast, hoisted the sail, and put my hand on the tiller... You can't have everything."[155] Much like "The Swimmer", "Housebreaker" ends on a disheartening and gloomy note, where a character who managed to escape place bound identity seemingly gives up and lets go of his urban persona, succumbing to the unforgiving social structure of suburbia. Rather than being outcast, Johnny rejects a part of himself in favour of a manufactured entirety.

As Beuka notes, Cheever's works are filled with allusions to alienation through commodification, and in the same way the swimming pool becomes an architectural focal point for suburban social status (as a site of interaction), domestic objects become indicators of suburban disillusionment. In "The Enormous Radio" (1947) the prediction of "The Swimmer" becomes apparent. Jim and Irene Westcott accidentally engage in the surveillance of their neighbours through the use of their malfunctioning new radio. Cheever underscores the "average" qualities of the Westcotts being:

> the kind of people who seem to strike that satisfactory average of income, endeavour, and respectability that is reached by the statistical reports in college alumni bulletins. They were the parents of two young children, they had been

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[152] Ibid. p.788

[153] Ibid. p.349

[154] Ibid. p.350

[155] Ibid. p.349

> married nine years, they lived on the twelfth floor of the an apartment house near Sutton Place, they went to the theatre on an average of 10.3 times a year, and they hoped someday to live in Westchester.[156]

The Westcotts are therefore primarily characterised by their status as "upwardly mobile" - the type of ex-ubranite who dreams of suburban living. In this way, Cheever clearly attempts to relate his characters to the reader, where the protagonists' dreams and aspirations might be shared by the postwar couple. However, the novel's couple differ from being entirely average in one way - "an interest they shared in serious music".[157] In some ways this difference serves to remove their experience from that of the typically suburban, addressing their dislike of the radio's unforeseen qualities as indicative of their inability to fit the high visibility of suburban spaces. Jim purchases the radio for Irene once the old one "lost" Schubert, but this new, more cumbersome, appliance is from the outset described as having a "physical ugliness" and interferes with Irene's living room, being both "an aggressive intruder" and a "malevolent" presence.[158] The narrative re-positions the radio (an object) as an individual, another person who interferes with Irene's domestic harmony, and threatens her own position in the home as the homemaker. Irene soon realises that she can "distinguish doorbells, elevator bells, electric razors, and Waring mixers, whose sounds had been picked up from the apartments that surrounded hers and transmitted though her loudspeaker".[159] It is no surprise that the radio's surveillance only extends as far as the domestic clamour of her neighbours, marking its use as a vehicle for inspecting and observing others. In this way the radio becomes an object of surveillance "gazing" into other people's lives and, given the Westcotts' dream of social mobility, could serve as an introduction to the visibility of suburban living. The radio is therefore an object which blurs spaces through equating a lack of privacy with commodification, where consumerist products in the home facilitate "gazes" into other private spheres. Yet, this interaction between objects and individual domestic bodies does not flow in a singular way, but rather the interaction between object and spaces becomes fluid, allowing the gaze to move both from the radio onto the individual and back again. Rather than listening to others, Irene is increasingly nervous about speaking freely for fear of being heard: "maybe they can hear *us...*I'm wondering if they can hear us".[160] Hence, the radio begins to produce and restrain certain behaviour in the Westcott household for fear of being "heard", and in this way, the

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[156] Ibid. p.49

[157] Ibid. p.49

[158] Ibid. p.50

[159] Ibid. p.51

[160] Ibid. p.53

radio functions as an object of identity maintenance that both informs bodies of other bodies, and also informs bodies in their conformist behaviour. Irene becomes increasingly suspicious of her neighbours, looking "searchingly at her friend and wondered what her secrets were"[161] and gradually begins to question her own secrets: "our lives aren't sordid, are they, darling? Are they?... We're happy, aren't we, darling? We are happy, aren't we?".[162] The radio's presence serves to undermine the Westcotts' lives, where the blurring of public and private "comes to act as a mirror reflecting the Westcotts' own experience".[163] The commodification of the private space opens up the domestic sphere to public judgement, eventually breaking the facade of normality:

> You stole your mother's jewellery before they probated her will. You never gave your sister a cent of that money that was intended for her... Irene stood for a minute before the hideous cabinet, disgraced and sickened... Jim continued to shout at her from the door.[164]

The fear of nonconformity, brought on by surveillance itself, creates domestic tension which finally translates into the breakdown of communication, and ironically, the dissolving of the Westcotts' marriage serves to mirror the abusive and dysfunctional unions of their neighbours. The radio is therefore an object whose place in domestic spheres marks domestic bodies with a mode of subjectivity, one which is defined by insecurity:

> the irony of Jim's position is that if he were successful, he and Irene would one day find themselves in a place like Johnny Hake's Shady Hill... [a suburban terrain] where the culture game is played by more complex rules, whee a rigidly defined and defended social stratification breeds yet more persistent paranoia and alienation.[165]

TELEVISION AND SUBURBAN ENTRAPMENT IN *RABBIT, RUN*

Cheever's "Enormous Radio" highlights the way in which domestic objects are central to the suburban landscape. Bodies in these spaces are marked, not only by the architectural frames they inhabit, but also by the objects and furniture therein. Whilst the radio is central to Cheever's depiction of domestic life, so too is television emblematic of suburban landscape and experience, bringing the public world into view through a private space. Much like the use of the swimming pool,

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[161] Ibid. p.55

[162] Ibid. p.58

[163] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.77

[164] John Cheever, *Collected Stories.* (London: Vintage Books, 1977), p.60

[165] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.81

television, with its ability to privatise amusements, becomes a central organising object for suburban experience, being “the ideal companion for these suburban homes”.[166]As Spigel writes, broadcasting managed to work in a similar way to suburbia itself, creating a “contained” space of homogeneity: “television... promised to keep children away from unsupervised heterogeneous spaces... broadcasting would be a cultural filter that purified the essence of an ‘American’ experience”.[167] At a time when the visibility of domestic interiors caused tension and a heightened sense of conformity, television worked to enforce this notion further, by transmitting the outside world into the privacy of the home, converting domestic spaces into spectacles, and theatricalizing living spaces. There is the implicit illusion of an outside space transmitted onto an interior - a public world deterritorialised and reterritorialised, taking over the normative boundaries of the private sphere - merging domestic with public exterior. In the same way drive-in theatres had worked to bring people together, so television promoted an intrusion from the outside world, bringing neighbours and relatives together in a previously private space and, heralding the arrival of “a surrogate community... television provided an illusion of the ideal neighbourhood”.[168] By extending the homogenization of suburban environments, television comes to represent another suburban space in its own right, emulating a new space which marks subjectivity. However, the extension of suburban values and ideology through television also meant that fears of transgression followed. Turning the home into a space for looking suggests the objectification of the inhabitants, perhaps to an even greater degree than the picture window allows. The effect of the “gaze” of the public world upon entering the home creates a space for observation, or exhibition, overturning the traditional gender binary. As Spigel asserts, television threatened women’s roles in the home by “depicting a threat to the visual appeal of the female body in domestic space... [by showing other female bodies] the television set became the ‘other’ woman”.[169] As previously explored, Fifties’ masculinity was under threat from the inscribed domesticity attached to suburban living, encouraging men to be effeminate in the home was seen as a “contamination” of masculinity. Television’s blurring of spaces heightened the fear of “momism”, for if men were thought to glean their identity from their surroundings, then the television’s position as suburban-centric meant that it too was yet another threatening version of the “disease” of feminised men thus “broadcasting quite literally was shown to disrupt the normative structures of

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[166] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press,1992), p.188

[167] Ibid. p.192

[168] Ibid. p.202

[169] Lynn Spigel, *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p.30

patriarchal (high) culture and to turn 'real men' into passive homebodies".[170] Television is therefore symbolic of a major part of the suburban experience, an object at the heart of domestic living, but also, a technological advancement that contained the possibility of disrupting and overturning hegemonic values by challenging gender performance in the space of the home.

In Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960), the protagonist Harry, searches for an escape from masculine estrangement in suburban living areas. Centring around the faded memories of his glory days as a high school basketball hero ("they've forgotten him: worse, they never heard of him"[171]), and his gradual decline into the corporate world of the flannel suit and marital disillusionment, Harry embarks on a journey to find an autonomous identity, free from responsibility and suburban bleakness. As Beuka notes, Harry's masculinity is threatened by the "fragmented endlessly mirrored nature of his suburban landscape and its male residents"[172] thereby equating the environmental insignificance with his own. Throughout the course of the novel, Harry struggles to accept his place within his community, for he "hates Philadelphia. Dirtiest city in the world", and would rather find himself, "down, down the map into orange groves and smoking rivers and barefoot women".[173] Rather than seeming to be purely disheartened by his lifestyle, Harry's real qualm is his repeated dissatisfaction with his marital sex life - a marker of his masculinity - and this may explain why his attempted escape ends in the arms of another woman (Ruth) only a few miles down the road. In some respects, Harry fails in his attempt to escape, turning back on the highway and heading "instinctively right, north"[174] as he lacks the vision and determination to remain deterritorialised from his environment, failing to reach "his goal... the white sun of the south like a great big pillow in the sky".[175] Much like the Wheelers, Harry's escape seems only to be temporary, full only of promise, returning to an alternative domestic environment whilst the discovery of Ruth's pregnancy towards the end of the book brings him back, full circle, to the opening pages. The domestic situation, therefore, seems to be inescapable, and his responsibilities as a father and husband follow him as he moves between his home with Janice and his other home with Ruth. Rather than escaping suburbia, Harry duplicates it. Updike seems

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[170] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p.212

[171] John Updike, *Rabbit, Run.* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), p.7

[172] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.123

[173] John Updike, *Rabbit, Run.* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), p.23

[174] Ibid. p.34

[175] Ibid. p.27

to suggest that the landscape is to blame for Harry's transgression and consequent infidelity, thereby questioning the very fibre of domestic unity and the stability of the patriarchal family. The space of suburbia is frequently depicted in negative terms, filled with "fortresses" and "stains" "past a block of big homes, small fortresses of cement and brick inset with doorways of stained and beveled glass and windows of potted plants".[176] Rather than depicted as homely or welcoming, the language used to describe these areas implies imprisonment and captivity, where anguish marks the architecture, "his downstairs neighbor's door across the hall is shut like a hurt face".[177]

Essentially, Updike addresses the erosion of masculine power through the consumer driven and commodified language of suburban living, where technology marks the landscape:

> he comes into Brewer from the south, seeing it in the smoky shadow before dawn as a gradual multiplication of houses among the trees beside the road and then as a treeless waste of industry, shoe factories and bottling plants and company parking lots and knitting mills converted to electronics parts and elephantine gas tanks lifting above trash-filled swampland yet lower than the blue edge of the mountain.[178]

So much of Harry's experience of suburbia revolves around commodities and consumerism; from his journey of escape, "on the radio he hears 'No Other Arms, No Other Lips', "stagger Lee' a commercial for Rayco Clear Plastic Seat Covers, "If I Didn't Care' by Connie Francis, a commercial for Radio-Controlled Garage Door Operators... ",[179] to his experience of the landscape:

> on his right, away from the mountain, the heart of the city shines; a shuffle of lights, a neon outline of a boot, of a peanut, of a top hat, of an enormous sunflower erected, the stem of neon six stories high, along the edge of one building to symbolize Sunflower Beer.[180]

Here, what is evident is how commodification and consumerism have blurred to create a landscape which mirrors consumerism - a functional, yet "advertorial", construction. Even Eccles finds solace in "Godless public places", resting his wrists on "the cold clean marble and orders a vanilla ice cream soda with a scoop of maple walnut ice cream, and drinks two Coca Cola glasses full of miraculous clear water."[181] Updike seems to suggest that commodities and consumerism, although

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[176] Ibid. p.7

[177] Ibid. p.8

[178] Ibid. p.35

[179] Ibid. p.28

[180] Ibid. p.64

[181] Ibid. p.148

misplaced and alienated from the natural landscape, are increasingly defining it, creating an interchange between domesticity and consumerism:

> the land refuses to change. The more he drives the more the region resembles the country around Mt Judge. The same scruff on the embankments, the same weathered billboards for the same products you wondered anybody would ever want to buy.[182]

Perhaps the most obvious commodification is in Harry's own identity, through his job as a salesman for the domestic appliance, MagiPeel. Here, Harry not only wears the uniform of the archetypal breadwinner (as a salesman) but also makes a living from providing tools for domestic spaces. Indeed, Harry talks in the language of a salesman, even to himself: "the base of our economy. Vitaconomy, the modern housewife's password, the one word expression for economising vitamins by the MagiPeel Method".[183] So entrenched is the language of consumerism and commodification in Harry's own subjectivity, that he regularly slips into thinking about his product, thereby suggesting that commodities inform him of his selfhood: "Good old MagiPeel, Rabbit thinks: he can almost feel one in his hand. Its handle came in three colours, which the company called turquoise, scarlet, and gold. The funny thing about it, it really did what they said".[184] Harry even extends the use of the MagiPeel into conversation over Ruth's weight, applying a domestic commodity to the shaping of bodies:

> let's try this. What you need, typical American homemaker, is the MagiPell Kitchen Peeler. Preserve those vitamins. Shave off fatty excess. A simple adjustment of the plastic turn screw, and you can grate carrots and sharpen your husband's pencils. A host of uses.[185]

So entrenched is Harry's identity in his job, that it may no longer seem so surprising that his quest for autonomy ends so quickly, for it seems Harry does not know himself; "why am I me?... he is no one; it is as if he stepped outside of his body and brain a moment to watch the engine run and stepped into nothingness".[186] Instead Harry chooses to be "safe inside his own skin" and living a life of surface value, of what Eccles calls "inner darkness".[187] Indeed, Harry's identity does seem mostly to be absent, and this stands in stark contrast to Janice and Nelson. Despite "the apartment [being] empty, it is yet so full of Janice he begins to tremble" and as he clears the apartment of his belongings, "the mailbox

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[182] Ibid. p.31

[183] Ibid. p.11

[184] Ibid. p.155

[185] Ibid. pp.61-62

[186] Ibid. p.243

[187] Ibid. p.109

seems to call at him as he sweeps past".[188] Whilst domestic objects mirror Janice and Nelson, and the position of the chair in the living room "turned to face the television" marks the space with Janice's identity, Harry ignores the callings of the mailbox, and his absence from the space of the home - a space almost entirely marked by his wife and son - preempts his eventual desertion. So absent is he, in fact, that he imagines life to continue unaltered without him:

> he imagines opening the door and finding Janice sitting there in the armchair with an empty glass watching television and feels, like a piece of food stuck in his throat at last going down, his relief at finding her face still firm, still its old dumb tense self of a face.[189]

Yet, this sentence alludes not only to Harry's absence from the domestic setting, but also to Janice's, who, rather than recognising Harry's desertion, is absorbed with and marked by another body - that of the television.

As well as his dislike for the fortresslike landscape, Harry notes the:

> pockets of rubble, candy-bar wrappers and a pool of glass flakes, litter that must have fallen from the clouds or been brought by birds to this street in the sky, planted with television ariels and hooded chimneys the size of fire hydrants.[190]

Indeed, *Rabbit, Run* is littered with references to television sets, programs and broadcasting; so much so that Beuka reads the bewildering nature of suburban landscapes in "the network of crosshatched television antennae that symbolise the utter disconnectedness of the suburban community... Harry stands as an emblem of the isolated imprisoned suburbanite".[191] Television is therefore a crucial part of the spatial identity of the characters in the text, where the combining of commercial and consumerist impulses with broadcasting serves further to alienate the inhabitants. There seems to be an implicit connection between television and the environment, even so far as to liken Ruth's swim to, "a clear image suddenly in the water wavering like a blooey television set"[192] and citing "my valley. My home" as a place characterised by "the scatter rugs whose corners keep turning under, the closet whose door bumps the television set".[193] It is even through the medium of

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[188] Ibid. p.86

[189] Ibid. p.83

[190] Ibid. p.189

[191] Robert Beuka, *Suburbia Nation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth Century American FIlm and Fiction.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.121

[192] John Updike, *Rabbit, Run.* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), p.123

[193] Ibid. p.189

the television that Janice and Harry are reunited: “it isn’t too bad a show... it even makes for a kind of peace; he and Janice hold hands”.[194]

Whilst little of *Rabbit, Run* is directly devoted to television, it is a powerful performative force, recurring in the narrative in various spectral forms, informing both Harry and Janice of their relationship to each other, as well as evoking memories in others. Most strikingly, it is Janice’s vacancy in front of the television at the start of the novel which seemingly provides Harry with the impetus for escape, “when he opens the door he sees his wife sitting in an armchair with an Old-fashioned, watching television turned down low”.[195] His wife’s involvement with the television removes her from interaction with him, “she looks to one side of him with vague dark eyes reddened by the friction of watching”[196] and nearly causes financial damage, “one time, Janice, who is especially clumsy when pregnant or drunk, got the wire wrapped around her foot and nearly pulled the set, a hundred and forty-nine dollars, down smash on the floor”.[197] So central to the domestic environment is the television set, that Harry has to navigate around it, “the closet is in the living room and the door only opens halfway, since the television set is in front of it”.[198] Later in the narrative, Updike’s criticism of modern technology becomes more apparent, likening rows of identical housing with television sets to “showing families sitting on sofas inside like chickens at roost facing TV’s”.[199] The implicit derogatory simile applied here works to undermine the advancement of technology, by suggesting that broadcasting can reduce individuals to homogenous and dumb animals, despite the potential for creating a newly transgressive space. Much of the text does work to undermine television, primarily as it appears as the backdrop to events in the protagonist’s story, absorbing Janice and informing his affair with Ruth “they have gone bowling once and have seen four movies”.[200] *The Mouseketeer’s* is perhaps the most central programme in the text. It is the programme Janice watches so vacantly at the beginning and a program that even Harry considers to be informative; “the big Mouseketeer has appeared, Jimmie, a grown man who wears circular black ears. Rabbit watches him attentively: he respects him. He expects to learn something from him helpful in his own line of

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[194] Ibid. p.186

[195] Ibid. p.8

[196] Ibid. p.8

[197] Ibid. p.9

[198] Ibid. p.9

[199] bid. p.41

[200] Ibid. p.99

work".[201] The program even evokes a memory in Harry, watching television with Ruth he is "curious to see the whole thing. It was like looking through a photograph album with about half familiar faces. The scene where the rocket goes through the roof and Fred MacMurray runs out with the coffee pot he knew as well as his own face".[202] Television programming becomes part of who Harry is, it reminds him of moments in his life and he recognises himself in the actors' faces. The allusion to the photograph album is noteworthy, suggesting a personal memory and a family member. For Harry, television has become part of his domestic landscape, being familiar, and homely, emblematic of suburban life.

The commodification and consumerist language which mark Harry's identity is also wrapped up with television broadcasting, and there is a sense that his demeanour having been learnt from advertisements or actors. When speaking to Eccles, Harry's lack of authenticity becomes even clearer: "I was remembering our other conversation. About the waterfall and the tree" "Yeah well: I stole that from Mickey Mouse".[203] In fact, Harry is considerably marked by Disney; not only in language, but also by way of his expectations, likening his own product MagiPeel to Walt Disney: "Rabbit tried it, pinching the mouth together and then the wink, getting the audience out front with you against some enemy behind, Walt Disney or the MagiPeel Peeler Company, admitting it's all a fraud but what the hell, making it likeable".[204] In many ways, Harry emulates the hyperreality of Disneyland, recognising he is 'all a fraud' and aspiring to autonomous masculinity but citing his utopia in, "this synthetic and desultory diner... [with] toy dogs in the street, candy houses in lemon sunshine".[205] In these ways, television shapes Harry's attempt at transgression, establishing his expectations of paradise and the parameters of his desired manhood, in a way which is so closely bound to the utopian that it is never achievable, setting up his inevitable failure. Increasingly, Harry's identity is inseparable from the commodified landscape of the suburban environment, marking his speech and persona with advertisements and television personalities, filling his uncertainties surrounding his performative masculinity with reflections of a cultural plurality.

