

Social-Physical Space, Social Imaginaries, and Homeless Identities

The construction of its own world by each and every society is, in essence, the creation of a world of meanings, its social imaginary significations, which organize the (presocial, "biologically given") natural world, instaurate a social world proper to each society (with its articulations, rules, purposes, etc.), establish the ways in which socialized and humanized individuals are to be fabricated, and institute the motives, values, and hierarchies of social (human) life. (Castoriadis 1991, 41)

Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic. (Lefebvre 1976b, 31)

The intellectual struggles over the boundaries of homeless discourse and the material struggles over housing, wages, and city displacement and gentrification raise questions about the theoretical and practical location of homeless persons within a society of expanding social inequality. What does that location mean for housed versus nonhoused people? How are these "locations" created? Homeless persons, like all persons, exist, move, thrive, and die within urban, suburban, and rural spaces, acting and reacting to imposed practices that seek to regulate their bodies. A homeless person is not simply an object for investigation, a "problem," but real breathing, bleeding flesh, a present humanness that is often stripped bare by the authoritatively imposed categories of others. Living with "spoiled identities," the very poor are categorized, inspected, dissected, and rendered mute in the public discourse about their future by those who have the power to enforce those categorical distinctions discussed in the introduction. Such distinctions are present not only in the verbal and textual discourses of researchers and policy makers, but also in the imagined distinctions of city life promoted by city officials, planners, and other agents of

authority. Understanding this requires a theory that can link how city officials imagine urban spaces, carry out their conceptions, and rationalize their creations by the invoking of the rhetoric of "progress" or conversely the rhetoric of "safety." While this will be discussed in more empirical detail in chapters 2 and 3, here I would like to outline a theory that can account for the categorization of homeless bodies and their regulation in urban space.

Social Imaginary Significations and Everyday Life

Perceived as outside the boundaries of middle-class comportment and respectability,¹ homeless persons are kept at both an ideological distance and a physical distance. Homeless populations, "framed" and contained in academic and policy discourse as passive apolitical subjects, are also subjected to a physical isolation through containment in shelters and segregation in marginal industrial areas. These actions require the active production and policing of city social space by local institutions. Therefore the contesting of social alienation and oppression occurs not only on the factory floor but in the realm of everyday life, in and through the very spaces we so often take for granted. The simple act of occupying particular urban spaces, of choosing a spot to place one's head at night, may conflict with what city officials define as the "proper" place for homeless persons. Such actions, as simple survival mechanisms for homeless persons, may be viewed as contesting city authority, especially if accompanied by any attempt of homeless persons to organize themselves. The mere presence of homeless persons in city areas, unofficially designated "off limits," will often be met with active city responses, from police sweeps to arrests. By their very presence homeless persons communicate their "out of place" status. This control of urban space, a highly political creation, is a means by which the privileged render the very poor "invisible." For local governments, people without an established home are to be installed in shelters, "in their place," out of sight.

Cornelias Castoriadis, a former editor of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* and an advocate for worker self-management and the revolutionary praxis of autonomy, and Henri Lefebvre, a contributor to the *Arguments* group and a writer on theories of urban space and consumption, both contributors to the Paris uprisings of 1968, offer an understanding of both the social imaginary and urban space. An integration of these concepts provides a context within which to understand the "out of place" character of homeless persons. Taking an active stance to oppose traditional Marxian theory and bureaucratic careerism, Castoriadis

and Lefebvre extended the understanding of alienation and oppression from the factory floor to the world of everyday life, and in particular to struggles over city space, racism, and sexism. The conditions of everyday life, and a concern with how everyday life is the battleground for extended deprivation, offer a way to understand what it means to be "out of place" and homeless.

Homeless persons, working at marginal jobs or struggling on the streets with handouts, exist outside of the formal labor economy; they do not fit within the Marxian model as active subjects in any category other than a derogatory "lumpen." Hence, the emphasis upon the conditions of everyday life, combined with concepts of authoritative strategies and tactical resistances, offers a better model with which to analyze my ethnographic data. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. Struggles against alienated labor extend from the factory to the gendered, racial, and class segmentations fostered by the market economy, to the *conditions of everyday life*.