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[201] Ibid. p.10

[202] Ibid. pp.99 -100

[203] Ibid. p.107

[204] Ibid. p.10

[205] Ibid. p.27

CONSUMING LOLITA

Vladimir Nabakov's *Lolita* (1959) has been read by critics as an attempt to read American culture through the lens of European academia, and, by way of its contrast to white collar narrative forms, is said to chart the unease of middle-class ideologies from a distanced perspective.[206] However, I argue that Nabakov's text, whilst depicting aspects of American culture, can be read as a critique of both suburbia and by extension, consumerism. Much like Updike's fiction, rather than only exploring masculine sexuality and perversion, *Lolita* is heavily marked by disillusioned suburban bodies who lack authenticity whose subjectivity is defined by the language of commodification. From the outset, the familiar unease surrounding the suburban landscape is evoked through Humbert's observations of New England:

> we almost ran over a meddlesome suburban dog... a little further, the Haze house, a white frame horror, appeared, looking dingy and old, more gray than white - the kind of place you know will have a rubber tube affixable to the tub faucet in lieu of shower.[207]

The reference to the "horror" of the "dingy" house, expresses Humbert's immediate dislike for suburban forms and is reminiscent of the architectural ugliness previous protagonists have identified in their domestic settings. Humbert's assumption of the rubber tube in the bath indicates an academic aloofness which serves to distance him, intellectually, from the domestic environment and alienate his subjectivity. By his own admission:

> I could not be happy in that type of household with bedraggled magazines on every chair and a kind of horrible hybridization between the comedy of so-called 'functional modern furniture' and the tragedy of decrepit rockers and rickety lamp tables with dead lamps.[208]

Humbert's European heritage further alienates him from a landscape which he clearly deems to be oxymoronic, mixing old and new styles in a "horrible" fashion. Indeed, as he later states upon remembering his childhood, "gloating" over maps of North America, the imagined "glorious diamond peak upon peak, giant conifers, le montagnard emigre in his bear skin glory, and Felis tigris goldsmithi, and Red Indians under the catalpas" faded against his real experience of the landscape, "that it all boiled down to a measly suburban lawn and a smoking garage incinerator, was appalling. Farewell Appalachia!".[209] Humbert clearly associates the

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[206] Andrew Hoberek, *The Twilight of the Middle Class: Post World War II American Fiction and White Collar Work.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

[207] Vladimir Nabakov, *Lolita.* (London: Penguin Books, 1959), p.38

[208] Ibid. p.40

[209] Ibid. p.238

proliferation of suburban settings with the destruction of mapped American magnificence, and in this sense the text does engage in a critique of suburbia, where Humbert is pitted against "consumerism and mass culture, academic and bourgeois pieties, trendiness and chic".[210]

Within this exploration of suburbia, *Lolita* offers a subtle narrative of space and body interplay. The two inhabitants of the house in Lawn Street, Charlotte and her daughter Dolores Haze, are frequently represented in terms which associate their identities with mass culture and consumerism. As mentioned above, the house is littered with "bedraggled magazines" and Charlotte's "polished words may reflect a book club or bridge club, or any other deadly conventionality, but never her own soul".[211] The small indicators of middle-class status, such as the magazines and commercial painting in the front hall, categorise the Haze women as cultural consumers and they are repeatedly presented in ways which suggest that they wear their culture as identity, "the sincerity and artlessness with which [Charlotte] discussed what she called her 'love life'... were affected by the same stuff (soap operas, psychoanalysis and cheap novelettes) upon which I drew my characters and she for her mode of expression".[212] Charlotte's "mode of expression" is entirely informed by culture, picking "modes" of expression from literature, television and editorial content and thereby underscoring her inauthenticity. Furthermore, this performativity extends to the house, for when Charlotte and Humbert marry, she begins to "glorify the home"[213] by way of a how-to manual, fittingly entitled "Your Home is You".[214] Her role as middle-class housewife clearly inform her of a suitable way of being, drawing on consumer products and manuals in order to conform to the suburban location. Even Humbert finds he is affected by the home, as his newly assumed patriarchal role means he enters into an "emotional relationship with [the house], with its very ugliness and dirt".[215]

In Humbert's new role as patriarch, he manages both to embrace and transgress the built space of the home, ultimately marrying Charlotte and assuming his role as father to Lolita in order to exert his sexual desires. In becoming a father, Humbert actively displaces traditional gender roles in order to make real his predatory intentions. He calculatingly decides to "resume my existence in the Haze

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[210] David Costronovo, *Beyond the Gray Flannel Suit: Books from the 1950s that made American Culture.* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp.14-15

[211] Vladimir Nabakov, *Lolita.* (London: Penguin Books, 1959), p.39

[212] Ibid. p.89

[213] Ibid. p.86

[214] Ibid. p.87

[215] Ibid. p.86

household; for I knew already that I could not live without the child"[216] and admits that "the idea of marrying a mature widow (say, Charlotte Haze) [was] merely in order to have my way with her child (Lo, Lola, Lolita)".[217] As Walker asserts:

> Nabakov saw... the enormous significance of the domestic in postwar American life and understood its fragility and attendant anxieties. When Humbert marries Lolita's mother solely to gain physical proximity to her preadolescent daughter, his behaviour is a travesty of the creation of the nuclear family, and ironic references to the domestic ideal permeate the novel.[218]

By extension, the novel tackles the idea of authenticity, as Humbert sets himself up as something he is not within the parameters of postwar ideology. The fact that he has to read the book "Know Your Own Daughter"[219] underscores his inability to fit the patriarchal role, but he continues to perform the fatherly role:

> "John", cried Jean, "she is his child, not Harold Haze's. Don't you understand? Humbert is Dolly's real father... The distraught father went on to say he would go and fetch his delicate daughter immediately after the funeral, and would do his best to give her a good time.[220]

The unease the reader inevitably experiences with the ambiguous use of "good time" here, is testament to the cultural associations implied by the displacement of the father role, for Humbert is no longer merely a sexual predator, but a trusted authoritative figure playing the part of the suburban patriarch. Nabakov's inclusion of the hotel room which bears the same number as the house on Lawn Street ("say, it's our house number"[221]) further enforces the inversion of the domestic space, transposing it into the site of incest. By mirroring the domestic environment, the narrative simultaneously evokes conformity (father and daughter) and fragmentation, shattering cultural hegemony with the consummation of Humbert's pedophiliac desires.

Much like Sal Paradise in Kerouac's text, Humbert uses the car journey in Part Two, and the implicit movement between built spaces, to continue to transgress moral boundaries, and thereby assert his individuality. In this section of the novel, Humbert and Lolita are depicted as "going places" and "voraciously ... consume[ing] those long highways in rapt silence... glide[ing] over their glossy

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[216] Ibid. p.71

[217] Ibid. p.77

[218] Nancy Walker, *Shaping Our Mother's World: American Women's Magazines.* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), p.26

[219] Vladimir Nabakov, *Lolita.* (London: Penguin Books, 1959), p.197

[220] Ibid. p.113

[221] Ibid. p.134

black dance floors".[222] The romance associated with their journey glossing over "dance floors" and "gliding" across the American landscape, highlights the use of transitional spaces as enabling a flight into escape. It is notable, that it is during this section of the text, and not before, that Humbert and Lolita become lovers. However, their journey of discovery (both sexual and literal), is signposted by commerce:

> we passed and re-passed through the whole gamut of American roadside restaurants, from the lowly Eat with its deer head... humorous picture postcards of the posterior "Kurort" type, impaled guest checks, life savers, sunglasses, adman visions of celestial sundaes, one half of a chocolate cake under glass and several horribly experienced flies zigzaging over the sticky sugar pour on the ignoble counter.[223]

Nabakov clearly points to the American experience as one of advertisements, commodities and consumer products, where "sidetrips and tourist traps"[224] abound and traditional culture, the Indian ceremonial dances, are "strictly commercial".[225] Commercialism and consumerism seem to stand in for a culture based upon tradition, and paradoxically, the internalising of a commercial (and therefore, artificial) culture provides the path for dissident individuals. In *Lolita,* bodies internalise and reflect cultural signifiers.

Ultimately, it is Lolita herself who carries the most cultural references in her performance, drawing her selfhood from Hollywood and movie culture. Nabakov positions her as a "modern" girl who is "an avid reader of movie magazines, an expert in dream slow close ups"[226] thus marking her with adult qualities ("a handsome, intensely virile grown-up friend"[227]) and as the perfect consumer. Arguably, it is Lolita's ability to straddle adulthood through consumerist qualities ("swooned to Humbert's charm as she did to hiccuppy music"[228]) and the actuality of childhood (the camp motif "dedicated to a Disney creature"[229]) which blurs the boundaries of sexuality, for her body may be childlike, but her persona which manifests itself through bodily performance becomes distinctly adult. She is repeatedly drawn to commercial objects and places, the "phoney colonial

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[222] Ibid. p.171

[223] Ibid. p.174

[224] Ibid. p.174

[225] Ibid. p.177

[226] Ibid. p.53

[227] Ibid. p.53

[228] Ibid. p.117

[229] Ibid. p.124

architecture, curiosity shops and imported shade trees"[230] in Briceland, for example, prompts Lolita to desire the movies: "sweet hot jazz, square dancing, gooey fudge sundaes, musicals, movie magazines [are]... the obvious items in her list of beloved things";[231] and she believed "with a kind of celestial trust, any advertisement or advice that appeared in Movie Love or Screen Land".[232] Lolita is, throughout the novel, associated with consumer culture, and to some extent, Nabakov envisions her as a non-self - a body without subjectivity, void and vacuous, filled only with media; "she it was to whom ads were dedicated; the ideal consumer, the subject and object of every foul poster".[233] She appears to be drawn, almost hypnotised, by the promises of commerciality:

> if a roadside sign said VISIT OUR GIFT SHOP - we had to visit it, had to buy its Indian curios, dolls, copper jewelry, cactus candy. The words 'novelties and souvenirs' simply entranced her by their trochaic lilt.[234]

For Lolita, a kiss is but a replication of a Hollywood scene and a lover is just a notion she read about in a kitsch low-brow novella ("I could never make her read any other book than the so-called comic books or stories in magazines for American females... she was quite sure she would not fritter away her 'vacation' on such highbrow reading matter"[235]) or magazine article. Lolita does not know herself for there is no aspect of her body which has gone unmarked by her surroundings, and Humbert's insight "to think that between a Hamburger and a Humburger, she would - invariably with icy precision - plump for the former"[236] further compounds Lolita's utter inability for Lolita to associate herself with anything other than commodities.

In likening her subjectivity to that of mass culture, Lolita too becomes an object to be consumed by Humbert. He refers to her as a possession and his "gaspingly adorable pubescent pet"[237] and given that on her departure, Humbert "removed from the car and destroyed an accumulation of teen magazines.. [with] ads and fads",[238] Lolita becomes an object which was once advertised and has

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[230] Ibid. p.130

[231] Ibid. p.166

[232] Ibid. p.166

[233] Ibid. p.167

[234] Ibid. p.167

[235] Ibid. p.196

[236] Ibid. p.187

[237] Ibid. p.194

[238] Ibid. p.289

been consumed. At the end of Part One, Humbert buys her trinkets for the car journey: “four books of comics, a box of candy, a box of sanitary pads, two cokes, a manicure set, a travel clock...”[239] and it as though by appealing to her love of mass culture, he too is buying her affection. The novel’s rampant commodity fetishism seems to mirror the implicit sexual fetishism, locking Humbert and Lolita into an affair of iconography and exteriority and the novel’s attention to photographs, advertisements, and magazines points to a landscape which is informed by image, where surface separates substance. As Costronovo notes, “one of Nabakov’s favourite literary techniques - metamorphing things and people - is central to Lolita... objects become other objects”.[240] Similarly, Humbert’s frequent renaming of characters, such as “Miss Opposite”, “Nymphet” and “Red Sweater”, reinforces the separation of surface and truth, whereby his constant refusal to name individuals by their real names, enables him to view the landscape as a consumer. They are no longer autonomous subjects but rather, a sea of objects or commodities with differing and varying qualities. Lolita’s elopement is testament to her position as a commodity, as once the consumer gains gratification, the commodity - Lolita - becomes redundant.

BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN

Perhaps the most influential domestic commodity was the television, which as previously mentioned, enabled a flow between the outside world and the home. Television as a box, an object, merely reaffirms the domestic setting, working in much the same way as the picture window or the cooker. It is there to indicate and mark domesticity. However, in the case of television programming, a milieu of simulacra is at work. The television, as an object to be looked at, functions in much the same way as the picture window permits surveillance of the private world in the public sphere - only television broadcasting brought other worlds into the home, and therefore suggested a new virtual space of the ideal, refracting the boundaries of suburban normalcy. Now, containment was actively instilled in television viewers, watching examples of how they should be. As Spigel asserts:

> television and suburbs are both engineered spaces, designed and planned.. media and suburbs are sites where meanings are produced and created; they are spaces in which people make sense of their social relationships with each other, their communities, their nation, and the world at large.[241]

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[239] Ibid. p.160

[240] David Costronovo, *Beyond the Gray Flannel Suit: Books from the 1950s that made American Culture.* (London: Continuum, 2004), p.113

[241] Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p.15

Indeed, television broadcasting permitted a slippage between exterior and interior influences, blurring traditional territories of difference, and highlighting hegemonic norms, thereby encouraging a greater adherence to conformist behaviour.

Television programming actively instilled a "concept" of the family which was "consistent with television's nostalgic portrayals of shiny, happy suburbs"[242] and its vision of a heterotopia worked to entrench gender modes. As Nina Leibman notes in her study of Fifties' family sitcoms, the representation of gender roles was central to the depiction of a family to which viewers could relate, and for this reason, set hegemonic patterns in the narrative are adhered to:

> while the television programs boast large homes with a multitude of rooms, familial interaction is limited to the following... the living room, the kitchen, the dining room, the children's bedrooms, the parent's bedroom. These rooms are coded in terms of the family members territory; the kitchen is the mother's domain, the children's rooms belong to the individual offspring, all other rooms are the domain of the father.[243]

Coding the scene's location in this way replicates the viewer's use of living spaces, and by rooting the mother in the kitchen, sitcoms worked to enforce a domestic gender identity for women: "during the ubiquitous dinner and breakfast scenes, the women are usually up and about serving, rather than sitting at the table".[244] Similarly, the placement of characters in sitcoms in and around the home and the suggestion of associated gender roles extended to those of children, thereby asserting a "naturalness" of female and male gender identities, for the female children of television families were "to be docile, domestic and modest, while boys were to be logical, intelligent and confident".[245] Hence, the representation of television families worked to underscore the importance of adhering to gender specific identities, firmly rooting women in domesticity and men in responsibility and by communicating these as norms to the public via television media, sitcoms embodied a vision of how bodies should behave.

Furthermore, by linking the characterisation of television families with those of the viewing public, the imagined and illusionary comes to replace or blur the boundaries of the real. By transposing "real life" into a media form, sitcoms managed to frame a view of the interiority of suburban families, making the private space public (albeit through simulacra). As Colomina writes:

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[242] Ibid. p.5

[243] Nina Liebman, *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p.129

[244] Ibid. p.129

[245] Ibid. p.216

> television families were typically presented as 'real families'... [promising] modes of spectator pleasure premised upon the sense of an illusionary rather than a real community of friends... television allowed people to enter into an imaginary social life.[246]

The opening up of the domestic space to be viewed through imaginary, yet familiar families at once blurred the distinction between the real and the imagined, as sitcoms were premised on their ability to frame the imagined as real, and thereby threatens to subvert the real as imagined. For the viewer was not only being parodied through television (and thereby informing characterisations of imaginary bodies), but was also being informed of the public world by the inclusion of advertisements and product placement in sitcoms. [247]

What is repeatedly developed in family sitcoms is the recognisable domestic setting; a space which drives the narrative of an "average" suburban family. In keeping with the mirroring of the real in broadcasting, these domestic settings often evoke cultural ideologies as a foundation for character depiction, yet at times, the domestic setting, whilst present, is subverted. Both *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970) and *Bewitched* (1964-1972) represent a home-centred, suburban landscape with male (patriarchal) and female (domestic) characters. Yet, whilst the settings may be familiar, both female protagonists subvert traditional female roles through their "supernatural" powers, thereby permitting an escape from traditional gender modes. Whilst both Jeannie and Samantha (*Bewitched*) are heroines who can supersede their rivals and aid their husbands, as well as setting traps for wayward neighbours, and achieving domestic brilliance at a flick or a wiggle of a nose, their fantastical identities only serve to exaggerate the domestic patterns of suburban normalcy, for their ability to be "super-feminine" is merely an exaggerated form of traditional feminine roles, and in their attempt to escape suburbia, their powers are only ever used to aid their containment within its bounded landscape, returning feminine success with domestic rewards. Furthermore, as Spigel writes of fantasy sitcoms, the alien qualities of Jeannie and Samantha "parody the technological utopias Americans had hoped to find in their new suburban homes",[248] thereby at once returning an escaped femininity to the realm of the home. Jeannie and Samantha are characters who question the naturalness of middle-class gender patterns, for their characters' domesticity is aligned with the supernatural. Whilst their alien superpowers provide the tools by which to achieve domestic roles and mirror the normalcy of their other female

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[246] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 204-205

[247] Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p.6

[248] Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p.133

neighbours, their otherness twinned with their success in masking their true identities, suggests the fragility of women's domestic roles. In other words, the norm becomes alien and the "fantastic unmasks the conventionality of the everyday".[249]

What emerges from television sitcoms is, in Colomina's words, "a sense of being there, a kind of hyper realism"[250] and in the same way sitcoms encouraged the blurring of reality and image, they also simulated a community, filling private spaces with duplicate families to both relate to and emulate. This form of hyper-realism recurs in other landscapes, such as Disneyland and The Monsanto House of the Future, where familiarity and sameness is what predicates the fantastical difference and television sitcoms worked in a similar way, associating fantasy with the real in domestic spaces. Yet this domestic hyperrealism manages to lay cultural ideology open to criticism, for if fantasy lies in the real, then hegemonic normalcy is nothing more than a fantasy, performed in a regulated space. Indeed, so closely related is the utopian to the ideology of suburbia, that late 20th and 21st century explorations of suburban landscapes commonly evoke the dystopian - *American Beauty* (1999)*, Stepford Wives* (1975), *Disturbia* (2007), and *Desperate Housewives* (2004-2012) - all feature domestic and suburban landscapes where the search for the utopian has failed, and in letting go of the American dream, the protagonists face alienation, debilitation and inhumanity. The subversion of suburban utopia through hyperrealism is notably aided by consumerism as an identity for bodies (as seen in *Rabbit, Run* and *Lolita)*, filling voided selves with conformist culture and negating autonomy and individualism. Furthermore, if consumerist bodies find their identity rooting in landscapes, suburbia's reliance upon visibility, both through objects and architecture leaves little room for negotiation, constantly evoking the "norm" as the only acceptable pattern of behaviour - a behaviour, even more confusingly, epitomised by the world of fantasy in television. Yet ultimately, as sitcoms show, the domestic-centricism of suburban landscapes works to undermine the purported authenticity and naturalness of gender roles, as all objects, broadcasts, books and built spaces, work to tell inhabitants how to behave, underscoring how suburbia itself is a hyper-real space.

This chapter demonstrates the centrality of the domestic space and the objects therein, in shaping the performance of bodies inhabiting suburban spaces. As the analysis of the texts explored illustrates however, the density of commodification, the reliance upon surveillance and the incorporation of vision into architecture (picture windows) as well as in these familial settings, made escape

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[249] Ibid. p.123

[250] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p.207

from these highly inscriptive spaces near impossible, for cookbooks, television, magazines and homes themselves, entrenched male and female bodies into specific modes of performativity. But what of the American landscape of the South, free from dense population and the proliferation of commodification and consumerism? Do these seemingly open, uncontained and pastoral spaces suffer from the same plausible simulation and the reduction of real to aesthetic values, beliefs and identities? The next chapter will attempt to link these notions of visibility and identity to Southern bodies, examining how a space designed to be viewed through cultural imagery can inflect individual subjectivities.

CHAPTER THREE: AMERICAN LANDSCAPES, SOUTHERNISM AND UTOPIAS IN NATIONAL IDENTITY

In Elia Kazan's 1961 film, *Splendor in the Grass*, the American South is reduced to a popular and accessible vision of Southern culture. This celluloid version of the South is repeatedly shored up in the Fifties and Sixties as a salve to anxious America, where "good ol" fashion values' lie in the hearts of the characters on display. The film foregrounds the issues of sexuality and desire from within a Southern community, and the narrative unfolds into a tale of punishment for transgressive teenagers who have "gone too far". These characters are enveloped by their Southern historical and cultural frames (such as Bud's family oil business, money and influence) and this frame is one which is rooted in traditional values and appropriate, conformist behaviour. Wilma Dean's "forbidden" love for Bud goes against the deeply patriarchal community and her inappropriate sexual desire results in mental breakdown, instability, fragility and her eventual Othering from her family and the town. What *Splendor in the Grass* makes clear is how inflexible Southern tradition is and how its rigid values leave little room for negotiation. Hence, the film's recognisable Southern locale and its depiction of transgressive behaviour enforces the role of the South as an image of "contained" ideology, striking a familiar chord with the principles of the Cold War.