Our principal human activity, according to Castoriadis, is not merely to produce and consume, but also to give meaning to the world, to make sense of the world around us. And the giving of meaning to the world around us, as an area of human action that involves both discourse and embodied praxis, is the province of a deep legitimated collective representation of that world, the *social imaginary* (Howard 1977, 265; Castoriadis 1987; Laclau, 1990 Hesse 1993).² The giving of meaning to the world, the province of the imaginary, the realm of dreams and fantasies, is itself conceived of as a material force, every bit as legitimate as the production of commodities. Castoriadis argues for an ontology that unites both discourse and body, that attempts to conceive of a dynamic relationship between the interpretive strategies we deploy in the world and the material basis of that world. How can we understand the forced social inequalities of market economies, the deprivation of homeless populations, "except in relation to intentions, orientations, chains of significations" (Castoriadis 1987, 136) and their referents? Whose intentions, whose orientations? These questions always bring us back to material explanations, which call for an examination of the material practices of planners, city officials, police, and social workers. Explanations of material exploitation and oppression as a result of the industrial division of labor, the extraction of surplus labor value, and the varieties of uneven development must be supplemented with an understanding of how our very dreams and fantasies, our imaginations, are constituted through our social relationships with each other and with the social institutions we come in

contact with. In and of themselves economic explanations cannot answer the question of why the poor have been partitioned into "teenage welfare mothers," "homeless veterans," "homeless teenagers," or why they are shunted into institutionally controlled settings, such as shelters.

For those living on the streets or confined to shelters, as indeed for the rest of us, alienation and deprivation are expressed in the most intimate way possible—through language and the body. It is at this concrete level of everyday life that such exploitation makes itself felt in the very manner in which homeless experiences are discussed, reflected upon, imagined, and acted out by the homeless themselves, by researchers, policy makers, planners, and law enforcement. Paying attention to these microactions of everyday adjustments reveals the horrendous disguise assumed by alienation. And these microactions are informed at the most basic bodily level by networks of meanings established through the production of symbols, networks of meanings composed as constellations of signs arranged in patterns that give coherence—symbolic meaning and symbolic networks—to one's thoughts as well as one's actions. Social institutions—the police, the courts, families, schools, and hospitals—all exist within these symbolic networks of social power connected together through those routine practices participants train for and are rewarded for exercising, practices guided by specific constellations of meaning established to control others.

These symbolic networks raise the question of meanings. In particular, as Castoriadis (1987) exclaims, "What are the meanings conveyed by the symbols, the system of signifieds to which the system of signifiers refers?" (136). Understanding these meanings is a matter of empirical investigation, the examination of texts, plans, discourse, and designs, which we shall do in the following chapters. However, the search for any well-established or fixed meaning is futile. Meaning is not arbitrary, except in an ideal sense, but "fixed" through *social practice*, practices that reinforce the distinctions created within and between the relations of economic, political, and cultural power operating through everyday life. These practices may exist in the generation of symbolic combinatory associations that employ binary either/or or us/them orientations, or in more complicated sequences that express a more sophisticated relationship of power. Simple combinatory relationships do not equal meaning, however; they merely provide the basis from which meaning is constructed.

The social practices of homeless rebellion and resistance, of defiance toward established authoritative practices, can work to shake the

very foundations of the dominant social imaginary. Social practices are, therefore, generated by the workings of social imaginary significations through symbolic networks. These networks are contained within social-physical space, by actors responding to, interpreting, resisting, and acting on their everyday life, through their bodies and on the bodies of others, whether they are city officials or homeless encampment members.

Signification is complex and polysemic, both negotiated and routinized. Symbols can carry signification only if they can be organized systematically, into an "intersecting unity," a network of meanings. This, in turn, points to the ways such symbols can extend, reproduce, and modify further significations, developing new symbolic networks. This "signification, which is neither something perceived (real) nor something thought (rational), is an imaginary signification" (Castoriadis 1987, 140) which can only be approached indirectly.³ The fact that symbolic networks can be produced by combinatory relationships, that signification is a result of created distinctions, does not address why or how, for example, social practices that generate relationships of domination and submission are accepted as a "natural" within capitalist societies; why, for example, "shelters" are thought of as "natural" places for homeless persons. These practices depend upon social imaginary significations,⁴ which find their most immediate expression through the production of symbols and signs and, in particular, in the development of categorical social and physical spatial and temporal distinctions that serve as intimate maps of power within a society; who is to be accepted, who is to be rejected, and where, in what location, are such distinctions performed? At the level of social-physical space, what are the "proper" places within which rejected and accepted bodies are to be placed by those who have the power to do so?