This chapter explores the South, in the literature, film and television of the Fifties, and attempts to examine the influence of Cold War ideology on a pastoral space which is repeatedly associated with the heart of American values. The texts explored here, reveal a type of Southern body that is Othered and objectified through vision, both by geographical position and by way of the South's employment in tourism and popular imagery. Furthermore, the types of masculinity encountered here appear as fraught with the tension between consumerism and individuality as those in the North. By drawing on current debates in Southern Studies and focusing on previously overlooked male narratives, the Southern texts examined here reveal anxious forms of maleness; only arguably these Southern men appear even more complex, caught between a contained ideology and the traditional inscriptions of the surrounding landscape. The chapter considers the role played by Hollywood in the construction of the South's image, and in doing so connects pastoral spaces to utopian structures through emphasis on the simulated and dream-like nature of this image. By linking representations of the South to film, television, culture and into architectural structures, this chapter moves closer to defining American national identity during the Cold War, and beyond.

As previous chapters of this thesis have illustrated, the supposed authenticity of American identity is destabilised by its reliance on the "norm"; a type of contained and conformist subjectivity displayed on the surface of bodies and in the performances of literary, television and film characters. If this constructed identity is inextricably bound to and found on the surface in the built environment, then perhaps the pastoral landscapes of the South can provide "real" bodies, for here the structures and designs that mark the city or suburban space are countered by the prominence of the natural, and natural rootings take the place of architectural inscriptions. As Leo Marx writes in *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), the pastoral in America is shored up as a space which embodies utopian schemes, and suggests an existence closer to patriotism in an undefiled landscape dedicated to happiness, harmony and joy.

SOUTHERN FICTION AND THE SELF

Perhaps one the most popular Southern writer to emerge in the twentieth century is William Faulkner, whose text *Light in August* is discussed in the earlier part of this thesis. What Faulkner's texts illustrate however, is a search for individuality which attempts to void the inscriptions of the image of the South. As Philip Weinstein writes:

> the lures of escape from human inter-indebtedness... take shape as unstoppable reservoirs of inexhaustible floods of potency... they are fascinations, problems, provocations for Faulkner's people and offered as such for his readers... [his writing] registers the power of history's living motion in the tragic turbulence surrounding islands of private subjectivity.[1]

What emerges quite clearly from Faulkner's writing is the importance of history in framing Southern bodies and the inescapable nature of the Southern tradition, as ingrained in the landscape as well as on bodies. Yet, as Faulkner's texts illustrate, this historical framing is one which is both embraced and fought. There is a desire to preserve the sanctity of the purity of the Southern tradition (as seen with the Compson family), and, at the same time, a desire to embrace the changing South of the Southern Renaissance (Joe Christmas, Joanna and Joe Brown in *Light in August*). Whilst Faulkner's Southernscapes foreground Southernism as defined by the history of segregation, white supremacy and patriarchy, there is also an effort to accommodate the "individualising south"[2] by exposing the inherent racism and misogyny of this tradition. This paradoxical nature of the "New South", its tension

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[1] Phillip Weinstein, *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.210 & 220

[2] James Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.163

between conformity and transgression, is not unlike the dualism of the Cold War itself, reminding the reader of the contradictory ideological pressures of containment and the desire for change. This “New South” was a product of the postwar years, rapidly rejecting its agrarian roots in favour of industrialisation and modernisation; switching from agriculture to tourism and technology and therefore, eliding itself economically with the North. As Cobb writes, the Southern writer:

> focused his eye on a changing south... but looked at a south that was slipping away, and the result was a creative mixture of detachment and involvement - an escape from then an attempt to return to the southern community.[3]

Indeed, the literature of the South frequently evokes tradition and rebellion; independence and obedience, and perhaps more than any other type of body encountered thus far, Southern bodies pull and push against and with the polarities of subjectivity as dictated by their geographical position. Bodies in Southern spaces must attempt to locate themselves in a space which does not root itself in historical tension, or contemporary consumerism, but rather find another anchor for subjectivity which might hold the possibility for authentic selfhood.

Without a suburban or metropolitan boundary, bodies in landscapes (as in the American South) might be closer to “natural” identity than in other previously examined areas, for here the pressure marking them is that of the land itself - the American soil. If metropolitan bodies display specifically urban traits and suburban bodies are marked by their domestic settings, then these pastoral bodies could be of a type which is moulded most closely to integral rather than performative identity. If bodies here are to be assessed according to the landscape and not the built environment, the theory of ecocriticism should be considered, thus linking pastoral bodies to their surroundings. Contemporary ecocriticism makes clear that reading the natural environment and the body are inextricably linked. As Cheryl Clotfelty writes, ecocriticism “asserts that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it”[4] and for ecocritics, such as Harold Fromm and Greg Garrard, nature is an actor in the drama of the human story - “instead of detachment from the environment, we have a subtle diffusion into it... [we must consider] the individual as a component of, not something distinct from, the rest of the environment”.[5] As this makes clear, bodies here are informed and marked by their surroundings. Rather than being inscribed by walls and frames, these bodies anchor themselves in the pastoral spaces around them and in this way, American landscapes can be understood as an extension of the boundary of selfhood for

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[3] Ibid. p.163

[4] Cheryl Clotfelty & Harold Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader; Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* (Athens: University Press of Georgia, 1996), p.xix

[5] Ibid. p.97

these bodies - “there is no such thing as an individual, only an individual in context, individual as component of place, defined by place”.[6] Unlike the spaces of the North, Southern bodies occupy a distinct type of subjectivity, one which finds its rootings in external space, aligning themselves with purportedly “natural” masculinity and femininity and therefore lending their perceived identities to a more convincing “traditional” ideal.

Bodies are animated by the environment within which they are placed, and when dealing with the Southern landscape, the conception of this pastoral area as colonial, aggressive and therefore, masculine, creates a gendered relationship between individual and nature. In its examination of the literature of the South, Southern Studies predominately focuses upon race (black slave narratives) and white women’s (domestic lady, Southern belle) narratives and critiques these through an examination of the landscape, more often than not demonizing patriarchy and foregrounding the historical influences race in the South bore on culture. Gary Richards’ *Lovers and Beloveds: Sexual Otherness in Southern Fiction* (2007) develops theories relating to the quarantining of Southern homosexuality; Patricia Yaeger’s *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing* (2000) focuses on black and white women’s writing and its fascination with the monstrous and grotesque in Harper Lee and Alice Walker. *In Race Mixing: Southern Fiction since the Sixties* (2004), Suzanne W. Jones addresses race relations in Tom Wolfe and Larry Brown illustrating the indefinable nature of colour and thereby challenging Southern mythic unity; and Jeff Abernathy’s *To Hell and Back: Race and Betrayal in the Southern Novel* (2003) uses Twain and Faulkner to unveil the ambivalent nature of white Southern literary liberalism existing across racial pairings. These indicative critical studies examine the contentious issues of the South such as race and femininity, and analyse the region through literature which exposes the invisibility of Negro and female voices, and the ongoing misogyny and racism after the Civil War. They seem most concerned with uncovering femininity as a masquerade and black identity as a fight for selfhood, but what becomes increasingly apparent is the way in which these studies overlook white masculinities. Given the patriarchal nature of Southern society, it is as though white male narratives are a given, or a dominant literary voice which needs no further examination. But what of the modern construction of the Southern man beyond his investment in slaves and agriculture? Perhaps male bodies in the South need to fight for their authenticity when material inscriptions are lacking, searching for masculine identity beyond a mapped inscription, seeking to keep the Old South alive and thereby cling on to patriarchal power. Is the naturalness of the South (the pastoral), a purifier of masculinity, or in other words,

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[6] Ibid. p.103

could it be that the landscape of the South fosters true masculinity? The image of the "other" spaces certainly appears to hold promise for masculine bodies - it is the place Rabbit dreams of in *Rabbit, Run* and the area Kerouac finds most liberating in *On The Road* - but the South is also the stronghold of gender containment, conformity and the defense of American conservatism.

THE SOUTH AND SOUTHERNISM

As discussed in previous chapters, men throughout the Cold War strove for an autonomous and individualistic identity amidst the suffocating influences of normative maleness, as expressed through domesticity, visible heterosexuality and the use of consumerism as a tool for anchoring the body within a conformist space. In the South, however, bodies do not appear to be as contained within the domestic settings of suburbia or the consumer sites of the city, thanks to their pastoral location. Hence, despite the conservative image of the region, it might be possible for these male bodies to find a more authentic version of masculinity within a more boundless, open and natural environment. For instance, the South is frequently evoked as a space for outdoor leisure, such as hunting - a virile and rugged masculine sport which gave men "an opportunity to escape women" and these men not only escaped domesticity through outdoor activity, but also took part in hunting because it was "considered one of the few remaining authentically masculine, white, male only activities in an increasingly feminised and integrated world".[7] Furthermore, given the culture of the South is indebted to its colonial and Antebellum history and traditions, we might anticipate more "traditional", older forms of masculinity to exist here - versions more attuned to "ambition... rivalry... aggression... toughness... sexual desire... greed... selfishness... athletic skill... strength... [and] animal instincts".[8] Indeed, in a recent study by Craig Friend, Southern men are described as possessing a:

> passionate manhood, the essence of which was a celebration of male emotions through acts of competition, aggression, force, sexuality, self fulfillment, and a new attention to the male body... [a form of] primitive masculinity - a primal virility that drew men into nature and into savage activities.[9]

Southern men therefore, seem more capable of expressing machismo masculinity than their northern counterparts, for their bodies find their inscriptive rootings in pastoral landscapes rather than metropolis' and Levittown. As Friend writes,

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[7] Roger Horowitz, *Boys and their Toys. Masculinity, Technology and Class in America.* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp.260 - 265

[8] Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood; Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolutionary to the Modern Era.* (New York: Basic Books,1993), pp.3 - 7

[9] Craig Friend, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction.* (Athens: University Press of Georgia, 2009), p.ix

Southern men “viewed themselves as in opposition to what they described as urban, industrial, liberal, corrupt, effeminate men of the North”[10] and hence these male bodies might utilise their geographical position as a way to mark a positive differentiation between the inauthentic bodies beyond Dixie and themselves. The South might be where “real” men can exist.

This positive differentiation between north and south is produced by embracing a distinct Southern identity, or the agrarian “Southernism”. Southernism plays on the pastoral myth of the American homeland - the national space at the core of America. But, according to recent studies, the South is also a site of dis-unity and rupture, where no concrete and recognisable version of this culture can be defined, for “[the] self contained and authentic southerner is simply an isolationist fantasy”.[11] If there is no authentic Southerner, then this cultural identity, clung onto by Southern bodies as a defining attribute, appears to be a construction, for it has no single identifiable image and instead points to its physical location as the sole defining characteristic. If Southernism is indeed constructed, then the bodies of the South expose themselves to Cold War ideologies, for not only do these bodies rely on a conservative and conformist identity (as in the North), but they also expose their defining point of difference as a manufactured, consumer space in itself. As Anthony Stanosis argues in his study of the South, Americans in the nineteenth century saw the countryside of the region as a place to find communion with God, and this pursuit of heritage continued into the twentieth century as the South emerged as “a massive museum for pursuers of Americana”.[12] This tourist investment in the region meant the need to impart instant historical and cultural information in digestible pieces, so that consumers could understand their experiences of pastoral America even after they had returned home. The result was the production of symbolic representations of reality - or souvenirs - to mark a trip to this Othered space. As Stanosis suggests, the interest of Northern tourists and the South’s pursuit of the tourist dollar encouraged not only a continuation of, but also a strengthening of the South as image, constantly reduced to marketable objects to be consumed by tourists as emblems of the South: “for many Northerners, the collective remembrance of Southern identity included not only the sounds of slavery but the tastes of Southern food and the exotic elements of Southern climate landscape”.[13] Hence, tourism not only

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[10] Ibid. p.x

[11] Tara MacPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender and Nostalgia in the Imagined South.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p.254

[12] Anthony Stanosis, *Dixie Emporium, Tourism, Foodways and Consumer Culture in the American South.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), p.6

[13] Ibid. p.27

contributed to the marketing of “Southern” objects and memorabilia, but also began to reduce the distinctive characteristics of Southern identity to consumer objects too. It was no longer just representational flags and trinkets which were offered as souvenirs, but now it also included sounds, tastes, colours, cultures, and temperatures available for Northern purchase. It wasn’t only souvenirs that were purchasable, even “pieces of the real.. of historical places and persons could be removed without a second thought.. [for] the possibility of buying such objects”.[14] As a consumer space then, Southern bodies who inhabit these newly purchasable spaces, offer themselves up for consumption, re-incorporating Southern bodies back into the ideologies of the North.

Magazines such as *Southern Living* (1966) and *The Southern Planter* (1950) illustrate the pervasiveness of the image of the South as a marketable commodity. *Southern Living* features recipes, fashion, culture and travel presumably aimed at a “Southern” readership, and the attachment of place to these common editorial articles attests to the packaging of the South for consumption. For instance, the magazine ran a series of features on floor plans and home styles, yet the individual plans were grouped into place specific blueprints, ranging from Georgia to Louisiana and Texas, each offering their own version of how a Georgian or Texan home should look. *The Southern Planter* on the other hand is more attuned to the South’s investment in agrarian culture, advertising itself as a magazine for those devoted to agriculture, horticulture and the household. Despite the purported Southern nature of these publications, what they offer is a “correct” way to landscape a garden, home and self in keeping with Southern tradition, revealing not only the distinctiveness of the Southern image, but also, the proscriptive nature of Southern identity. Here, Southernism becomes an identity anchored in one’s ability to appear “Southern” in your home, on your body, in your garden and even in your food choices. These magazines reveal ways in which the South can be bought by those outside its community, and thereby confirm the constructed nature of Southernism’s purported “traditional” identity.

Northern advertising also sourced Southern images for use in marketing campaigns, drawing attention away from the violent history and focusing on traditional aspects of Southern life. Plantation scenes came to suggest a life of leisure, and in a broad sense, “dixie.. as a brand.. conveyed the values of the product as well as the values of white society”.[15] The image of the South was sold to the North, then, as representing a contrastingly leisurely life to their urban and industrial lives. As Staonsis writes, advertisements of the South focused on selling

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[14] Ibid. p.34

[15] Ibid. p.51

a “slice of life”, depicting scenes of cultural values and society. He cites the example of Crab Orchard Whiskey, sold as:

> a scene of the old Crab Orchard Springs Hotel, where people came for such ‘Southern delicacies (sic)’ as ‘bar bequed squirrel’ or ‘roast possum and candied yams’. They washed it down of course with bourbon whiskey ‘ a flavour which even the flower of old time Kentuckey’s gentilly praised’.[16]

The effect of these social tableaux was the attempt to make products synonymous with that culture, associating the advertised commodity with the values of Dixie. The result of these hyperbolic marketing representations of the South was the creation of a Southern identity which “became detached from reality.. only the idea of Dixie was needed to make it seem real”.[17] What emerges therefore, is the importance of the South’s tourist culture, a culture built upon a series of aesthetic and publicly visible actions - Southern is gardening, Southern is your Texan ranch, Southern is eating fried chicken - and this perpetuates the assumption that other parts of America want to be both part of this history and yet distanced from it. The South is clearly homogeneized and repeatedly simulated through a series of acceptable images for Northern consumption, eradicating its bloodied and aggressive past, and repackaging the region for an age of “togetherness” and wholesome family values. In an age where advertising sold goods and these goods were purchased in order to help define the American identity, the heritage expressed by the cultural icons of the South began to define the South’s identity for American consumers. Much like the advertising employed for Crab Orchard Whiskey, the South’s past is repeatedly eradicated in favour of Southern status, leisure and ideals. As Karen Cox cites in her study of Dixie, Maxwell coffee campaigns of the 1940s (see figure 2) associated the Old South with American values and heritage, actively “perpetuating the myth that their southern antebellum ideal was only a cup of coffee away”.[18] The South was repeatedly imagined in these distinctly “unreal” terms, selectively employing elements of American “heritage” to sell products of leisure to Northern consumers. The packaging of the South was not, however, confined to the world of advertising and perhaps the most powerful simulation of Southern values and culture came in the form of film.

Gone with the Wind (1939), Victor Fleming’s film adaptation of Mitchell’s 1936 novel, is a popular and accessible version of Southern bodies and culture. In its representation of the Old South (during the Civil War and Reconstruction), it manages to both popularise and stereotype the region into a Hollywood, and

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[16] Ibid. p.63

[17] Ibid. p.68

[18] Karen Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie ; How the South was Created in American Popular Culture.* (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2011), p.47

therefore intensely visual, romantic space. Set in a grand plantation home, and foregrounding race relations and appropriate gender roles, the film represents a South which existed prior to the Fifties, and yet still managed to influence ideas of the South beyond the film's release date. As Deborah Barker writes, *Gone with the Wind* "constitutes the commodification of southern culture, reproducing the south not as home (inhabited place), but as homesickness, as an object of nostalgia in both the spatial and temporal senses of the word".[19] Indeed what the film represents is the reduction of Southern values to a series of visual representations for popular consumption, by reducing Southern women to the image of the Southern belle (Scarlett O'Hara), Southern men to assertive and sometimes cold figures (Rhett Butler) and the Southern landscape to a place marked by the drama of its violent history (the Civil War, the plantation home and the slave characters). Southern gender is evidently reduced to a series of types, and race is devalued to objects of abstract stereotypes - Prissy House Servant, Mammy House Servant, Pork House Servant - each name foregrounding service over individual identity. *Gone with the Wind* may be a celluloid version of Southern landscapes, but it is one which reveals a range of specifically mapped social convictions and values, and in doing so, through the big screen, it becomes a romanticised, simulated and ultimately objectified image, repeatedly sold as a commodity. *Gone with the Wind* continued to influence society and culture beyond the screen, influencing women's fashion and feminine ideals. In 1939, Macy's department store in New York turned several of its floors over to products associated with the film, and tied in the displays with a magazine article which proclaimed how the film "will influence fashion and decorations.. [forseeing] new trends in textures and colours as a result of this film".[20] Furthermore, the film expressed a particular ideal of femininity - the "Southern belle", an embodiment of acceptable behaviour for women in America. By advocating an agreeable type of woman, and providing the products (clothes) by which to fashion the appearance of this type (see figures 2.1 and 2.2), the sale of *Gone with the Wind* directly influenced the identity of women during the Cold War. In this sense then, the South's glamorization underscores Southernism's commodification, and it appears almost entirely reliant upon projecting itself as an "image" in order to sustain any sense of meaningful identity. In short, the popular images of the South can be viewed as "an evolving set of images [more than] an actual place.. transformed into such symbols as a stately plantation or a mammy".[21]

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[19] Deborah Barker, *American Cinema and the Southern Imaginary.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), p.8

[20] Karen Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture.* (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2011), p.51

[21] Anthony Stanosis, *Dixie Emporium: Tourism, Foodways and Consumer Culture in the American South.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), pp.4 - 5

If the culture of the South can be reduced to a set of “symbols”, rather than an “actual place”, tourism must bear some influence on the region’s identity. Increasingly, it seems as though the “tourist eye” is responsible for coding the image of the South, taking over any cultural space where the “real” South had resided in the nation’s conscience.

By way of being constructed, this recognisable image of Southernism unveils itself as a vision rather than an actual space and place, quietly overlapping with the cultural space of the real South - a physical space free from coded imagery and abstraction. Southernism, as vision, becomes the simulation of the South, taking on the mythical pastoral ideal of America and commodifying, consuming it and selling it as culture to the rest of the nation. Hence, in an absurd twist, following the death of the Old South and its unacceptable, pro-slavery misogynist ways, the New South must find a new culture, and the construction of Southernism seems to fill this gap; producing a culture for a region who lost theirs - “[the marketing] of an image of the South or regional icon ...[plays a] part in the making of culture”.[22] Indeed, whilst Southernism may be a construction for northern consumption, it is a culture which is freely embraced and shored up by Southern bodies who find they have no cultural rootings in the space of this “New” South - where the pastoral ideal has been so firmly ingrained in the image of the region and nation, that the real spaces of Southern identity signifiers can no longer exist. Whilst in keeping with postwar culture, the problem with commodifying this image for purchase is the resulting displacement of history into aesthetic style, thereby reducing any claim to cultural tradition to a reliance upon surface value and bodily performance. Yet, by shifting the representation of the historically problematic South to a set of ideals, images and nostalgic visions, the South moves closer to occupying a truly American myth - the space of utopia.

This shift into a mythical and dream-like space is easily facilitated by the region’s embrace of its own Otherness, both by mapped boundaries and “othered” gendered and also racial bodies, coupled with its commodification and the reliance on and perpetuation of the pastoral idyll, the South rapidly becomes a truly Othered America. As Gray writes, “whatever else Southerners may have in common, they have habitually defined themselves against a national or international other... whatever the North is not and vice-versa...”.[23] Once again, however, this Othering moves the region back into Cold War rhetorics by aligning itself with the Fifties

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[22] Ibid. p.11

[23] Richard Gray & Owen Robinson, *A Companions to the Literature and Culture of the American South.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p.4

notion of “them” and “us”. Only here, the South adopts containment and internalizes it:

> [southern writing imbues] a sense of place and community, an overwhelming awareness of past in the present, a deeper religious sense, a preference for the concrete over the abstract... the organic spirit that embraces can also exclude, that quality that ensures a sense of place can also keep people in their places.[24]

Perhaps the Othering of this space might allow for “real” male subjectivities, for the transgressive nature of non-conformist identity may be more readily accommodated, but as Pascoe’s study of Southernism has already revealed, the South’s reduction to consumer product further threatens to alienate male bodies within such a shifting site - “it was assumed that the South was definable, discrete and shared while the reality was broken”.[25] What we encounter then, is another paradoxical site of identity where masculine bodies are again faced with a crisis of subjectivity, for the Cold War stamped a type of “normative masculinity ... [which was] applicable to all men everywhere”.[26] The South, then, despite its position as Other, appears to be a site of complex dualities after all, for the culture of Southernism is as bound to the Cold War manifesto as other sites, being both manufactured - as a consumer space in itself - and defined solely by its geographical location, a location which prides itself on patriarchal, familial, and conservative values, thereby striking a chord with the ideology of the time.