The social imaginary exists prior to logical reason; reason emerges out of the social imaginary. And yet the social imaginary is also deeply altered by the forms of reason and practice employed within a given social world. According to Castoriadis (1987):

This element—which gives a specific orientation to every institutional system, which overdetermines the choice and the connections of symbolic networks, which is the creation of each historical period, its singular manner of living, of seeing and of conducting its own existence, its world, and its relations with this world, this originary structuring component, this central signifying-signified, the source of that which presents itself in every instance

as an indisputable and undisputed meaning, the basis for articulating what does matter and what does not, the origin of the surplus of being of the objects of practical, affective and intellectual investment, whether individual or collective—is nothing other than the imaginary of the society or of the period considered. (145)

Therefore the organization of societies, of race, ethnic, gender, and class configurations, of social-physical space and temporal organization, is not conducted strictly along biological or chemical lines, or by the logic of reason, or by a materialist logic of capital development, but are the by-products of the organization of fantasies, of the working of the social imaginary in a dialectical relationship with the material world. A social world comprised of vast social inequalities will produce different fantasies of “normality,” struggle, resistance, and domination than a world in which social inequality is abolished. The social imaginary does indicate its presence in the construction of particular types of reasoning, reasoning that shapes intellectual and physical practices. Such *logics*, technical or otherwise, work to reshape the dominant social imaginary by their expression through social practice. Therefore the social imaginary works through the social and economic relations of a society, expressed along particular cultural dimensions and refracted through the race, ethnicity, class, and gender aspects of populations.⁵ Constructed images of the homeless are readily visible in Hollywood films, as we shall see in the forthcoming chapters, and in the procedures of Departments of Public Aid, and the practices of local police departments.

The social world, then, is a product of the organization of systems of signification, networks of meaning, informed by dominant social imaginary significations. Symbols and icons arise as a result of the historical playing out of conflicting systems of significations expressed materially in political, cultural, and economic struggles, often in and through urban spaces. Old social imaginaries are transformed through human struggles in everyday life, struggles over the meanings of social practices that have been shaped by dominant social imaginaries. And these struggles will be indicated by changing social practices, often violations of routine or traditional ways of accomplishing something. Not all symbols end up as social representatives, not all systems of reason or expression end up constituting a society. Through the operations of the dominant social imaginary on symbolic networks, answers to the questions—Who are we? Who are they?—are produced and reproduced, answers that often remain unconscious to the participants.

Social imaginaries, therefore, are deeply implicated in the very formation of homeless social identities, identities that are contained and expressed through specific intellectual and material practices. The indirect grasping of the material limits of an expressed social imaginary might be possible only during times of revolutionary change, when the very foundations of everyday life, and hence social identities, are radically altered, providing an opportunity for a brief glimpse of what is possible beyond the status quo. This is not to negate the very real role of material production, merely to understand that material production, exploitation, and alienation constitute a larger world than that of the factory, the commodity, or of the relationships of use to exchange value.

The Production of Space and the Location of Identity in Everyday Life

The constitution of identity as defining what is "us" and what is "them" is fundamental to any society. When we examine the issue of class in North American society, the particular social imaginary that informs the construction of identities is the imagined distinctions generated between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor, key elements of a deeper fantasy that operates to create a particular identity of what a "good" American is, of what a "good" person is. The American frontier myth of self-reliance, combined with a possessive individualism, works to maintain distinctions between the deserving and the undeserving poor, explaining homelessness by invoking descriptions of personal failure.

Performances of success or personal failure are judged according to standards of worth that are made possible by prior discriminations of who is and who is not worthy. These distinctions are established by the dominant social imaginary working within real material interests. Because social imaginary significations operate by establishing distinctions, they also create hierarchies of worth, both socially and physically, allowing for the assembling and disassembling of material objects, groups of people, and urban spaces, creating vast areas of contested land. The very creation of social and physical spaces indirectly points to the workings of dominant social imaginaries in the very distinctiveness, in the manifold uses, with which land is developed.

Lefebvre (1976a, 1979, 1990, 1991) understands social and physical space as something more than a mere container for human action.⁶ Space is active, creating and recreating the social relationships of everyday life

in a dialectical manner that is both *utopian* and *strategic*.⁷ Dominant social imaginaries work through these utopian and strategic manifestations of space to produce specific city landscapes that are essential to the formation of social identities. Active human agents strategically maneuver within social spaces but have the potential of actively exploring alternative, liberatory forms of social space; the homeless encampments of Chicago are merely one form of these liberatory spaces.

Placing human agency at the forefront, Lefebvre extends the understanding of social and physical space beyond the realm simply of domination, beyond Michel Foucault's "networks of power" and microresistances, to a general concern with everyday life as a locus for emancipatory practices in the midst of an economically, culturally, and politically polarized landscape.⁸ Spatial hierarchies of worth, generated by the social imaginary working through social practices, both produce and maintain an increasingly fragmented and socially polarized city topography. Therefore, space is not simply a reflection of economic contradictions produced by the production process, but rather a fundamental aspect of the production process itself; *space, labor, capital*. This is because, as Gottdiener (1985) puts it, "the social relations governing the activities associated with space need to conform to the way in which space is used to acquire wealth. This relationship is contradictory since the uses of space to make money are continually coming into conflict with the institution of private property" (125). Space is produced and space is consumed. Space facilitates or retards production, consumption and distribution, not only of products but also of the worth of human actors.

Downtown spaces are produced to facilitate financial exchanges, light manufacturing, and the reproduction of middle-class lifestyles, while an adjacent space is consumed in the form of visiting museums, art galleries, sports games, and the like. Insofar as urban spaces are imagined as playgrounds for tourists, those people who conflict with the imagined realm of tourism will be effectively locked out of such spaces through police practices designed to restrict the movements of those thought of as "out of place." Other urban spaces become repositories for throwaway populations. Still others, for segments of the privileged and well heeled. The organization of these differences in social-physical space is not natural, but the result of social imaginaries working through the social practices of developers, bankers, designers, architects, politicians, policy makers, and police enforcers.

Lefebvre encourages us to think about space as an instrument of social control via the state and also an instrument for liberation from

the alienation of everyday life under capital. Space can be viewed as "administratively controlled," a policed space that acts to reconfirm the dominant social-spatial hierarchical organization, to ensure that everyone is in their proper place. Clearly, this is the form of space most frequently encountered by those who find themselves poor or homeless. City, county, and state political divisions serve to establish administrative districts that provide for the control of land-use development and the regulation of police, health, and social services by location. These administrative distinctions are shaped by the dominant social imaginaries within a given society.

The social space of status distinctions associated with moral worth and the physical spaces of differentiated activities are the major vehicles for reproducing a Gramscian cultural hegemony; such a hegemony is established through an underlying logic working through the actions of knowledge and technical experts who generate necessary "systems" of control, spatial control. Understandably, such hegemonic attempts to systematize space, to establish a particular reasonable logic throughout everyday life, informed by the dominant social imaginary, is fraught with contradictions and conflicts that must be negotiated. These negotiations occur through our coded understandings of social-physical space. Lefebvre understands that space can be decoded, or read, because social-physical space is an aspect, a "process of signification," organized as a spatial code that is historically constituted. However, unlike those who are willing to reduce decoding to formal plays of sign systems, to readable formal codes, Lefebvre (1991) is more interested in looking at the dialectical nature of spatial codes as "part of a practical relationship, as part of an interaction between 'subjects' and their space and surroundings" (18). In this sense, then, social-physical space may be viewed as the product of social practices that create specific coded contents, whether it is the construction of sports stadiums or the establishment of shelter facilities in specified parts of the city.