Bodies within this environment oscillate with and against these dualities, for they continue to be inscribed by their surroundings. As Elizabeth Grosz writes:

> the body, or rather bodies, cannot be adequately understood as a historical pre-cultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them, but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself... these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type.[27]

In the case of Southern bodies, the markings external to them are that of the pastoral ideal, the American landscape, thereby inscribing bodies with a particular type of “Southern” identity. Much like the bodies in metropolitan spaces and suburbia, Southern bodies are moulded by their location, reflecting an identity premised upon spatiality. Marked in this way, the body is inscribed with an identity which upholds the conformist ideology of the time; containing bodies within

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[24] Craig Pascoe, *The American South of the Twentieth Century.* (Athens: University Press of Georgia, 2005), p.168

[25] Michael O’Brien, *The Idea of the American South 1920 - 1941.* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), p.226

[26] Steven Cohan, *Masked Men; Masculinity and the Movies.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.xv

[27] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.x

specific, conservative and national parameters; and yet the South encourages a complex type of subjectivity for these bodies are not as easily defined or contained as those in other spaces. What feminist corporeality makes clear is the way in which landscapes are capable of evoking a space which is contested; where performative inscription and heterotopias can be imagined on the body. As a heterotopia, the South which is removed from the tourist eye can encourage flux, negotiation and contest, for there is "no single south, no typical southerner... the region plays myriad roles in the national imaginary".[28] Indeed, what becomes evident in Southern literature is the manner in which Southern bodies are moulded as much by the image(Southernism) as they are the geographical location (the real). Bodies here are caught between imagining Southernness and being a distinct, Othered and potentially "real" Southern body through a serious of dualisms in "stasis.. mobility, action.. inaction, continuity [and] change"[29] as dictated by the contesting sites of Old and New South. But, as the previously examined theories of Grosz and Deleuze make clear, a conflict of identity types suggests the possibility for "becoming", taking shape in the space between conformity and transgression, implying the opportunity for bodies to be deterritorialised. With this understanding comes the promise of a male body who might be able to be "more deviant, dangerous and depraved than anywhere else on the North American continent"[30] and hence, a Southern body who could escape the consumerism, surfaces and capitalism of Cold War ideology.

THE MOVIEGOER AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE SOUTH

Southern bodies in the literature of the South illustrate this shift towards transgression and suggest the possibility of "becoming" in a new deterritorialised and Othered space within the boundaries of the landscape. In Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* (1960) Southern bodies seem to be caught in a process of agitation between Cold War ideologies and a definitive Southern identity. Percy's protagonist, Binx Bolling, bears a similarity to his northern counterparts, such as Updike's Rabbit and Wilson's Tom, in his attempt to conform to the contained norm of postwar masculinity; recognising the need to "identify the self in order to avoid a

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[28] Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender and Nostalgia in the Imagined South.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p.253

[29] Ibid. p.32

[30] Helen Taylor, *Circling Dixie: Contemporary Southern Culture through a Transatlantic Lens.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), pp.10 - 11

kind of ghostly nonexistence".[31] Binx, as the title suggests, is enveloped by consumer culture, a culture so prevalent in the US that it invades not only spaces, but also images, as Farrell O'Gorman states, "[the south] is also a region where… the displacement of the real... has been given new impetus by the prevalence of simulacra in the mind of media saturated consumers".[32] The South Binx inhabits is not that of Faulkner, but rather one which ingests consumer images of itself:

> a south largely under the sway of Madison Avenue and Hollywood, of a time when images of the generic American culture often dominate regional desire, but also when, insofar as 'the South' itself still exists, shallow, mass produced images of the region... often seem to have displaced their referent.[33]

Hence, it is not only Southern bodies, but also the New South of the Cold War which must fight against consumerism, for the "real" is being elided by the Southern image, conflating the issue of spatial bodily subjectivity. As Phillip Simmons writes:

> the recent history of the rise of mass culture becomes part of the older myth of the fall from grace and loss... [of] the aristocratic agrarian old South... the double historical vision prompted by mass culture... [the] future is both celebrated as a way of progress and bemoaned for its obliteration of a more 'authentic' past.[34]

If the space surrounding the body is being coded by representation, can a body find "authentic" selfhood in a space which is repeatedly manufactured; caught in a Southern space which is influenced by the media of film, television and the cinema, can the real exist?

Binx's narration is littered with allusions to, and likeness with, movies, recalling real events as though they were celluloid; "It reminds me of a movie I saw last month out by Lake Pontchartrain".[35] In *The Moviegoer*, happiness is found at the neighbourhood movie theatre, a place which bears "permanent lettering on the front of the marquee reading: Where Happiness Costs So Little".[36] Not only does happiness come from the movies, but it is notably a state of being which can be

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[31] John Sykes, *Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and the Aesthetic of Revelation.* (London: University of Missouri Press, 2007), p.99

[32] Farrell O'Gorman, *Peculiar Crossroads; Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and Catholic Vision in Postwar Southern Fiction.* (USA: Lousiana State University Press, 2004), p.8

[33] Farrell O'Gorman, *Peculiar Crossroads; Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and Catholic Vision in Postwar Southern Fiction.* (USA: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), p.8

[34] Philip Simmons, "Toward the Postmodern Historical Imagination: Mass Culture in Walker Percy's "The Moviegoer" and Nicholson Baker's "The Mezzanine", *Contemporary Literature.* Vol. 33, No. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 601 - 624, p.603

[35] Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer.* (New York: Vintage International, 1960), p.4

[36] Ibid. p.7

bought, suggestive therefore of the power of consumption on the bodies who are willing to pay the small price. Movies also perform another act for Binx and those who watch them, the possibility of being something and someone else:

> Nowadays when a person lives somewhere, in a neighbourhood, the place is not certified for him. More than likely he will live there sadly and the emptiness which is inside him will expand until it evacuates the entire neighbourhood. But if he sees a movie which shows his very neighbourhood, it becomes possible for him to live, for a time at least, as a person who is Somewhere and not Anywhere.[37]

The movies are therefore an integral part of the visibility of landscapes, they can change opinions, foster new relationships and encourage the possibility of escape from the self. Furthermore, the movies "offer a paradoxical juvenation, bringing to life the dead spaces of the urban environment that they themselves... have helped kill".[38] The problem with the movies as an anchor for the self is how this enforces the notion that the "experience is not 'real' until it has been commodified as an 'image'"[39] thereby threatening a collapse in distinctions and confusing surface with depth.

Binx's South is one which is changing, following the lead from the North, and radicalising its values and appearance to conform to New South norms. Even the residential landscape is shifting in appearance: "except for the banana plants in the patios and the curlicues of iron on the Walgreen drugstore one would never guess it was part of New Orleans. Most of the houses are either old-style California bungalows or new style Daytona cottages."[40] Here, Percy's Southern landscape mirrors the encroaching influence of consumerism, and, with it, the possible replacement of authentic identity with only the aesthetically pleasing alternatives (the California bungalows in the New Orleans town). Binx's town of Gentilly morphs into a space that no longer seems comfortable with its place in the landscape and instead, seeks to eradicate its Othered past by adopting a more normative appearance, thereby encouraging its inhabitants to follow suit. But Binx recognises the futility of a contained existence: "For years now I have had no friends. I spend my entire time working, making money, going to movies and seeking the company of women".[41] Unlike Rabbit and Tom, Binx is less willing to succumb to these distinctly northern and superficial values. Whilst the infiltration of northern

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[37] Ibid. p.63

[38] Philip Simmons, "Toward the Postmodern Historical Imagination: Mass Culture in Walker Percy's "The Moviegoer" and Nicholson Baker's "The Mezzanine", *Contemporary Literature.* Vil. 33, No. 4, Winter 1992, pp.601 - 624, p.617

[39] Ibid. p.617

[40] Ibid. p.6

[41] Ibid. p.41

consumerism is evident, Binx sees its inadequacies and so begins his "search", one which leads him to reject the so-called normative culture and pursue the quest for an authentic, Southern body. Even the planners of Gentilly fail in their promises of pastoral bliss:

> though it was planned to be, like its namesake, the grandest boulevard of the city, something went amiss, and now it runs an undistinguished course from river to lake through shopping centers and blocks of duplexes.[42]

Binx also finds the car to be disappointing, something which notably makes him feel "invisible": "the truth is I dislike cars. Whenever I drive a car, I have the feeling I have become invisible. People on the street cannot see you; they only watch your rear fender until it is out of their way".[43] It is the clear inadequacies of these northern pursuits, that force Binx to one conclusion, that of the search, something that "anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life", a search the movies notably "screw up. The search always ends in despair".[44] The rejection of the self is clear, and the attempt to distance real with image through popular culture is evident, as Richard Pindell writes, "the world of *The Moviegoer* is a bazaar of lifestyles, a costume room. There is an attire for every enterprise"[45] suggesting the performativity of Southern identity and the influence garnered directly from mass culture in what is a purportedly "natural" space.

Binx's search is, quite simply, one of subjectivity, of finding his place in a transitioning space - "this hero tests himself not in the timeless dark forest or on the ancient wine dark sea, but in the newly sprung wilderness of mass culture".[46] Percy confronts us with a quest for selfhood in an untraditionally barren space, one which appears to be filled, but is in fact, empty. Quite pointedly, Binx's search involves a movement, a flight, but not away from society, but rather back into it with a fresh vision:

> now I have undertaken a different kind of search, a horizontal search. As a consequence, what takes place in my room is less important. What is important is what I shall find when I leave my room and wander in the neighbourhood. Before I wandered as a diversion. Now I wander seriously.[47]

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[42] Ibid. p.9

[43] Ibid. p.11

[44] Ibid. p.13

[45] Richard Pindell, "Basking in the Eye of the Storm: The Esthetics of Loss in Walker Percy's The Moviegoer", *Boundary 2.* Vol.4, No. 1, Autumn 1975, pp. 219 - 230, p.222

[46] Philip Simmons, "Toward the Postmodern Historical Imagination: Mass Culture in Walker Percy's "The Moviegoer" and Nicholson Baker's "The Mezzanine", *Contemporary Literature.* Vil. 33, No. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 601 - 624, p.608

[47] Ibid. p.70

With a nod towards the flâneur, Binx recognises the importance of subjectivity within space, but rather than focus on the built environment, his search is now solely influenced by the landscape itself, a search he must undertake in order to avoid "the danger of becoming no one nowhere".[48] As John Sykes writes, "Binx's search might be said to be a search for realised selfhood. The most dreadful unreality of all is that of the ghostly self being lost for oneself".[49] Cold War ideology clearly calls for the denial of selfhood in the face of conformity, demanding a body should be defined by surface appearance, but Percy's text undermines this notion and instead insists on the impossibility of visibility as the only signifier of identity. In this way, *The Moviegoer* aligns itself with the city texts covered in previous chapters (such as Ellison's *Invisible Man*), but, in doing so, quickly rejects the importance of visibility and instead argues for authenticity at a time when white Southerners struggled to redefine their regional identity and distinctiveness, and exposes the visibility of inauthentic selves. Southern bodies who allow themselves to be engulfed by consumerism risk "the danger of slipping clean out of space and time" and those who are inauthentic "seem dead to me".[50] As Farrell O'Gorman writes, Percy saw his protagonists' "homelessness as the necessary condition for escaping despair. Their collapsing tradition and the postwar society taking its place are both finally insufficient... [these characters] might not just escape the past but live authentically in the present".[51] Hence, it is through recognition and subsequent rejection of consumer culture and its spatially rooted trappings ("because I felt that I must be such and such a person... I was free. Now I am saying goodbye")[52] that Binx can redefine himself in a 'real' Southern space which embraces Otherness and rejects the glossy veneer of image; "in *the Moviegoer*, mass culture can still be seen as an alien presence rapidly colonising the old South".[53] Whilst both Percy and his protagonist are aware of the reduction of the South to image and the inflecting role tourism plays in building the South's reputation within the confines of the rest of the nation, Binx:

> is not a tourist... dreaming of postcards, out of contact, let alone a communication, with the life he consumes through the dead eye of his Kodak.

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[48] Ibid. p.83

[49] John Sykes, *Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and the Aesthetic of Revelation.* (London: University of Missouri Press, 2007), p.129

[50] Ibid. pp.75 & 100

[51] Farrell O'Gorman, *Peculiar Crossroads; Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and Catholic Vision in Postwar Southern Fiction.* (USA: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), p.155

[52] Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer.* (New York: Vintage International, 1960), p.115

[53] Philip Simmons, "Toward the Postmodern Historical Imagination: Mass Culture in Walker Percy's "The Moviegoer" and Nicholson Baker's "The Mezzanine", *Contemporary Literature.* Vil. 33, No. 4, Winter 1992, pp. 601 - 624, p.605

> Rather, he is a pilgrim in progress, however troubled and wavering, towards some untrodden prospect in the human heart.[54]

The text therefore offers a homegrown, American culture as the source of alien and detrimental influences on the South, citing mass culture, and with it, the linked association of consumerism, as a blinding force obscuring the self from accessing their true spatial rooting.

INTERNALISING THE MONSTROUS SOUTH AND AUTHENTIC SOUTHERNERS

Yet, once again, assessing what "authenticity" means for Southern bodies, suggests the possibility of an in-between state of being - a non-essential version of real selfhood which can still be considered authentic. Binx, according to constructivist arguments, is inauthentic, unable to access his inner core of identity, and hence, his submission to Cold War culture (with its consumerism and emphasis on homogenous visibility) suggests he is unable to become real. Up until now, postwar authenticity appears to be "that which separates the individual from the social world, as what might be uniquely one's own rather than a consequence of social influence".[55] Essentially, authenticity has been considered as transgressive, for postwar homogeneity seemed to equal the denial of autonomy, and yet, when linked to Deleuzian notions of lines of flight and folds, authenticity seems more apt to describe a process of being rather than an absolute, a "commitment" to achieve transcendence.[56] In a recent study, Abigail Cheever argues for the "uniformity", not conformity of the Fifties - a time when bodies can enact phoniness so long as they remain ethically sound internally ("the authentic who remained ethically committed to their individuality and the phonies who did not").[57] This argument suggests that a self without interior and exterior distinctions is the true phony, the real monster of the Cold War (such as Patricia Highsmith's Tom Ripley - a non self, an unembodied self who lacks any notion of an authentic selfhood). As she writes:

> true independence stems from the recognition that one is simultaneously influenced by one's context and, inevitably in conflict with it. To believe there is no distinction between the imitation and oneself, the surface and the depth, begins to suggest real phoniness, where the individual is imagined to be both in

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[54] Richard Pindell, "Basking in the Eye of the Storm: The Esthetics of Loss in Walker Percy's The Moviegoer", *Boundary 2.* Vol.4, No. 1, Autumn 1975, pp. 219 - 230, p.228

[55] Abigail Cheever, *Real Phonies: Cultures of Authenticity in Post World War II America.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), p.3

[56] Ibid. p.86

[57] Ibid. p.248

> sync with the demands of organisation... it is only a problem when it becomes actual uniformity - when it becomes real phoniness.[58]

Hence, if Binx accepts his phoniness as part of his cultural conformity, but still searches for truth, then he might be considered authentic. Furthermore, if this in-between, "superficial" authenticity exists, it might be fostered in the historically and culturally in-between space of the South - a space where Southern bodies are inscribed by image and clash with a corporeal rooting in the real spaces of the Southern landscape where there is potential for individuality and autonomy.

One aspect of Percy's text which illustrates this inauthentic cultural space of Southernism, is the fear of not knowing oneself, and therefore leaving open the possibility of not knowing others (and hence a potential threat from outside). As discussed in previous chapters, postwar culture was heavily influenced by the fear of inauthenticity - of not knowing the difference between them and us, and allowing for bodies to pose as something they are not, whether it be communists, homosexuals or deviants. Flannery O'Connor's seminal work *Wise Blood* (1949) plays on the idea of not knowing the true identity of others through the motif of consumerism. In O'Connor's text, the problem with consumer culture is the evasion of the self, and hence the insistence upon surface renders authentic selves as unknowable. The text features several characters who impersonate others, such as Hoover, Gonga, Asa Hawks and the Jesus figure stolen from the museum. Asa, a preacher whose supposed dedication to his faith led him to blind himself, is revealed to be a fraud:

> Hawks took off his glasses and, from a hole in the window shade, watched him get in his car and drive off. The eye he put to the whole was slightly rounder and smaller than his other one, but it was obvious he could see out of both of them.[59]

Asa's identity as a blind preacher is revealed as inauthentic for he merely looks like a blind man and performs as one. Similarly, Onnie Jay Holy's identity as a disciple of the Holy Church of Christ Without Christ is one which is manufactured in the hope of gaining profit, claiming:

> I want you to listen to him and me and join our church... the new church with the new jesus, and then you'll be helped like me.. It'll cost you each a dollar but what is a dollar? A few dimes! Not too much to pay to unlock that little rose of sweetness inside you![60]

Yet, as the reader soon discovers, even Onnie's name is false, for his real name is Hoover Shoats, thereby illustrating the ready ability for subjectivities to shift in accordance with situation, other bodies and for personal gain. Onnie Jay Holy is

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[58] Ibid. p.199

[59] Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood.* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p.73

[60] Ibid. p.104-105

not only a fake disciple, he is also a fake body, for Onnie Jay Holy does not exist. Selves and bodies in O'Connor's work seem inconsistent, there is little evidence to link the two together (as seen later when Hoover introduces the "True Prophet" Solace Layfield in order to discredit Hazel), and rather, the narrative of *Wise Blood* seems to enforce the exact opposite, the unknowability of selves despite their bodily appearance. Gonga the gorilla is another such instance where bodies are not as they appear, in spite of the promise of "GONGA! Giant Jungle Monarch and a Great Star HERE IN PERSON!!!",[61] Enoch is greeted by "an ugly pair of human [eyes] moved closer and squinted at [him] from behind the celluloid pair. 'You go to hell', a surly voice inside the ape-suit said".[62] Not only are bodies impersonated in O'Connor's world, but so are animal and spirits, and no matter what form the aesthetic takes, from gorillas to Jesus, they are ultimately revealed to be spurious: "he had taken the new jesus out of the sack and, hardly daring to look at him, had laid him in the gilt cabinet; then he had sat down on the edge of his bed to wait. He was waiting for something to happen".[63]

By extension, the unknowability of characters in *Wise Blood*, much like Percy's text, demonises consumerism by removing the threat from the outside and turning it back on itself, onto the inside, for no one seems able to portray an authentic identity. In doing so, O'Connor distorts consumerism itself, and illustrates its pernicious and malignant effects on society, turning religion into a consumer product ("between the two buckets there was a pyramid of green cardboard boxes and on top of the stack, one peeler was open for demonstration. The man stood in front of his altar"[64]) and making bodies purchasable for the benefit of others ("Fifteen cents' she roared, 'You're worth more than that, baby girl").[65] So penetrative is consumerism, that it distorts not only objects, but also values and beliefs into commodities; as Bacon writes, O'Connor's South shows how "forms of advertising and marketing envelop the self, submerging it in a world of salable objects".[66] Hence, threats are clearly internal rather than external, for all bodies are commodities and none are as they are advertised, suggesting a threat of inauthenticity with the potential to transform a landscape once considered by

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[61] Ibid. p.121

[62] Ibid. p.125

[63] Ibid. p.119

[64] Ibid. p.24

[65] Ibid. p.60

[66] Jon Bacon, *Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.123

Americans as “the only one that promised security”.[67] By turning the pastoral spaces of Southern America into a place of deception, O’Connor strikes an uneasy chord with postwar ideologies; as Jon Bacon writes:

> the agrarian setting had tremendous symbolic value during the Cold War, it functioned as a synecdoche for the United States. Rural life, in other words, was identified with the American way of life. In this respect, the scenario of the invaded pastoral represented a subspecies of the Cold War narrative.[68]

If landscapes were supposed to offer security, the literature of the South was rapidly equating the security-minded postwar values with insecurity and instability, for nothing is as it seems in this new space of the Cold War, post antebellum, New South. *Wise Blood* transforms several cinemas into churches - “that night he preached in front of three other picture shows”,[69] “that night he preached outside of four different picture shows”,[70] “Haze parked the Essex in front of the Odeon Theatre and climbed up on it and began to preach”;[71] and alters the car into a home, “I wanted this car mostly as a house for me... I ain’t got any place to be”.[72] Yet, Hazel’s attempts to preach from the Odeon fail, ending in the hijacking of his gospel and identity by Hoover and Solace, and the possibility of escape in the car is destroyed by its unreliability and destruction at the hands of the police: “the patrolman got behind the Essex and pushed it over the embankment”.[73] Clearly, O’Connor’s text serves as a warning against the dangers of selves who identify with consumer products - they will be disappointed and betrayed in their search for self realisation. As Farrell O’Gorman writes:

> [the car] indicates his attachment to a consumer good that offers him a false sense of self sufficiency [and is therefore] damming.. deprived of the machine that has served as his ‘home’, and his source of identity, Haze is forced to settle down and begin his bizarre penance.[74]

Notably, the car is destroyed by the Southern landscape (tumbling down an embankment) and hence there is a sense that, according to *Wise Blood*, a

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[67] Jon Bacon, *Flannery O’Connor and Cold War Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.32

[68] Jon Bacon, *Flannery O’Connor and Cold War Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.9

[69] Flannery O’Connor, *Wise Blood.* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p.71

[70] Ibid. p.101

[71] Ibid. p.113

[72] Ibid. p.49

[73] Ibid. p.143

[74] Farrell O’Gorman, *Peculiar Crossroads: Flannery O’Connor, Walker Percy and Catholic Vision in Postwar Southern Fiction.* (USA: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), p.170

consumer South is one which is bound to fail in its attempts to foster authenticity for consumerism is at odds with true subjectivity.

In an effort to illustrate the incompatible qualities of consumerism with authenticity, O'Connor, much like Percy, offers the trope of sight as the sole indicator of identity, but here, the narrative deviates into gothic and grotesque paradoxes, where we are warned that sight can no longer be an accurate indicator of knowledge. Hazel, despite his lack of Christian faith, is repeatedly told he "looks like a preacher... that hat looks like a preacher's hat"[75] and the waitress tells Enoch she "knows a clean boy when I see one".[76] Both of these statements, however, suggest more than a superficial judgement, for Hazel's appearance as a preacher implies his identity and profession, whilst Enoch's cleanliness is spoken as though it were a moral perception, the waitress sees him as an honest and good boy rather than merely unsoiled. Hence, there is a certain gravity granted to sight and visibility in terms of identity, for it suggests the perception of inner character, not just outer appearance. As Asa and Haze's conversation illustrates, sight is considered a path to truth:

> I'll take them up there and throw them over into the bushes... you be watching and see can you see.' ' I can see more than you!' the blind man yelled, laughing. 'You got eyes and see not, ears and hear not, but you'll have to see some time'. 'You be watching if you can see.[77]

Sight is presented in this society as the passage of other bodily and subjective perception, but what *Wise Blood* teaches us is that only blood matters, an inherent and unchangeable form of individualization which counts as the only measure of true subjectivity. It is Enoch's blood that tells him what to do and what to believe - "he had come to the city and - with a knowing in his blood - he had established himself at the heart of it",[78] "his blood all morning had been saying the person would come today",[79] "very faintly he could hear his blood beating, his secret blood, in the centre of the city"[80] - and it is by following this inherent path that he rejects the idea of "escaping his duty" and instead accepts, "that the knowledge he couldn't avoid was almost on him".[81] Inherent truth is what Hazel seeks when he

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[75] Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood.* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p.20

[76] Ibid. p.61

[77] Ibid. p.36

[78] Ibid. p.53

[79] Ibid. p.54

[80] Ibid. p.68

[81] Ibid. p.96

blinds himself, rejecting sight as the only means of subjective validity, instead able to see beyond the visibility of bodies:

> the blind man had the look of seeing something. His face had a peculiar pushing look, as if it were going forward after something it could just distinguish in the distance. Even when he was sitting motionless in a chair, his face had the look of straining toward something.[82]

It is the act of blinding that acts as authentic flight away from conformity, for Hazel removes the constraints of a knowable visible subjectivity, and instead transgresses into a bodily maimed, but self freed, state; "if there's no bottom in your eyes, they hold more".[83] Hazel's blinding represents the possibility of true sight, for he is no longer tied to a visual perception of himself or others, but rather escapes into a world which looks outward from within. Notably, Hazel also flatly rejects consumerism and commodities, disregarding cash in rubbish bins (because he "didn't need it")[84] and refusing "tobacco or drink",[85] behaviour Mrs Flood considers to be "not natural.. not normal".[86] At his death, Mrs Flood observes his face and concludes he followed "the deep burned eye sockets... [which] lead into the dark tunnel where he had disappeared"[87] suggesting he disappeared in death, into his eyes, thereby turning inwards towards some inner light, an inner truth and most certainly, an inner sight. In death, Hazel finds validity in a way which almost entirely excludes the body, for even after blinding, his "head contains the whole world".[88] But O'Connor's subtle shift remains, for implicit in the idiom of the final chapter is the shift in power towards the landlady and away from Hazel. According to the narrative, he remains at the mercy of others.

The Southern bodies in *Wise Blood* are isolated and alienated, often appearing as freaks and hillbillies (such as Enoch and Asa), characters who are cut off geographically from northern traditions and social cultural norms, and therefore become Othered bodies. Enoch epitomises the perception of postwar Southern characters, both fighting against and embracing consumerism in an attempt to find himself. He has "a fondness for Supermarkets"[89] and his room is adorned by

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[82] Ibid. p.147

[83] Ibid. p.153

[84] Ibid. p.151

[85] Ibid. p.151

[86] Ibid. p.154

[87] Donald Hardy, *The Body in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction.* (USA: University of South Carolina, 2007), p.11

[88] Donald Hardy, *The Body in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction.* (USA: University of South Carolina, 2007), p.11

[89] Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood.* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p.89

calendars from “Hilltop Funeral Home and the American Rubber Tire Company”[90] replete with advertising slogans and manifestos. Enoch is heavily influenced by this typically Northern culture, finding himself almost inadvertently compelled to spend, purchase and consume products:

> he appeared to be working his way to a rumbling noise which came from the centre of a small alcove... here was a yellow and blue, glass and steel machine, belching popcorn.. Enoch approached, already with his purse out, sorting his money.[91]

Similarly, Enoch finds himself unable to escape the lure of consumerism claiming “I ain’t going in no picture show like that” before “he found himself moving down a long red foyer and then up a darker tunnel... I ain’t going to look at it, he said furiously”.[92] Enoch’s inability to stop himself following and purchasing these products creates an unnerving sense of obligation and necessity - a compulsion which is unconscious - and hence it illustrates how Enoch, unlike Hazel, is caught between his blood and his sight, his true and his conforming self. Yet, Enoch is aware that “he wanted to become something”, pursuing his dream to be “THE young man of the future, like the ones in the insurance ads. He wanted, some day, to see a line of people waiting to shake his hand”.[93] Indeed, Enoch does transform himself into someone else, recognising the advertising for Gonga once again, he appears to have “a certain transformation in his countenance... a look of awakening”[94] and the realisation of his dreams now seem to lie with Gonga. Much like Hazel, Enoch’s moment of self-galvanisation is transgressive, and his transition into personal validity and improved selfhood comes in the form of murder, death and a bodily disfiguration, murdering Gonga and taking over his identity:

> burying his clothes was not a symbol to him of burying his former self; he only knew he wouldn’t need them any more... no gorilla in existence, whether in the jungles of Africa or California, or in New York City in the finest apartments in the world, was happier at that moment than this one, whose god had finally rewarded it.[95]

As Enoch and Haze’s story tells us, the distortion of their own sight, and similarly, how others see them, presents the possibility initially of negative representation, but more importantly, these bodies can now experience “real” individualism. Rodney Allen suggests O’Connor’s text is littered with repeated imagery which reduces humans to animals, and he goes on to illustrate how the blurring of

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[90] Ibid. p.91

[91] Ibid. p.93

[92] Ibid. p.95

[93] Ibid. p.131

[94] Ibid. p.133

[95] Ibid. p.135 - 136

Enoch's transformation from human to animal, indicates how a world without spirituality is nothing more than a prison for animals, something he believes relates to commodification as it is "implicit in the commercial idea of sexuality, in which women are turned into objects to be imprisoned, tortured or killed by aggressive males".[96] A belief Allen carries further in his assessment of the immobility of characters and their resignation to this bodily imprisonment. In a sense, Allen's argument ties in with my own, linking bodies to containers and reminding us of Deleuzian concepts of bodies as figures where the animal spirit unmakes man;[97] only the freakishness of these Southern bodies is given a reverse anthropomorphic quality. Linking O'Connor's characters to Deleuze, "becoming animal" folds the body into flesh through disfigurement in order to create strength in the non-identity and hence, freedom.[98] If O'Connor's work really can be read as a zoo of caged animals, this once again implies the sanctioning of the South, the Otherness of the Southern body and the positioning of that body for view in the tourist South. These bodies, despite their strange qualities, are commodities and it is only in death that the cages are opened - dying at the hands of the police is, according to Allen, a death "at the hands of the... keepers of the human zoo"[99] unleashing caged matter to disappear into a space without framed, bodily limits.

In *Wise Blood* parts of the body become metaphorically and in some cases, physically detached from the body as a whole (such as Haze's eyes), reminding us of the Deleuzian Bodies without Organs; a "real" self which can not be contained to a single bodily categorisation for different parts have been removed and the recognisable body has been eradicated. This reduction of the body, the maiming of the bodily norm, might foster authenticity in a Deleuzian sense. Parts of the body might be in process for this deterritorialised body could, theoretically, respond to autonomous subjectivity more readily than a rooted, territorialised corporeality. These parts lack the fixity of a central organising frame. The text gradually breaks each character's representation, dividing them into a series of grotesque and freakish acts, and thereby aligns the South with both the Other (through the genre of Southern Gothic), and as a space which can no longer contain and maintain, an American myth. As Jon Bacon writes:

> the characters who populate her rural settings are not representative figures, but maimed souls... in portraying her rural characters as freaks and misfits,

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[96] William Allen, "The Cage of Matter: The World as Zoo in Flannery O'Connor's Wise Blood", *American Literature.* Vol. 58, no. 2, May 1986, pp.256 - 270, p. 261

[97] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus.* (London: Continuum, 2004)

[98] Ibid

[99] Ibid. p.269

> O'Connor allied herself with those who called attention to the representational inadequacy of the pastoral myth... Americans could no longer base their national identity on a belief in pastoral innocence.[100]

By maiming the Southern body, *Wise Blood* internalises the monstrous Other of the Cold War[101] and in doing so, deterritorialises the "true" blood of Enoch and Haze into a new space of original "becoming", for the "southerner who defends individuality triumphs over the southerner who preaches conformity".[102]

THE HEAT OF THE SOUTH - SOUTHERN SEXUALITY AND THE WORKS OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

The boundaries of Southern identity can clearly shift in order to permit a "true becoming" and authentic selfhood by way of transgression into freakish and Othered bodily representations. Yet, these characters do so from within the Southern identity framework, and hence their transformations occur from within pastoral mythology. With this in mind, this uncontained corporeality works toward confirming, rather than undermining, the image of the South as different and alienated from the rest of America. The works of Tennessee Williams also challenge the construction of Southern bodies by hinting at the depraved nature of Southern sexuality whilst also preserving the myth and old order of traditional Southern values. Both *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1954) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) feature settings and characters who embody the Southern landscape and its values. In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Big Daddy represents the old, patriarchal order of Southern politics, a man who epitomises consumption in both the land (the estate and wealth) and his physical appearance: "I went through all that laboratory and operation and all just so I would know if you or me was the boss here! Well, not it turns out that I am and you ain't... I made this place! I was overseer on it!".[103] Big Daddy's character is one whose reliance upon consumerism is shown to be conforming, both as masculine and Southern ("Y'know how much I'm worth?...

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[100] Jon Bacon, *Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.37

[101] What is notable about the nature of the Cold War monster is it's "othered" status, threatening to penetrate the home, government, family and self of American citizens. Potential enemies are seen as alien rather than internal to the nation, and increasingly, the works covered by Southern writers, invert this fear back onto the American people, illustrating the domestic, rather than foreign, nature of these so-called monsters.

[102] Jon Bacon, *Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.103

[103] Tennessee Williams, *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 40

close on ten million in cash an'blue chip stocks outside, mind you, of twenty eight thousand acres of the richest land this side of the valley Nile!"[104]) but also harmful (as indicated by his health issues and Gooper's desire to usurp him). Similarly, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Stanley is given a distinctly "othered" masculine persona by being described as a "Polack" and "at the peak of [his] physical manhood".[105] The power of his masculinity and exotic/erotic otherness is illustrated later when he lets it be known that "I am the king around here, so don't forget it!".[106] The setting of *A Streetcar Named Desire,* much like *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, is also firmly rooted in the image of the ideological South. Despite the omission of the stereotypical estate and plantation, the paradoxical descriptions of New Orleans, as both decay and grace ("the section is poor but unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. The houses are mostly white frame, weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables"[107]) helps to indicate the tension between Old and New South. In a space defined by its white frame houses, the inevitable decay of the old shows an inability for the Old South to coexist with the new - reflected in the homeowners struggle to live up to these once grand and imposing buildings. Clearly, both plays acknowledge their Southern heritage, but Williams, much like O'Connor, distorts this image of Southern romanticism and we do not encounter *Gone with the Wind* in the plantation, nor do we find Southern breeding and refinement in New Orleans. Instead, both *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* feature characters whose sexual desires seem at odds with their surroundings, and yet who remain aesthetically true to their spatially inscribed identities, arguably inwardly responding to the outward "heat" of Dixie.

Perhaps, by highlighting the incongruous nature of Old and New Souths, Williams permits these characters to find a chasm in the plains of territorialisation, where their location and its mixed embrace and rejection of history, allows for a periodical boundlessness of inner subjectivity. As Richard Phillips writes, it is possibly their very location that creates transgression for, "it is worth acknowledging that rural constructions of identity are far less rooted than urban sexual identity politics".[108] Indeed Williams' characters (in particular, Blanche and

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[104] Ibid. p.45

[105] Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p.27

[106] Ibid. p.77

[107] Ibid. p.1

[108] Richard Phillips, David Watt & Diane Shuttleton, *De-Centering Sexualities: Politics and Representations beyond the Metropolis.* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 214

Brick) seek escape through their uncontained and transgressive desires, yet remain bound to their geographically inscribed identity, for despite her overt sexuality, Blanche remains a Southern belle ("her appearance is incongruous to this setting. She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and ear-rings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district"[109]); and Brick, despite the homosexual subtext and allusions ("you think me an' Skipper did, did, did! - sodomy! - together?.. You think that Skipper and me were a pair of dirty old men?.. ducking sissies? Queers?"[110]) remains the heir to his father's plantation, thereby conforming to the masculine stereotype. However, at times, both characters unveil their inability to perform these roles with authenticity and integrity, for Blanche is herself a duality (as suggested by her name DuBois) and whilst, "preserving the veneer of an aristocratic belle of the Old South, [and] criticising her sister for an animal marriage, Blanche herself slips into vulgarisms".[111] Brick too, seems unable to live up to his role as son and heir, as "real" manhood is something he has failed to achieve by refusing to sleep with Maggie and turning to alcohol to kill the "DISGUST!"[112] he bears over his relationship with his best friend. This dichotomy is unsurprising, for both homosexual masculinity and eroticised femininity are excluded from Southern ideology and idealism (Brick should be like Big Daddy and Blanche should be married), yet their other attributes are inclusive - Brick is still the heir to the plantation and Blanche looks like a Southern belle, once again conflating the postwar fear of not knowing the true identity of others and the failure of recognising selves based only on appearance and visibility.

Even more alarmingly, in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* "truth" is never disclosed, for Brick's homosexuality is never proven, thereby allowing him to remain within conformist ideology, confirming the possibility for transgressive selves to both conceal their true selves and conform (as illustrated by the plantation's forefathers, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello, "a pair of old bachelors who shared this room all their lives together").[113] Williams repeatedly urges for Brick to be "masking

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[109] Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p.3

[110] Tennessee Williams, *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 63

[111] Stephen Stanton, *Tennessee Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays.* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc, 1977), p.46

[112] Tennessee Williams, *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 54

[113] Ibid. p.xv

indifference"[114] or "absent" and "dreamily"[115] detached from the scene's events and action, and Big Mama's objection to locked doors ("I hate locked doors in a house")[116] combined with her concern, "something's not right! You're childless and my son drinks!"[117] works to undermine the image of Brick's heterosexuality, for that "something" is closeted from view. By suggesting Brick harbours homosexual desires, Williams "challenges the essential constructs of an American heteromasculinity in general"[118] for:

> publicly, Brick is the archetype of heteromasculine America with his good looks, his strong athletic build, and his fawning wife... privately he is its anathema, with his suspiciously intense relationship with his best friend... and his emasculating alcoholism.[119]

Here, the concept of Cold War masculinity is most keenly observed, directly conflating the boundaries of knowable sexuality and truth. As John Bak writes, at the heart of Brick's uncertain identity is "the epistemological plight to negotiate what they know of the truth with what society informs them it is".[120] An existential observation that is intended to implicate Brick's society, the audience and the Cold War culture as a whole at a time when "the powerful entities of government, commerce and Hollywood [were employed] to manufacture appearance".[121] Brick's inability to define the truth of his relationship with Skipper is not a flaw in Williams' play, but rather an honest inability for Brick to authenticate an identity he knows to be unsanctioned by the society and those around him. Furthermore, the sexual ambiguity of a character who appears to embody Southern identity, illustrates the way in which the old rites and customs of the South are no longer applicable. Does this mean Brick is outside the Southern ideological frame?

Not on closer analysis, as the text reveals flaws in all its characters' supposed strengths and truths - Big Daddy's masculine prowess is undermined by his illness, something he attempts to hide "a tall man with a fierce, anxious look,

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[114] Ibid. p.1

[115] Ibid. p.7

[116] Ibid. p.16

[117] Ibid. p.20

[118] John Bak, *Homo Americanus; Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, and Queer Masculinities.* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), p.52

[119] John Bak, *Homo Americanus; Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, and Queer Masculinities.* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), p.141

[120] John Bak, "Sneakin' and Spyin" From Broadway to the Beltway: Cold War Masculinity, Brick and Homosexual Existentialism. *Theatre Journal.* Vol. 56, No. 2, May 2004, pp. 225 - 249, p.230

[121] Ibid. p.232

moving carefully not to betray his weakness even, or especially, to himself";[122] Maggie feels unloved, "I think that Maggie had always felt sort of left out because she and me never got any closer";[123] and Big Mama feels embarrassed by her "true-hearted and simple minded devotion to Big Daddy... who made himself loved so much by the simple expedient of not loving enough".[124] These characters appear increasingly unable to express authenticity, failing to remove themselves entirely from the weighty importance of the roles expected of them and their visibility in performing these acts; as Brick says "Who can face truth? Can you?".[125] The play ends without these truths being revealed, and Brick's decision to go to bed with Maggie in order to "make the lie true"[126] manages to both confirm his heterosexual performativity (and hence his position within Southern ideology) but in no way works to refute his homosexuality - as Michael Bibler writes:

> in terms of the play's ending, this means accepting that homosexuality and heterosexuality can easily overlap, for within Brick's decision whether or not to sleep with Maggie, the lines between all the categories of gender and sexuality become permanently blurred.[127]

Maggie's efforts to define Brick's heterosexuality in fact forces him to assert an identity which he may be unable to sustain, and hence, she risks undermining his newly conformist self and highlighting his transgressive sexuality once again. As Bak writes:

> because her declaration is a truth that will soon be borne out (or not, as the case might very well be), it reignites an existential crisis in Brick, but one that moves beyond earlier questions of heteronormality and now towards those of homosexuality.[128]

In other words, Brick is returned to a world based on surface, where failure to produce a visible object as proof of his sexual identity (in this case, a child) will condemn him to sexual Otherness. This final scene reminds us of Cold War ideologies, not only through the reliance on sight as identifier, but also, once again, links bodies to consumerism, for Maggie's need to determine and secure Brick's

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[122] Tennessee Williams, *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 31

[123] Ibid. p.66

[124] Ibid. p.76

[125] Ibid. p.67

[126] Ibid. p.91

[127] Michael Bibler, *Cotton's Queer Relations: Same Sex Intimacy and the Literature of the Southern Plantation 1936 - 1968.* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), p.118

[128] John Bak, "Sneakin' and Spyin" From Broadway to the Beltway: Cold War Masculinity, Brick and Homosexual Existentialism. *Theatre Journal.* Vol. 56, No. 2, May 2004, pp. 25 - 249, p.237

heterosexuality is done in the hope of securing her place in Big Daddy's will and estate. The lines of authentic masculinity are no clearer than at the play's start, and this ambiguity has the effect of turning suspicion onto the audience's need to know and affirm the conforming identity of others. The play's ending, which fails to affirm or deny Brick's sexuality, illustrates the ability for Southern bodies to transgress into Othered sexuality and desires, suggesting the possibility for the use of Southern landscapes as a place for self discovery, isolated from the rest of heterosexist America, which might be an authentic, independent and maybe, utopian idyll.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* however, Blanche's sexuality is more openly displayed. Unlike the refined image of the Southern belle she seeks to convey, Blanche makes suggestive sexual hints to Stanley, leading him to exclaim, "If I didn't know you was my wife's sister I'd get ideas about you!"[129] - and also to Mitch; "you are not too heavy... you are not the delicate type. You have a massive bone structure and a very imposing physique.. Samson! Go on, lift me".[130] More than just flirtatious, Blanche's stage directions are sexually suggestive appearing in a "scarlet satin robe"[131] and offering herself for the male voyeuristic gaze during the card game; "she takes off the blouse and stands in her pink silk brassiere and white skirt in the light... [Stella] You're standing in the light, Blanche!... Blanche moves back into the streak of light. She raises her arms and stretches, as she moves indolently back to the chair".[132] Yet her sensuality is at odds with an ideology that dictates a clear marital identity for women, though the mention of her failed marriage to a beautiful young poet (whose homosexuality is alluded to) reinforces the unsustainability of postwar ideologies to create lasting authenticity through conformity. Indeed, Blanche's sexual appetite appears to have been fostered by her failed marriage and her desire for love and selfhood is displaced onto men in accordance with social values. For Blanche her subjectivity is reliant on the active recognition by men, remarking that "people don't see you - men don't - don't even admit your existence unless they are making love to you. And you've got to have your existence admitted by someone".[133] Blanche's identity rests on the acknowledgement of masculine attention, a paradoxical transgression which works both to confirm the presence of conformist ideology in the South and reject it by recognising its inability to provide selfhood and give her body meaning.