Briefly, Lefebvre (1991, 33) specifies that we can examine space in terms of (1) spatial practices, (2) representations of space, and (3) representational spaces. *Spatial practices*, which involve the creation and re-creation of social formations within given locations and sites, assists in generating a degree of social cohesion and continuity within a society. In modern capitalist society, spatial practices may take the form of the daily life of suburban commuters or the wanderings of those living on the street. Each individual actively engaged in everyday life gives form to urban and suburban spaces, generating an apparent

"structure" of everyday life, a minimal sense of cohesion, in which the very actions of oneself and others create the illusion that space is merely a container for those actions. What is often not recognized is the manner in which everyday life, as a spatial practice, is subverted by those perceptions, or dualisms, discussed earlier, that separate out persons from spaces, individuals from the social, the cognitive from the somatic, and thought from action. And as Bourdieu (1984) has pointed out in *Distinctions*, spatial practices have a strong class component to them in the realm of consumption, as well as in production. It is also clear that spatial practices can also be oriented along racial, ethnic, and gender lines, as we shall see.

Representations of space, what Lefebvre associates with the space of engineers and planners of all kinds, is space conceptualized abstractly and conveyed through different expert discourses. Technical conceptions about how people live and should live are equated with what can be thought about, organized within verbal and visual sign systems (Lefebvre 1991, 39). Representations of space may be viewed in the plans of engineers, the schemas of politicians, the zoning discussions of land-use planners, and many other professional areas of expertise, the dominant social-physical space of any given society. For example, Liggett (1995) discusses the planning documents included in the City of Cleveland's *Cleveland Civic Vision 2000 Citywide Plan* as an institutionalized representation of space, designed to convey how Cleveland should be understood and perceived. City and suburban planning documents, especially those directed at downtown redevelopment schemes, constitute representations of space, which guide us in understanding who is to be legitimately included within the dominant vision of the city and who is to be excluded. The City of San Jose holds a particular concept of downtown space as a "recreational" space that excludes homeless persons, unless they are "contained" within established institutional settings. It is this category of space that we shall look at in more detail in the next two chapters.

Representational space, however, is space that is "directly lived through its associated images and symbols" (Lefebvre 1991, 39), often the realm of artists, philosophers, writers. Lefebvre understands this form of space as one that is often dominated within a given society, but also a space through which the imaginary attempts change. One can easily think of the production of public monuments, historic fountains, market squares, public parks such as Central Park in New York or Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, historic Greenwich Village or North Beach, and a host of other spaces too numerous to mention.

Representational space can provide the utopic dreams within which dominant social imaginaries may be challenged.

These three ways of examining "space" move the debate about urban and suburban space beyond the inherent dualisms visible in both Erving Goffman's front and back "regions" and Anthony Giddens's "structuration," to understanding social-physical space as a complex set of relationships with many historically produced contradictions and distinctions. What anchors these distinctions is the work of the body within social-physical space.

Goffman's analysis of back-region behaviors reads like a list of disrespectful actions: using profanity, "sloppy" sitting and standing, smoking, and elaborate belching and flatulence. For homeless people living on the streets, performing in front regions is a constant task, with little space or time to relax. According to Duncan (1979), the "moral order" of the "landscape" through which homeless persons must move is populated by distinctions between "prime" and "marginal" spaces that serve to confirm a degraded status identity in the eyes of others. Nonetheless, Duncan outlines how those labeled as "tramps" use the landscape as cover for their activities, as a strategy for survival, to negotiate the differences between how spaces should be used according to authorities and how they are actually used by people who are homeless.

Duncan, like Goffman understands urban space as the realm within which people act and negotiate their identities, making adjustments to meet the demands of the moment. Therefore, the desire to "get off the streets" is not simply an issue of solitude or individual "privacy" but, as Giddens (1984) understands, a place where one can engage in "the expression of 'regressive behavior' in situations of co-presence" (129), where one can be free of those who would judge one's behavior. For example, being forced into shelters, as "total" institutions, means that such "regressive" behaviors will be discouraged, that one will be expected to engage in front-region behaviors. Without the ability to "let off steam," shelter rules that demand a front-region performance to prove one's credibility might produce further frustration and anger among homeless patrons. Often interpreted by homeless encampment members as forcing a "loss of privacy," shelters were avoided in favor of the camps because the camps offered the possibility of back-region behavior and security. The advantage of homeless encampments over shelters was their ability to generate a back region of one's own, often within another back region of housed society.