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[129] Ibid. p.22

[130] Ibid. pp.62 - 63

[131] Ibid. p.83

[132] Ibid. pp.30 -31

[133] bid. p.53

Unlike Brick's homosexual desire in *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, Blanche consummates her unorthodox urges with Stanley, though notably, at the point of sexual fulfillment, her agency is removed and Stanley rapes her. The removal of her consent confirms her unwillingness to be perceived as anything other than the image of the delicate belle she works hard to maintain, and might even indicate the misplacement of her desires. Her yearning for love and selfhood is not found in sexual activity, and instead she finds pain and suffering which is given architectural form in the "lurid reflections" and "grotesque and menacing" "shadows" that "appear on the walls around Blanche".[134] The apartment forewarns her of the inevitability of these violent acts, for shadow cannot be avoided, and its 'depraved' nature is confirmed by her punishment with Stella sending her to a mental hospital at the play's close where she is led from the room "as if she were blind". The use of blindness is of interest here, suggesting her lack of agency and autonomy, as well as the blinding of her previous self. Blanche is stripped of her delicate image and others, as well as herself, are no longer able to see her as she once was. Her condemnation fits with postwar Southern ideology, for "women are to be wives. They are also to be mothers. A woman who has children has credibility, social acceptance, as a woman - if she is not a mother she is somehow categorised as an unacceptable woman".[135] Blanche accepts her fate, recognising perhaps both her transgressive desires and their incongruity in Southern society. By giving in to her desires and refusing to conform, Blanche's removal to the mental hospital illustrates the cost of authenticity.

Stanley, however, remains unpunished for his part in Blanche's demise, and his sexuality is seemingly accepted as part of his masculinity, despite sleeping with his wife's sister. Stanley is consistently presented as othered, hyper-masculine and described with macho and virile characterizations; "roughly dressed in blue denim work clothes",[136] he describes himself as "being the unrefined type",[137] his mannerisms are bestial and animalistic, being "strongly, compactly built" he "bears his emblem of the gaudy seed bearer...[sizing] women up at a glance, with sexual classifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them".[138] Stanley's working class and immigrant status is quite clearly

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[134] Ibid. p.94

[135] Angelina Wilson, *Below the Belt: Sexuality, Religion and the American South.* (London: Cassell, 2000), p.85

[136] Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire.* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p.2

[137] Ibid. p.15

[138] Ibid. p.13

illustrated by his reliance upon crude and crass humour, bowling and poker games, but it is his animalistic qualities that are frequently channeled into sexuality, and it is these attributes that mark his masculinity as heterosexual and predatory. Blanche recognises this, warning Stella that "such a man has to offer is animal force"[139] exclaiming she finds "something downright - bestial - about him!".[140] But rather than finding this carnal show frightening, both women seem to be drawn to it, once again highlighting the way in which masculine heterosexuality is bound to the image of man in the South; "there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark - that sort of make everything else seem unimportant".[141] Stanley's brutish qualities only manage to reinstate and reconfirm the image of Southern masculinity as potent, virile and forceful, trapping women, "canary bird! Toots",[142] and showing them who is "king".

Williams' play underscores Stanley's macho sexuality, but Elia Kazan's film adaptation (1951), starring Marlon Brando, manages to eschew these conformist ideas of sexuality, and Brando's performance as Stanley conflates postwar issues of contained eroticism. The film adaptation portrays Stanley as rugged, muscular and handsome, and the cinematography is such that his shirtlessness or wet torso adorned with a ripped T-shirt, make him the object of the eroticised cinematic gaze. In Brando's ultra sensual and hyper-macho portrayal of Stanley, it is no longer Blanche but rather his sexuality that becomes the locus of the play's sexual tension. According to Williams' play, Blanche is erotic, Stanley is quite simply, just male; but in Kazan's version, by transposing the erotic gaze from female to male body, Brando conflates the issues of Southern sexuality, at once becoming feminised in his hypermasculine screen performance. As Steven Cohan writes, "with its obvious contrast to the gray flannel uniform of hegemonic masculinity, Brando's torn T shirt appeared to signify a more authentic expression of pure masculinity. He stands for everything that is primitive and untamed in the masculine psyche".[143] Yet:

> Stanley's masculine masquerade draws on the narcissism and aggression that, in openly sexualising his body, whether the effect produced in his audience is

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[139] Ibid. p.45

[140] Ibid. p.47

[141] Ibid. p.46

[142] Ibid. p.74

[143] Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.244 - 246

> desire or fear, gives it the homoerotic impact of a boy posing as a man... whose masculinity impersonates maleness in its various postures.[144]

Hence, Hollywood eroticises the image of Southern masculinity, and in doing so, the celluloid version of Stanley is one which undermines the masculinity he seeks to convey, potentially feminising and queering him. Hollywood's inversion of *A Streetcar Named Desire* indicates the way in which Southern masculinity can be reduced to representative symbols in a way that could reveal the inauthenticity of such renowned images and indicates the falsity of putting such idealistic store by simulacra of the South.

SIMULACRA AND THE SOUTH

The South seems most commonly envisaged in terms of simulacra, repeatedly configured in ways which denote images, symbols and stereotypes borne out of nostalgia and film. According to Jean Baudrillard, simulacra "threatens the difference between the true and the false and the real and the imaginary"[145] and refers to something which is not "unreal, but a simulacra, that is to say never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference".[146] Indeed, simulacra is the point where the real is exchanged for the representation of the real, rendering the new object as without origin, a sign of the original which no longer bears the point of reference of that original, an "operational double".[147] Take for example the image in Figure 2.4. Here, the image of the South as presented in these photographs creates a particular impression of the region. The photographs intended to sell Mississippi to tourists as traditional, historic and as an accessible antebellum experience. Yet, the plantation home, the Southern belle and the horse and carriage displayed code the South into these distinctly visual identities. What is not apparent is the nature of the Southern landscape itself, for these photographs offer image over reality. The understanding of the South is not derived from the landscape, but rather a photograph of that landscape, and hence any assumptions made about the nature of the South is formed from simulacra of the South, not from the real South. It is as though:

> something has disappeared; the sovereign difference between one and the other that constituted the charm of abstraction because it is difference that

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[144] Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.248

[145] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation.* (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1994), p.3

[146] Ibid. p.6

[147] Ibid. p.2

> constitutes the poetry of the map and the charm of the territory, the magic of the concept and the charm of the real.[148]

Without the charm of the real, all images of the South are reduced to this point of abstraction and hence, are denied the charm of territory, and given the frequent shoring up of Southern identity through media and images, the real South is repeatedly ignored. The South is presented as only a momentary abstraction, a glimpsed version, as simulacra. Problematically, the South is repeatedly represented in this manner - *Gone with the Wind, Splendor in the Grass*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire* all illustrate this diminished view of pastoral America. With such imagery available for consumption (see figures 2.5 & 2.6), the real South becomes elided with the consumer South. Here, the South is vibrant, jovial, leisurely filled with music, ambiance and beauty. But this "tourist" South is only a cultural space defined by appearance and not by depth. This distinctly postmodern phenomena means "images and signs proliferate to the point where previous distinctions between illusion and reality, signifier and signified, subject and object collapse" and the result is a space granted identity by illusion".[149] For Southerners, the problem of a new space which has no point of reference and is sustained by images and simulacra, is the reduced possibility of a positive mapped identity. A rooting of their selves within the pastoral landscape seems almost unobtainable when this landscape is being coded as a model rather than a real space. If "individuals relieve their identity in relation to others not primarily from their type of work but from the signs and meanings they display and consume"[150] then Southern bodies must struggle to find authentic selfhood when the signs and meanings they consume are those of a simulated culture and South, for "where the image determines and overtakes reality, life is no longer lived directly and actively".[151] When considering the South, outsiders expect to encounter the plantation houses of *Gone with the Wind* ; they anticipate the stifling moral codes of *Splendor in the Grass*; and romaticise the Southern belle in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.[152] By recognising this influence on the South, Southern identities are easily aligned with imaginary characters and their identity becomes homogeneous within these fantastical parameters. Because we have been repeatedly told this is what the South looks like, these encounters are expected. Hence it is the image of the South

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[148] Ibid. p.2

[149] Douglas Kellner, *Baudrillard, A Critical Reader.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp.41 - 42

[150] Ibid. p.77

[151] Ibid. p.48

[152] See figures 2.5 & 2.7

which unifies and conceptualises this concrete yet, simulated vision of Southernism.

In television, Southerners are frequently portrayed as asinine and witless agrarian types, as featured in *The Real McCoys* (1957 - 1963) and *Petticoat Junction* (1963 - 1970) and more recently as idiotic and chaotic criminals on probation for the illegal transportation of moonshine in *The Dukes of Hazzard* (1979 - 1985). Perhaps the most famous Southern family on television was *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962 - 1971), who epitomised the parody of Southerners on the screen. The Clampetts are the stereotypical Southern family, whose identities were entirely manufactured in accordance with consumerism and consumption; a family so entirely moulded by the influence of simulacra that they existed only as a tool for Northern consumption in a way which actively enforced the containment of Cold War bodies. Baudrillard said of television families, that they create "the pleasure of an excess of meaning... [here] one sees what the real never was (but as if you were there) without the distance that gives us perspectival space and depth vision (but more real than nature)".[153] Hence, according to Baudrillard, television families allow the audience an active part in the creation of its reality - there is a sense of being enveloped by the family, a belief in their realness, and whilst there exists recognition of their distance from the viewer, the family become an unstable collage of representation - the simulacra of a Southern family. *The Beverly Hillbillies* represent a caricature of this type of family; simulacrum that exaggerates prominent features in order to identify the Southern dynasty, but a version that bears less resemblance to the original subject. First aired in 1962, "The Clampetts Strike Oil" manages to set up the parameters for the typically Southern bodies: the title music features a bluegrass banjo; they live in a ramshackle wooden cabin; the central characters are the grandmother (a domesticated woman), Jed, the father (a working man indicated by his dungarees) and Ellie May, the daughter (who fits the Southern landscape by hunting, fighting and being uneducated). The comedy of the show's opening episode rests solely on the Clampetts' fatuity: they fail to recognise the value of the oil in the swamp; they have never heard of a telephone or an airfield; they consider "a million dollars" to be a new type of dollar bill; they conform to various Othered stereotypes, eating mustard greens and possum innards; they confuse their new home in Beverly Hills with a prison; and in episode two ("Getting Started"), they assume the upstairs is occupied by someone else as "there's a whole other house upstairs". Much of the comedy stems from these misconceptions, on the part of the Californians and the Clampetts, in equal measure, making wrongful judgements of each other's culture and nature; Miss Hathaway mistakes them for domestic helpers, granny and Jethro use the "cee-

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[153] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation.* (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1994), p.28

ment pond" (swimming pool) to wash their laundry and Ellie May uses a bra as a 'double barreled sling shot'. But it isn't until episode four ("The Clampetts Meet Mrs Drysdale") that the annexing of their Otherness becomes increasingly apparent and the sitcom takes on a more malevolent role, containing Southerners to these roles as doltish imbeciles. Mr Drysdale, the president of the bank, becomes so worried about his snobbish wife's disapproval of the Clampetts (now her next door neighbours) that he is convinced she will leave him. Whilst this storyline pertains to the comedy of the Clampetts' Southern mannerisms, it also suggests something more disagreeable, whereby judgement of bodies is based not only on their appearance, but in this case, also on the location of their mapped identity. There is something not only unsightly about the Clampetts' Southern roots, but also inherently undesirable for the predominately northern CBS viewers. *The Beverly Hillbillies* undeniably plays on the misconceptions of Southern and northern cultures, but what is at the heart of this is the suggested clash between a civilised and uncivilised culture, forcing the South into an imagined space of a foreign territory. Much like the culture of Southernism itself, there is an embrace and rejection of these bodies, embraced with their wealth, rejected with their behaviour, and as Alison Graham argues, the uneducated hillbilly "could be rendered socially harmless... [yet] when stamping unbridled into the culture at large... he presented a clear and present danger to the nation's social equilibrium".[154] The series actively reinforces the pastoral myth and the perception of the South in accordance with the "tourist eye", categorising Southerners into camps of idiocy, slovenliness and primitive behaviours unfit for integration, or even view, in other parts of America. This reductionist view of Southern values uses comedy to instill anti-Southern values, and in turn, emphasise Northern supremacy.

These specific types of Southern bodies in *The Beverly Hillbillies* indicate a bodily identity which has become categorised by the landscape but in doing so, has become marginalised, Othered and differentiated in a grotesque, gruesome and comical way. Bodies of the South appear to be imagined as moronic monsters, allowing for the ideology of containment to prevail, and also opening up the possibility for the real bodies of the South to find authenticity - if the simulacra of

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[154] Allison Graham, *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television and Race During the Civil Rights Struggle.* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), p.115

the South is plantation homes, belles and freaks,[155] there might exist another space which can fit in-between these images and therefore evade the reduction of Southernism to code and symbol. It seems as though the vast contradiction and acceptance of Southern identities might permit a breaking of the simulated Southern identity, where a deterritorialisation from the celluloid South might be where the real can reside.

In Robert Mulligan's film adaptation of Harper Lee's novel, T*o Kill A Mockingbird* (1962), the characters, much like in O'Connor's novel, gradually undermine the supposed freakishness of Southernism by internalising these differences and suggesting positive and authentic representation as a result of Otherness. As already illustrated, "films set in the south or ones that featured southern characters were mostly expressions of the nation's perception of the region"[156] and films which featured the South, did so in a way which ingrained this accepted image, in general, working towards perpetuating the image of the region. On screen, northern postwar families were meant to illustrate the maintenance of normative values and uphold the ideology of the time (seen most clearly in the suburban families of *Ozzie and Harriet* and *The Honeymooners*), and as Laura Mulvey asserts, these families were "the socially accepted road to respectable

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[155] See Southern bodies in films such as *Deliverance* (1972) and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974). In *Deliverance* the South is represented as the space for masculine types (macho, intellectual and domesticated) to reaffirm their masculinity, to find their authentic masculine selves by pursuing male pastimes in the form of white water rafting, archery, and survival techniques. However, their quest for authentic masculinity is undermined by the landscape itself, turning their canoes over, drowning in the rapids and they are eventually destroyed by Southern bodies themselves, who prove to be so entirely "othered" (as freaks, simple, and backwards) that they threaten their Northern masculinity and sexuality.*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* works in a similar way, enforcing the use of Southern spaces as sites for freedom. Here, this freedom is squashed by a nearby family who murder and eat passing strangers - a representation of Southerners as cannibals, freaks and murderers. These films are part of a growing number of prolific horror movies set in the South (*The Devil's Rejects* (2005) *The Hills Have Eyes* (2006)) illustrating the distinctive nature of the South in the cinema.These films all bear the same mark - that of the freakish and murderous nature of Southern bodies - and rather than attest to the "real" nature of the South, these films indicate the power of an outsider's view on Southern culture, one which projects the fear of the other onto the South, annexing it away from the rest of America, and keeping it housed in a mythical space which can not disrupt the national narrative of homogeneity. These films do not reveal the South as a house for rejects, but a simulated space in cinema, where the fears of America could reside. See also "Nightmare about Dixie: Monsters in America... and in the American South", by Karen Cox, posted on Pop South website October 2011; http://southinpopculture.com/2011/10/26/nightmares-about-dixie-monsters-in-america%E2%80%A6and-in-the-american-south/

[156] Karen Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p.82

normalcy, an icon of conformity".[157] But the screen family could also be a metaphor for "deviance, psychosis and despair... the inside space of human interiority, emotions and unconsciousness"[158] as seen in *Rebel without a Cause*. The South, on the other hand, could align itself with a different set of rules, ones more open to the possibility of conveying a family who were not in rebellion, or suffocated by suburbia, but rather, were just a family (albeit unconventional). The very fact that *The Beverly Hillbillies* were socially unacceptable to the rest of the nation indicates how a Southern family might transgress, just by being Southern, they are already outside the norms of contained America. The film version of *To Kill A Mockingbird* works in a distinct way, it visually confirms our expectations of the South and Southern culture, but then inverts them, working against these expectations and the characters gradually breach this stereotypical representation.

Like *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the town is "hot and tired", pointing to malaise and Southern passion, and the black housemaid introduced in the opening scenes, conforms to the slave image of the region. However, one of the first characters encountered is Scout, a six year old girl whose appearance is decidedly masculine, dressed in dungarees, with a short cropped hairstyle, she swings from the tree outside the house in the opening shots. Her father, Atticus, is dressed in a suit, tie and waistcoat when the other men wear agrarian working clothes, and his appearance seems to be incongruous with his surroundings. He is not the heir to a plantation and also not a toothless redneck - he does not seem able to fit with our interpretations of Southern men. Even his children seem confused as to the authenticity of his masculine identity, demanding he plays football or they won't leave the tree by the front porch - a request Atticus denies. Dill, the fatherless nephew of their neighbour, by contrast to Scout's masculine demeanor, is feminised with kept hair, frilly clothing and an inherent prettiness (perhaps as a result of the lack of masculine influence in his life and his overly mothered rearing). Whilst Dill conforms to Cold War ideologies (he exposes the latent truth in postwar men's emasculation) he is not local to the area, and hence Dill is a symbol of northern men - not Southern. Boo, the only other "child" in the street appears as a freakish monster, the source of local legend whose insanity and homicidal tendencies have become public knowledge, yet even Boo does not manage to complete the image of the Southern freak. As the plot progresses he becomes Jem and Scout's salvation, saving them from an attack and when he is finally unmasked and revealed to the audience, he is dressed in white trousers and shirt with striking

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[157] Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures.* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 74

[158] Ibid. p.74

blonde hair. Boo's appearance is not that of the Southern freak, despite his label as such, but rather, he becomes an angelic image of safeguarding and protection.

The roles of the individual family members too become twisted: Scout is put to bed, but by Atticus; the children are served dinner, but again, by Atticus; Jem wants a gun but is told he must not kill animals, by Atticus. Gregory Pecks character repeatedly performs a feminine role, and he is repeatedly shot looking down, in a submissive and again, potentially feminine pose. During the scene with the rabid dog, he confounds his children by performing a masculine act, shooting the dog dead with a single bullet. In the scene, Peck removes his glasses and rubs his face before carrying out the killing, and whilst this suggests that he is capable of masculine acts, there is also the idea that he has to unmask his inner male in order to become wholly masculine in that moment. Atticus unmasks his inner male, but in doing so reveals the possibility of blurring Southern gender roles for he can be both a child minder and a killer. Similarly, when confronted by men with guns outside Tom Robinson's prison cell, his weapons of literature and a lamp prove Southern masculinity can be biform, no longer contained to the plantation or the ramshackle cabin. As Gary Richards writes of the novel:

> Lee explores sexual differences more obliquely through transgressions of gender, the absence and parody of heterosexual relations, and the symbolic representations of closetedness. What... emerges in *To Kill A Mockingbird* is a destabilisation of heterosexuality and normative gender.[159]

It is not only Atticus but rather all parental roles in the film that are dysfunctional: Dill lives with his aunt and not his parents; Scout and Jem live with Atticus and not their mother; and Boo's parents are intent on sectioning him in an asylum. Bob Ewell by contrast, is the most masculine character of the film, fitting the role of the redneck, agrarian, Southerner. Yet, he is also the most sinister character, casting a shadow over the children in the car and blamed for his daughter's abuse, and the film seems to condemn those who conform to "normative" identification where "normative gender are the surprising exceptions rather than the rule".[160] It is Ewell, the stereotypical Southerner who is the monster of the tale, not Boo, who only looks like one. The film repeatedly inverts expectations of masculinity wherein the freak becomes the saviour, the typical Southerner becomes the murderer, the Southern father becomes effeminate and the black man becomes the victim. With this, sexuality too is twisted and the film's central theme, the rape of Mayella Ewell (the only heterosexual relationship in the film) is exposed not only as a fiction, but the twisting of one woman's sexuality. Unlike Blanche's downfall in *A Streetcar*

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[159] Gary Richards, *Lovers and Beloveds: Sexual Otherness in Southern Fiction 1936 - 1961.* (Baton Rouge: Louisanna State University Press, 2005), p.119

[160] Ibid. p.137

Named Desire, Mayella Ewell uses Southern culture to cast doubt onto her white, female sexuality, fooling the courts into believing she was raped by Tom, instead of her luring him into her bedroom.

The South in the film version of *To Kill A Mockingbird* is represented not as mythical (like *Gone with the Wind*) or the secure moral heartland of *Splendor in the Grass*, but rather a place which is corrupt and transgressive, drawing impetus from the Scottsboro Boys incident of 1931, and therefore, might in fact, be real. The landscape here does not attempt to live up to the images previously encountered by Hollywood, but rather addresses that image and then unveils the truth behind it - a place where black men are lynched and white men are presumed innocent, where men raise their children as single parents, where children are free to behave however they see fit and where appearance can not be trusted as authentic. What becomes increasingly evident is the way in which both the South's Otherness and its location within pastoral myth and idyll is created not only through Southern bodies themselves, but also through northern consumers and their view of this landscape through the lens of the "tourist eye" and cinema, thus shaping a simulated South in film and television.

DISNEYFYING SOUTHERNISM

The Cold War's ideology of containment dealt with Southern transgression very well indeed, simply quarantining it into the realm of Other and therefore, branding the real space as foreign and rebranding its image as a popular, visual consumer product. The real South was not housed in the same way as the rest of the nation, and instead, it was the symbol of the South that was accepted as a mythical idyll. It was the South of the "tourist eye" that is frequently conjured up in film, television and imagery, and it is this simulacra of the South that stands in for the absent cultural image that the New South can not foster from its past. In a sense, the South had to be reduced to an image which no longer reflected its real cultural heritage, for its real heritage was one which needed to be wiped from the nation's conscience. The post-antebellum South, or New South, or even postmodern South as it has later been referred to, was an acceptable, simulated version of the old, for through simulation the popular South is free to break with historical and traditional rootings, and is capable of manufacturing a unified image in whatever fashion is deemed desirable by outsiders. Essentially, the New South is one which is fed by Hollywood idealism and this space of simulacra is where real Southernism is defiled and its doppelganger is Disneyfied. For Southern bodies, this raises certain questions regarding the authenticity of identity, for if this Southernism is a model which has no origin or reality, then how do bodies interpret the spaces and objects

of this hyperreal landscape? What happens to the authentic in an age of simulacrum?

To be Disneyfied suggests the alteration of an entity into a simplified, sentimentalised or contrived version of its original in order to change its form or manner. If the South was indeed becoming Disneyfied into a national and yet, utopian space, how was the alteration being instilled in the conscience of a nation? In 1946 Disney released *Song of the South*, a children's animation which established Southern values through vibrant and entertaining imagery, music and technological advancement (juxtaposing actors with animated characters). The visual palette of the film employs technicolor, a process which was known for its ability to produce sharper and finer images. In Technicolor, Disney's version of the South is one filled with pastel blue skies, rich green pastures, marshmallow clouds and earthy tones in place of black and dark brown hues.[161] It is not only the film's content therefore, but also the film's appearance which adds to the fantastical nature of the South's representation, adding layer upon layer of colourful prints to create a vibrant but ultimately inviting version of the region. Disney's vision of the South was one which was heavily influenced by both the post-antebellum and plantation versions of the region, blending past (rich white plantations) with the present (black equality), and hence, its depiction is one of an idyllic paradise where history, tradition and modernity coexisted in harmony to create mythical landscapes of tweeting bluebirds and the fabled and hearty Uncle Remus.[162] The film lacks a conventional linear plot and instead consists of the retelling of Br'er Rabbit's many haphazard tales interspersed with the stories of the young children who come to listen to his adventures.[163] The children are clearly associated with the South living in imposing plantation homes, ramshackle cabins and black agricultural shanty towns, and the film clearly attests to the imbedded nature of the South's racially charged history, featuring the anticipated stereotypes of the black maid and the white aristocratic family. The Disney film also depicts Southerners in a similar

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[161] See Figure 2.8

[162] Uncle Remus is a fictional character who is the narrator of a collection of African American folklores. Speaking in a "deep South" dialect, he is a former Negro slave who imparts oral songs and stories onto the children who come to listen to him. His appearance in Disney's film marks an inclusion of 19th and 20th century stereotypes of black masculinity, embracing and embodying the antebellum past and again, repackaging the South's racial past with passive and docile Negro men.

[163] Br'er Rabbit refers to "Brother Rabbit", a character in African culture. It has been suggested that the character represents the enslaved Africans who have overcome adversity (for he is a trickster) and his ability to outwit his oppressors make him a hero of African folklore, resorting to revenge and the bending of social mores in order to survive extreme circumstances. Like Uncle Remus, Br'er Rabbit's inclusion in Disney's film frames the image of the South with distinctly racial terms, but avoids having to assert these through the medium of children's entertainment.

fashion to *The Beverly Hillbillies*, featuring a backward, retarded and foolish Br'er Bear, a character who, though animated, still manages to dress and speak like the folklorish "hillbilly". The tales told are those with moral resonance, where Br'er Rabbit's wit outsmarts his predator's stupidity, attesting to the strength of character in spite of their circumstance (for he should have been eaten by the fox and the bear). The use of Uncle Remus manages to neutralise any threat race had posed to the union of Southern bodies in spite of their colour, and the mythical entanglement of song, animation and pastoral paradise reflects the distinctly American ideals of youthful freedom, unison with nature and the carefree, happy attitudes of Southern individuals.[164]

Whilst *Song of the South* manages to deny racial tensions, it does not reflect the "real" South, but rather the South of established simulacra. Uncle Remus and Br'er Rabbit are quite clearly racially "othered" characters, yet their identity within such a frame is ambiguous. Whilst their characterisations are marked with an identity politics that denies them authenticity, for they are both objects of fable and imagination, they exist as neutral objects and their otherness is somehow undercut by the nature of the Disney film as fantasy. Furthermore, the images and moral tales seem more applicable to the northern consumer than the new Southerner, and by including a plethora of ideas related to the landscape in an unspecific way - neutral race, middle class attitudes, appropriate elements of past blended with likable images of the present, selective in its use of history - Disney diminishes the South to a voyeuristic sequence of images designed to reduce the region and all its anomalies to suit an outsider's gaze. In terms of the postwar period, the image of Southern culture (or more accurately the northern image of Southern culture) is used to instill a sense of difference that holds the potential to be "tamed" and altered through northern influence, a type of South that reinforces the need for northern ascendency in order for it to overcome its otherness and discrimination. If the Cold War needed to contain heterogeneity, it seems as though it might be able to do so by neutralising the threat of the South by making the landscape and its people, seem more "Northern" through visually acceptable and relatively normative representations. In later years, Disney frequently shored up the insecurities of a postwar nation, such as the impurity of the Siamese cats in *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), the marginalisation of the red Indians in *Peter Pan* (1953), the enforcement of women's need to be domesticated in *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and the Orientalism in the characterisation of the wild animals in *The Jungle Book* (1967). Disney films were clearly marked by Cold War ideologies, instilling the norm for contained and domesticated women, brave but ultimately domesticated men, and white American's supremacy over foreign bodies

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[164] See Figure 2.9

and their influences. What the Disney films managed to do for the South was make it acceptable to a nation who wished to smooth over the ever visible cracks of an area which was deemed inadequate by comparison to the North's unified and clean image. By embracing the simulacra, the South might now be able to occupy a place in the nation's memory, and with this new amenable version, might no longer threaten to destroy America's homogeneous national identity.

Yet, by upholding and strengthening American idealism, Disney managed to undermine the power of the nationalism it sought to convey, for at its heart lies the unavoidable realisation of its constructedness and manufactured nature. In 1955, Walt Disney opened Disneyland in Anaheim, California. The theme park was intended to enable the magical effect of bringing Disney's films to life and allowing its visitors to "escape the here and now".[165] The park attempted to blur all spatial and temporal boundaries by eliminating time and the distinctions between representations of past, present and future, hoping to "wall people off from the outside world" in a timeless land of fantasy.[166] It celebrated the art of leisure and fun, posing itself as "an antidote to the perceived urban malaise of the day"[167] by transporting the world around the visitor into an indeterminate golden American age, ultimately encouraging postwar men, women and children to "escape their unnatural present day cares, drop their defenses and become more like themselves".[168] Despite the fabricated nature of the escapist world offered to its visitors, Disneyland could also evoke an element of the real such as national memories in Main Street USA, pioneers in Frontierland and scientific advances in Fantasyland, which all managed to solidify its position in a world which was parallel without being distant. Visitors were not expected to feel alienated, but rather at home in these surroundings, for aspects of the park turned recognisable American history and the present into a better version than the real, "an enriched version of the real world",[169] without ever appearing "unreal". It gave life to the television set and cinema screen and permitted viewers not only to watch, but interact with the world they had previously only observed. In effect, Disney offered a space where Americans could live in an American utopia for a day, a national, real and yet, hyperreal heterotopia. For bodies, Disneyland offers a non-gendered space, without inscriptions of male and female roles. It is a space which offers only an

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[165] John Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture After 1940.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.54

[166] Ibid. p.54

[167] Ibid. p.67

[168] Ibid. p.67

[169] Ibid. p.69

androgynous body and in this sense, grounds bodies in purely national terms. Yet, the park complicates the issue of authenticity, for whilst it relies heavily on Cold War ideologies and enforces these (consumerism, consumption, capitalism, conformity), it stipulates the unreal nature of national citizenship. For instance, at the heart of Disneyland was consumerism and corporations, for the "large corporations that seemed to threaten personal autonomy played an integral role as partners" and whilst it supposedly championed individualism, "it mastered the economics and media of mass culture... [being] organised along industrial lines for a type of mass production".[170] The ethos it promoted meant the park attempted to sell happiness as a durable good for Americans to purchase. Furthermore, much like the postwar investment in containment, the park too adopted its very own control over its people and the environment. As Steve Mannheim writes:

> the scale of Disneyland's environment is critically important to keeping the visitor involved in the 'show'. Therefore trees cannot become too mature for their surroundings. Many trees are maintained in buried pots, with their root system confined... Control in the Disneyland design extends beyond the built environment to the green environment.[171]

Unlike the spaces beyond the gates, nature in Disneyland could be reworked and transformed, constructed and made into hyperreality. Disney employees had to learn to "be" Disney employees by conforming to strict ways of dressing, speaking and behaving, and the magical kingdoms serve as symbols of mastery over urban and pastoral spaces, imposing meaning onto areas which were otherwise placeless and indistinct. The "historically nostalgic" areas of Main Street USA and Frontierland also suffer from this constructedness, for despite the American heartland they seek to convey, their reassembled nature is so lacking in original context that when presented as a coherent totality, "conventional understandings of time and place are lost [and] new ones stand in for them".[172] The manipulation of the environment and visitors encased within the walls of the park, promises a better way of life through organisation and an uprooting and dislocation of bodies from their surroundings. In effect, Disneyland created a break between subjectivity and its moorings, and relocated identity within an imagined landscape without real signifiers. The points of reference Disneyland employs as its anchors of paradoxical reality are so entirely dislocated from the original, that:

> the reality/signifier distinction is dissolved, as reality is increasingly apprehended through simulacrum - as hyperreality... thus the fake worlds of the

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[170] Ibid. p.91 - 94

[171] Steve Mannheim, *Walt Disney and the Quest for Community.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p.84 - 85

[172] Alan Bryman, *Disney and His Worlds.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.164

> Disney parks... become models for American society, so that a hyperreal America is being constructed.[173]

Keith Booker asserts that the park was a weak and 'bad' vision of utopia, for the inability to sustain a coherent narrative and the fragmenting of textual form led to "quietism and ultimate acceptance of the status quo",[174] in other words, an enforcer of containment rather than an escapist fantasy. As Baudrillard writes, Disneyland, much like the pastoral spaces of the South, lies at the heart of the American conscience, being "the social microcosm, the religious, miniaturised pleasure of real America". But, if this is the case, then "Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the real country, all of 'real' America that is Disneyland... [it] is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real".[175] For Baudrillard, the park is a space which is simultaneously recognised as unreal and real, and if it is upheld as the perfect America, the American Dream in living form, then the "real" nation must be lacking referents or points of origin. Baudrillard's assertion leaves open the possibility that lines of reality are blurred beyond recognition and there is no way of ascertaining the real from its simulation - notions of fakery and reality lose their moorings. This American utopian landmark is a hyperreality, a self-referential site where the real is only that which is made visible, and bodies are ignorant to its constructed nature. In effect, what was meant to be a space for escapism, the antidote to modern life, and American perfection, instilled further the homogeneity and necessity for the appearance and visibility of a unified American national identity and body, revealing its ultimate inadequacy as an anchor for subjectivity.

The use of "unreal" utopian sites as pillars of nationalism extends further than Disneyland. Both the Monsanto House of the Future[176] and the Playboy Mansion[177] ascribe to a utopian fantasy. The Monsanto House of the Future was an exhibition in Tomorrowland at Disneyland, and was intended to represent the future of modern living. The house, entirely made out of plastic, with panoramic windows and open living spaces, depicted the utopian dream of domestic architecture and advocated consumerism in much the same way as the park. Only the house illustrated the potential shift from utopian landscapes to utopian living, and its erection in Disneyland attests to the attempt to instill the distinctly postwar dream-

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[173] Ibid. p.172

[174] Keith Booker, *The Post-Utopian Imagination - American Culture in the Long 1950s.* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), p.19

[175] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation.* (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1994), p.12

[176] See Fig. 2.10 & 2.11

[177] See Fig. 2.12 & 2.13

like quality of the desired ways of American living into the nation's conscience. If Disneyland can be considered a national (but hyperreal) space, then the Monsanto House of the Future undermined its own potential reality, for it too resided in a simulated space. The Playboy Mansion also occupied a utopian site, for it suggested the potential for a world within a world. In Foucault's terms:

> the Playboy House functioned effectively as a virtual 'countersite' a sort of 'enacted utopia'... that simultaneously represented, contested and inverted American sexuality during the late 1950s.[178]

The mansion both literally and symbolically enabled the visibility of private spaces, penetrating the interior space in a way which staged and illuminated previously unseen, and erotic spectacles. In terms of the Cold War, the Playboy Mansion offered the possibility of a sexual utopia which appeared directly to contrast the ideology of the time. However, the promotion of men gazing at women within a built environment only served to further ingrain the domesticity of women and men's roles within this domestic setting, thereby setting up a utopia that firmly located men and women within homogeneous and normative roles. Neither Disneyland, the Monsanto House, nor the Playboy Mansion adequately escape the ideology of the era, despite the manifestos of the organising bodies behind such concepts to be free from postwar cares and foward-looking. Instead their visions for the future indicate ways in which "America" is capable of being constructed to promote unobtainable and unsustainable utopian fantasies on a national level, and a conviction in the global potential of Americanism. What does this reliance upon simulacra and investment in hyperreality imply for American culture?

SOUTHERN BODIES, SIMULATION AND SUBJECTIVITY

What becomes increasingly evident from the texts and locations considered in this thesis is the reliance upon visual stimuli and visible signifiers in categorising American experience. To be "Southern" is a visual identity, both on a map and on the body (hillbillies, freaks and misfits), and to be utopian is a vision of how "American" the fantasy can be. The utopia of Disneyland was not one of freedom and individualism, but rather consumerism and corporate allegiance. The utopia of the Playboy Mansion was one of domestic containment within a commodified structure. Visibility is key when recognising national desires, for here, these desires are made flesh. Disneyland is treasured because it brings to life aspects of American culture (television, consumerism, the good life) that would otherwise only be imagined. As Connell writes:

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[178] Beatriz Colomina, *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy.* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p.242

> signs of American pleasure are so dominant today that they effectively function as signs of universal visual pleasure... we project America in our own (local) images and desires so it becomes what we're not, what we want it to be and what we want to be.[179]

Bodies housed within this highly visual and simulated environment can actively engage with a fantasy life, making the American Dream wholly achievable. Yet the dense use of simulacra impacts rather negatively on bodies housed in the South, for here their reality is eclipsed by the simulated Southern image. As theories of feminist corporeality show, "the body is more or less a neutral surface or landscape on which a social symbolism is imprinted", and male gender is simply the repetition of "certain muscular shapes and tensions, certain postures and ways of moving".[180] Hence, within this simulated space, our understanding of Southern bodies must be imprinted by the consumer South, the tourist South, and not the real South. Thus, the way in which identity is rooted is made more complex and the search for authentic Southern bodies seems near impossible. But the very fact that this is a hyperreal version of the real suggests there is room for transgression. What we find in the Disneyfied version of the Southern body is a consumer space which grants access to the consumption of the American landscape in its mythical and idealised form. By recognising the existence of two distinct Souths, the "tourist eye" in fact enables the potential for escape from containment, for "the truth of the subject is always between self and society".[181] Hence, a distancing of self from the image of Southernism might encourage authenticity, and a "distancing" from society implies a transgressive body, a marginal body, or even, a gothic and grotesque body. As Braidotti's theories illustrate, the body who does not observe boundaries (in this case, the nomad) is "the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity... [the nomad is] a form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity".[182] Bodies who do not allow themselves to be fixed are open to subjective truth. So whilst the discernibly regonisable Southern bodies are contained by their position within the boundaries of the Cold War fantasy (like those bodies entering utopian sites), those who allow themselves to be Othered, embracing heterogeneous aspects of American identity, seem free to express their identities, neatly contained in geographically foreign and dystopian spaces. Bodies such as Hazel (*Wise Blood*) and Boo (*To Kill A Mockingbird)* are

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[179] Neil Campbell, *Issues in Americanisation and Culture.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p.33

[180] Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities.* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2005), pp.46 - 53

[181] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects.Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 14

[182] Ibid. p.22 - 23

able to transgress precisely because their version of identity is far removed from the one upheld on a mythical and national level. Binx (*The Moviegoer*) and Enoch (*Wise Blood*) recognise their position within the simulated space of the tourist South, but are not able to transgress as easily without rejecting society or transforming their bodies. Williams' characters too, recognise their rooting within a rapidly commodified Southern image, and like Binx, Brick and Blanche recognise the importance of upholding a visual identity in keeping with the regions' representation. However, unlike O'Connor's gothic protagonists who maim themselves in pursuit of authenticity, Brick and Blanche fall victim to their society's vision, suffocating under the constraints of a tightly enclosed set of "Southern" ideals, from which any attempt to escape results in punishment. Whilst Southern bodies differ to those in the North in so much as they are limited in their dense exposure to architectural influences, they are still marked by their surroundings and here, the consumption of the South complicates the potential for escape. Without the suburban home or the urban metropolis, these bodies hold the potential for locating an identity which can be free from Cold War ideology, yet the infiltration of consumer culture into both the Southern culture and their image as a whole, renders these bodies equally susceptible to performative and inauthentic subjectivity.

The various types of spaces covered in this chapter illustrate how the hyperreal and simulacra, can be taken for universal and national monuments, where the "American" is inscribed in their architecture, myths and imagery. Disneyland is of particular interest, for its architectural frame holds bodies within a manufactured utopian space, marking and inscribing bodies with a notion of national identity which is entirely created and sustained by fantasy, consumerism and fabricated objects. As an anchor for subjectivity, this "unreal" space raises serious issues in American identity, for according to feminist theory, architecture marks bodies with their identity, and hence Disneyland marks bodies with an entirely artificial and phantasmagoric character. As Baudrillard writes, "it is both a quality and the absence of quality... when I speak of the American 'way of life' I do so to emphasise its utopian nature, its mythic banality, its dream quality, and its grandeur".[183] Ultimately, the analysis of texts and spaces in this chapter endorses the central conceit of my thesis, the authenticity and nature of "American" culture, ethnicity and nationality, for as the image of the South has revealed, accepted notions of subjectivity according to space, place and visibility does not equal "real" bodies. Forging the realisation of a utopia, bodies react to a constructed version of American national identity, a place where "History, unable to become flesh, must at least become plastic" reminding us of the exclusionary nature of possible authentic

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[183] Jean Baudrillard, *America.* (New York: Verso, 1988), p.95

bodies in the nation as a whole and once again positing a question of the realness of American identity.[184]

[184] Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays.* (Great Britain: Picador, 1986), p. 57

Figure 2

"Maxwell House Coffee", 1930, from Cox, Karen. *Dreaming of Dixie - How the South was Created in American Popular Culture*. (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2011)

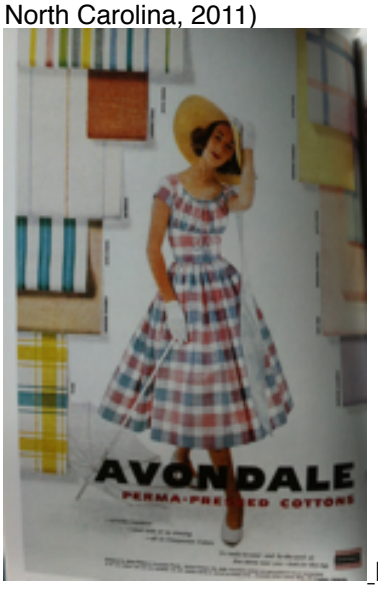


Figure 2.2

"Avondale", 1957, from Heimann, Jim. *50s Fashion: Vintage Fashion and Beauty Ads*. (Italy: Taschen, 2007)


Figure 2.3

"Maidenform", 1956, from Heimann, Jim. *50s Fashion: Vintage Fashion and Beauty Ads*. (Italy: Taschen, 2007)

Figure. 2.4

from Mississippi's tourism brochure, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, reproduced in Cox, Karen. *Dreaming of Dixie - How the South was Created in American Popular Culture.* (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2011)


Figure 2.5

a still from *Gone with the Wind.* Dir. Victor Fleming. Warner Brothers. 1940

Figure 2.6 Promotional image for *Showboat.* Dir. George Sidney. MGM. 1951

Figure 2.7

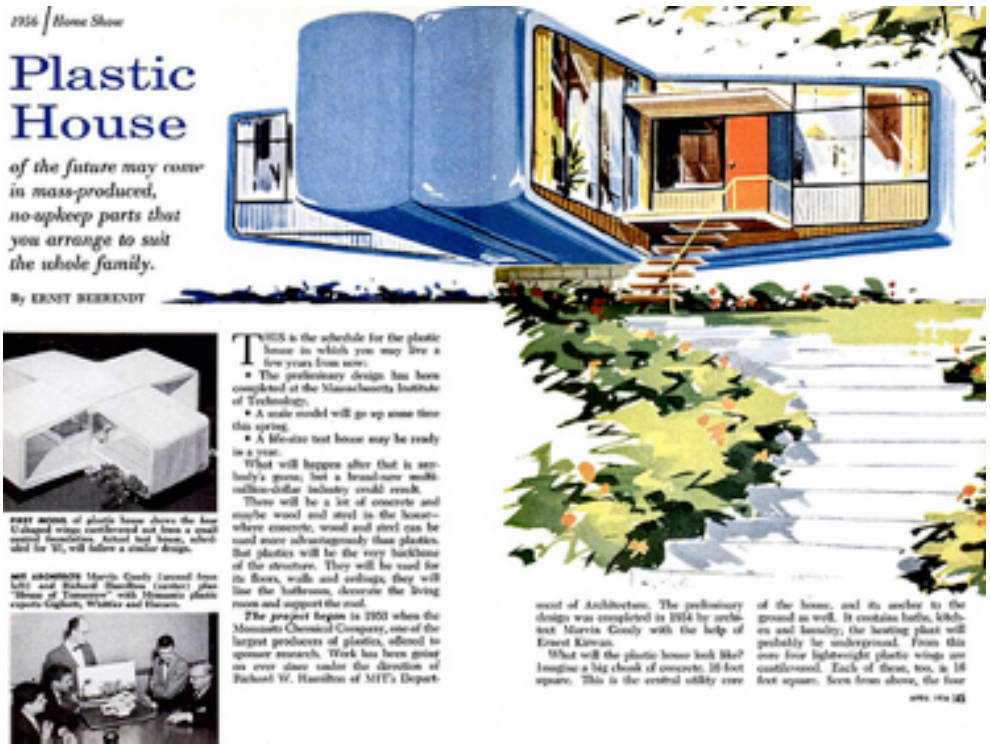
Vivian Leigh as Blanche DuBois, in Elia Kazan's film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Dir. Elia Kazan. Warner Brothers. 1951

Figure 2.8

Film still from *Song of the South*. Dir. Harve Foster & Wilfred Jackson. Walt Disney Productions. 1946

Figure 2.9

Promotional image for *Song of the South* illustrating the happy mix of Southern bodies regardless of colour and forgrounding Uncle Remus and the representation of the Southern landscape



1956 / Home Show

Plastic House

of the future may come in mass-produced, no-upkeep parts that you arrange to suit the whole family.

By ERNST BERENDT

THIS is the schedule for the plastic house in which you may live a few years from now:

• The preliminary design has been completed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

• A scale model will go up some time this spring.

• A life-size test house may be ready in a year.

What will happen after that is anybody's guess; but a brand-new multi-million-dollar industry could result.

There will be a lot of concrete and maybe wood and steel in the house—where concrete, wood and steel can be used more advantageously than plastics. But plastics will be the very backbone of the structure. They will be used for its floors, walls and ceilings; they will line the bathrooms, decorate the living room and support the roof.

The project began in 1953 when the Monsanto Chemical Company, one of the largest producers of plastics, offered to sponsor research. Work has been going on ever since under the direction of Richard W. Hamilton of MIT's Depart-

scent of Architecture. The preliminary design was completed in 1954 by architect Marvin Goody with the help of Ernest Kirwan.

What will the plastic house look like? Imagine a big chunk of concrete, 10-foot square. This is the central utility core of the house, and its anchor to the ground as well. It contains baths, kitchens and laundry; the heating plant will probably be underground. From this core four lightweight plastic wings are cantilevered. Each of these, too, is 10 feet square. Seen from above, the four

Figure 2.10

Promotional feature in the magazine *Home Show* (1956) reviewing the Monsanto House of the Future

Figure 2.11

The Monsanto House of the Future as seen from its location in Disneyland

Figure 2.12

A floorplan for Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion, illustrating open, fluid spaces suggestive of voyuerism and uncontained sexuality

Figure 2.13

The outside of the original Playboy Mansion in 1960s replete with women and automobiles

CONCLUSION: “AMERICAN” BODIES?

American culture has always had to rely on some aspect of self manufacture in order to become real, for, as Christopher Bigsby writes, “it is a society born out of its own imaginings”[1] a place where its own national identity has been created so as to fit with the new land and dissolve the natives. American identity is something that therefore, can never be fixed or wholly defined, America was “a blank sheet on which her identity was yet to be inscribed... it was simultaneously what it was and what it would become. It was the future and the past in the same moment”.[2] So if, during the Cold War, Disneyland is “American”, it is because it can be perfect and unfixed at all times, bringing to life the essence of the American spirit - its undefinability and its endless possibilities. But what does this then imply for Cold War bodies who inhabit these postwar spaces? If, in order to be an American in the postwar era meant containment and conformity, how was it even possible to find authenticity within these national parameters of identity?

It seems as though a constructed sameness defined American bodies, where, as Simone de Beauvoir observed, the nation had become “a nation of sheep; repressing originality, both in itself and in others; rejecting criticism, measuring value by success, it left open no road to freedom”.[3] The Cold War was exemplified by an ideology which promoted white suburban normalcy and togetherness in a country which had no fixed or original notion of national identity. If America was a place of endless possibility and newness, the postwar period merely stamped a new version of “Americanness” onto the people in a fashion which was widely accepted when no other clear “Americanness” stood in its path. The result was, as this thesis illustrates, a singularity of identity, a containment of bodies and ideas and an attempt to homogenise all aspects of culture. As Bigsby writes:

> the Cold War politicised American culture. The values and perceptions, the forms of expression, the symbolic patterns, the beliefs and myths which enabled Americans to make sense of reality - these constituents of culture were contaminated by an unseemly political interest in their roots and consequences...the effect was the same: the suffocation of liberty and the debasement of culture itself.[4]

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[1] Christopher Bigsby, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.1

[2] Ibid. p.2

[3] Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance.* (New York: G P Putnam’s Sons, 1965), p.372

[4] Christopher Bigsby, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.259

The closest the US had come to defining itself had been as a new nation where dreams could be realised, a place which is, “an unfinished story” so that “the idea of America and its reality are not coterminous... it is a fiction, or more truly a series of fictions whose pattern changes with every shake of a hand”.[5] Given this assessment, it is not surprising to encounter a postwar nation whose culture, literature and bodies seek to find an identity which marks them as “us”, for without it, they lay themselves open to the possibility of being rejected from their homeland, and this ultimately means the denial of their dreams of newness and reinvention:

> for three centuries, America had celebrated its polycultural origins; it claimed to welcome differences, to nurture exceptions... multiplicity would spawn not only variety and tolerance, but also the vigor and originality of a truly hybrid species; the American would be a new man.[6]

The result of this leveling of national identity (where all bodies do, act and believe in the same values) is the creation of a nostalgically recognisable hyperreality. As Baudrillard stipulated when he wrote about Disneyland, the point of the park was to make Americans believe in the reality beyond its walls, when none actually existed. By forcing Americans to conform to a manufactured form of identity which actively belied their autonomy, the Cold War was capable of creating a utopian population which accepted the image of America over its reality. America as image was unified, perfect and wholesome where happiness was found in domesticity, suburbia and television - the real America remained absent, indefinable and inconsistent:

> there is, they know, another America, the America that should be and somewhere is... This is the happiness they are sure lies somewhere ahead, the happiness they pursue but in truth never possess, not least because it lies behind them in the trackless land they once took for possibility.[7]

In essence, to be “American” meant to be a certain way, to be homogeneous, and to suffer the denial of liberty at the promotion of authority, stifled independence and autonomy.

Politics and national identity were so interwoven that they became inseparable at this time in American history. It is fascinating to consider how the nostalgic image of the Fifties engulfs that of its reality, turning what was quite simply an attempt to homogenise society through political fear, into the image of American values and national pride. If America needed an image of its national heritage, the myths attached to the South are therefore, unsurprisingly, associating

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[5] Ibid. p.26

[6] Ibid. p.333

[7] Ibid. p.30

pastoral small town America with values which lay at the core of postwar containment - that of tradition and community. The conformity of the Fifties was not something chosen by the bodies inhabiting these spaces, but was rather enforced upon them through the spaces in which they lived; as David Bell writes of the frozen nature of ideology, it was a time when "the gaze of masses is upon us".[8] It is ironic to consider the way in which the Cold War sought to destroy communist sympathies and regimes, and yet actively instilled one of its own on its own people, where being part of this utopian dream was to be "divorced or alienated from oneself"[9]. Whilst far-left politics were banned, the fear-mongering and policing of American togetherness was evidently a form of entrapment into a far more detrimental system. Under these political influences, America sacrificed individualism and authenticity in search of a perfect American image and at the heart of this political leaning was the anti-communist crusade of the late 1940s, an era characterised by an emphasis on:

> economic growth; identity and/or single politics; the loss of master narratives or comprehensive ideologies to guide political thinking; and the end of the politics of revolution and emancipation in some deep transformational sense.[10]

The problem of individualism at a time when politics needs to be clear and singular is the potential it creates for pluralism; a political identity which threatens to create an incoherent ideology and ultimately undermines the entire system when unity and a distinct motive are required. As McKay writes:

> equality and individualism are so central to the American creed, and conflicts between them have been recurring themes in American history. At the same time, the issue brings into sharp focus the conflict between the philosophy of limited government and the need for strong government action to redress what are seen as the long term effects of inequality and discrimination.[11]

Hence, the Cold War was characterised by political strength, a strength needed to protect "American" identity. Yet this political ideology created a stifling climate of discrimination and a performatively based idea of nationalism, fixed on action and visibility:

> adherence to certain normative values rather than the presence of existential or organic forces such as blood ties, language, skin colour or religion defines what it is to be an American... the cumulative result is that 'being' American is not a given, a product of simply being born in a particular place or having a certain

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[8] David Bell, *The End of Ideology.* (Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p.25

[9] Ibid, p.23

[10] Christophe Agnew & Roy Rosenzweig. *A Companion to Post 1945 America.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p.155

[11] David McKay, *American Politics and Society.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p.15

> mother or father - being a citizen involves 'becoming' an American. Certain values, beliefs and attitudes are intrinsic to American identity.[12]

Hence, at a time when politics called for authentic "American" identity, and in the wake of containment culture, it is troublesome to find this identity can be characterised by behaviour, action and visibility over inherent values and beliefs. It is precisely this paradoxical relationship between national identity and authentic identity which conflates the postwar scare of foreign infiltration and solidifies the impossibility for values such as individualism, autonomy and heterogeneity. Individualism was condemned in politics too, and egalitarians frequently saw it as a way to "isolate the individual from the community, dimming the sense of collective purpose, damming the springs of civil virtue, and creating inconsolable inequalities".[13] Whilst the United States had been built on the values of individualism (possibility, perseverance, and personal achievement), both the social and political culture of the postwar period condemned individuality as a source of discrimination. Rather than resisting this consensus, it was seemingly accepted with ease :

> while most Americans likely sensed a feeling of insecurity, they did not lose faith in the system. They accepted social changes as a necessity and relied upon traditional institutions to adopt a new world. Consensus politics, compromise diplomacy and moderate welfarism created no moral crisis for them.[14]

The ideology of the Cold War was "suspicious of emotions, claims for morality and altruism"[15] and words such as "self, inner life, soul, emotions, emancipations, trust, communication, altruism, love, responsibility, belief, religion, community, citizenship, culture, beauty, harmony, knowledge [and] truth" were taboo.[16] Clearly, America was a nation of confused, polemical values, upholding itself as a nation of possibility and self invention but also a place of insecurity, political control and fear of dissent. Returning to my point above, how then could a secure and authentic national identity be fashioned when it was one based on visibility and behaviour at a time when all bodies were encouraged to act and look a certain, and similar, way? How can the self be "real" and American when the dominant culture is perceived as commodified, self -denying and "unreal"? Whilst playing on the

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[12] Robert Singh, *American Government and Politics; A Concise Introduction.* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.7 - 10

[13] Richard Ellis, *American Political Cultures.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.5

[14] Marcel Ezell, *Unequivocal Americanism: Right Wing Novels in the Cold War Era.* (New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1977), p.15

[15] Tobin Siebers, *Cold War Criticism and the Politics of Skepticism.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.33

[16] Ibid. p.70

themes of traditional American values - the self-made man - the need for homogeneity filtered through into television and film, where:

> images of workers as freed from the world of work and living in the realm of consumption, family commitments and countless personal choices (a kind of utopian consumerist communism purchased on the installment plan) permeated films and particularly television.[17]

It is truly ironic to encounter a nation promoting itself as a utopian paradise of freedom and democracy when its citizens seem almost entirely moulded by Cold War spaces designed to homogenise them and their behaviours: “an atomized society composed of lonely, isolated individuals”.[18] Perhaps it is therefore unsurprising to find the culture of the 1960s devoted to authenticity, “of discovering, voicing and exercising genuine, whole personality freed from the grip of mortifying convention”[19] with “the impulse to strip away illusion, look behind appearances and gauge the validity of long held, oft professed ideals or norms”.[20]

These attitudes still prevail, and the notion of American identity as homogeneous and highly visible, is still enforced in modern popular culture. The Cold War ideologies of containment, consumerism, and the need for visible identity regularly feature in film and television dramas. The containment of foreign bodies in order to preserve the good of the American people in *Ghostbusters* (1984); and the need for America to protect its country and people from invasion in *Independence Day* (1996) are themes regurgitated from Fifties science fiction films. The importance of consumption in order to fashion the body in a suitable and “normal” way in *American Psycho* (2000) and *Fight Club* (1999) where the male body is authenticated only by its reliance upon objects and clothes, belying the “real” reminds us of the significance of bodily visibility. *Forrest Gump* (1994) emphasises the longevity of the American Dream and its possible attainment despite the obstacles, but can only be achieved by being a model citizen; and finally, the recent television series *Homeland* (2011) once again recalls the fear of “them” and “us” and the necessity for Americans to be American both outside and on the inside. Clearly, the culture of the Cold War is far from dead, and it continues to pave the way for American nationality, setting the parameters of self containment, authenticity and visibility in the hope of protecting its identity from outsiders; with 9/11 shifting these parameters into religious debates. But, as this thesis has indicated, bodies who fit these boundaries are no longer capable of living up to the

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[17] Michael Klien, *An American Half Century.* (London: Pluto Press, 1994), p.23

[18] David Bell, *The End of Ideology.* (Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p.31

[19] Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s.* (London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p.66

[20] Ibid. p.68

American way of life for their authenticity is immediately sacrificed for a manufactured conformity.

Whilst it is clear that growing disillusionment led to transgression, how and why bodies could transgress lies in a more theoretical understanding, as Ellis writes:

> Cultural transmission is absolutely not a game of pass the parcel... if however, we allow for rival cultural biases within a society, the active, negotiating individual is resorted by giving the individual competing norms and values over which to negotiate. No longer is the individual faced with only a grim choice between conformity and deviance... or between submission and revolution... in a world of clashing cultures/biases, culture is a prism, not a prison.[21]

Hence, returning to my central argument, and given that culture is not a prison but rather a variable spectrum, it is about finding a space which can break, even momentarily, from a structured frame. As Deleuze writes:

> it is a matter of relationships of intensities through which the subject passes on the body without organs, a process that engages him in becomings, rises and falls, migrations and displacements... when we speak here of a voyage, this is no more a metaphor than before.. and of what takes place in and on it - morphogenetic movements, displacements of cellular groups, stretchings, folds, migrations, and local variations of potentials. There is no reason to oppose an interior voyage to exterior ones.. are effective realities, but where the reality of matter has abandoned all extension, just as the interior voyage has abandoned all form and quality, henceforth causing pure intensities - coupled together, almost unbearable to radiate within and without, intensities through which a nomadic subject passes.[22]

Hence, within a voyage of the self, where the body “becomes”, there are mutations, events and actions which affect the body - not just on, but also in it - to create “pure” intensities - the “real”. It is “reterritorialisation that always reconstitutes shores of representation”[23] and hence, it is through a fold, a shift, a migration that representation, or selfhood, can be realised. So whilst a body needs a territory in order to “be”, it is through a shift in territory that it can “become” and it is in this manner that James Dean, Sal Paradise, Invisible Man, Roark, Boo and Hazel find authenticity, by occupying a new space. Whilst their paths differ wildly - Invisible Man occupies an underground space, Paradise travels the country never settling, Roark marks New York with originality, and Hazel blinds himself to a corrupt and corporate world - their escape takes the form of a freeing movement:

> the diagonal frees itself, breaks or twists. The line no longer forms a contour and instead passes between things, between points... it draws a plane that has

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[21] Richard Ellis, *American Political Cultures.* (Oxford~: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.23

[22] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. *Anti Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), p.84

[23] Ibid. p.130

> no more dimensions than that which crosses it, therefore the multiplicity it constitutes is no longer subordinated to the one, but takes on a consistency of its own.[24]

It is within the shifts between spaces that the self can be realised, for it is here that there exists possibilities - in the middle bodies can escape the lines of contained territorialisation - and therefore the fold expresses the co-constructing and variously problematised nature of Cold War identity.

What this thesis makes clear is how bodies, regardless of their city, suburban or pastoral location, were heavily marked and influenced by a culture which aimed to contain and homogenise them as American citizens, and this leveling of identity extends not only beyond the Cold War but also into the definition of what it means to be American. If the Fifties are remembered as the epitome of togetherness, wholesome values and Americanness, this thesis exposes the fractured and complicated nature of that identity, where bodies are molded by objects, cultures and politics beyond their control, denying them autonomy, authenticity and truth. Feminist corporeality makes clear the perpetual nature of these inscriptive surfaces and objects, thereby committing bodies in a recurrent process of signification - one which Deleuze allows us to break and permits the potential for escape. As this thesis has argued, it was the American landscape which actively denied personal privileges and kept bodies within visible, knowable and categorised boundaries. The result is a national identity based on repeated performance, maintained through fear of penetration and isolated by its reliance upon hyperreal props of national endeavour and importance. When stripped bare, the culture of the Cold War built a nation of bodies who believed in their collective identity and national heritage, but were, rather, investing in simulacra, hyperreality, fabrication and the power of visibility as real - a version of Americana still upheld with irrefutable loyalty and allegiance to this day.

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[24] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus.* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p.557

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