Giddens advances Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory by examining "the situated character of action in time-space, the routinization

of activity and the repetitive nature of day-to-day life" (Giddens 1984, xxiv). While Giddens understands Goffman's observations of face work, gestures, and reflexive control of the body, the positioning of individuals in everyday life, Giddens also realizes that "positioning" must be understood through the encounters one engages in, one after the other, across time and space, conducted within specific places or locales.⁹ People are positioned in multiple ways attached to specific and assumed social identities. The body must mediate these multiple positionings. To the degree that positionings are contradictory, the body will have to work harder to integrate them into some type of order.¹⁰ If the body/subject is not successful in this task, increased stress is the result. Although Goffman pointed out how daily social interactions occur and how institutions could perform their functions through routine practices, Giddens contributes a sense of history that gives such actions shape and meaning. Giddens attempts to restore a sense of intention and motivation to social action. He attempts to break with the dualisms of individual/social, micro/macro, subjective/objective by positing a theory of structuration that integrates human action within a temporal and spatial flow influenced by historical developments, a theory that privileges the examination of social and system integration (142).

Routinization is the means by which place, or locale, and space are integrated, a means by which we come to see the world as "whole." In integrating Castoriadis's theory of the social imaginary with Giddens's concept of body routinization, we can note that the "fixing" of signification occurs at multiple levels on and through the body, a body subjected to routinization on a daily basis, a body acting to configure the specific manner in which practical consciousness¹¹ operates in the understanding of the world.¹² It is this practical consciousness, often conducted within institutions, that is most influenced by routinization. An obvious problem with this schema, however, is the disallowance of conflict and change as integral elements of identity. Cannot identity also be produced through nonroutinized forms of action, through conflict and struggle?

Giddens (1990) argues that the separation of space from place, where place is represented by locale referring to "the physical settings of social activity as situated geographically" (18), is the main characteristic of modernity since the Enlightenment. "Empty spaces" are the end products. This separation of space from place assumes that time and space can be recombined in the "time-space 'zoning'" of everyday life where local actions and knowledges are now structured by distant social influences, whether regional or state planning associations or

corporate boards of multinational companies. Extended travel and the expansion of interconnected information and communication systems mean that local places are increasingly dominated by regional and global organizations of space and time.¹³ Culturally, one has merely to look at the rapid expansion of all forms of national and international media into the home and on the street, including advertising and marketing. And yet such an organization of space merely increases personal and social isolation of homeless persons who are not connected directly to the market. Unfortunately, Giddens's concept of social and physical space remains relatively immobile; it does not specify how particular forms of time-space regionalizations, spatial organizations, are supposed to change, except through the introduction of new technological developments.¹⁴

Avoiding these problems, Michel Foucault's (1980) concept of space as an intrinsic and active aspect of understanding (70) adopts spatial metaphors of territory, field, displacement, domain, region, soil, horizon, and site in order to describe the deployment of knowledge/power throughout society (68).¹⁵ Foucault's spatial concept, however, remains wedded to a concept of space that, while performing an excellent job of explaining the deployment of administrative power throughout urban landscapes, is less useful in understanding the possibility of resistance as it emerges from utopian dreams of liberation. Resistance remains local.

Still, Foucault's concepts can be useful in examining the application of "truth regimes" to specific organizations of administrative spaces and the spaces of local resistances to such power. Foucault's concept of heterotopias is useful as a descriptive term for categorizing the various types of administrative spaces within a city. For example, those who find themselves homeless often float between city spaces defined as *heterotopias of deviation* (Foucault 1986), the world of rest homes, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals, spaces where deviation from constructed norms is expected, and a declining set of *crisis heterotopic* sites, which, in contrast, are "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis" (24). Homeless shelters would constitute a heterotopic space somewhere between these two types of social spaces, although, according to Timmer (1988), in management ideology and function, as we shall see in chapter 4, shelters closely resemble correctional facilities. Ruddick (1990, 188; 1995) applies Foucault's spatial perspective in her examination of the homeless geography of Los Angeles. She identified a series of heterotopias occupied by homeless families and individuals, such as the Ocean

Front Walk in Venice, along Rose Avenue in Santa Monica, and Plummer Park in Hollywood. In my work in San Jose, California, homeless heterotopic spaces consisted of McKinley Park, the Guadalupe River, a doughnut shop on San Carlos Avenue next to Fifth Street, St. James Park, and the southern reaches of Coyote Creek. More often than not these heterotopic spaces weave themselves through the fabric of the city and are often adjacent to fashionable areas. When the very poor who occupy such spaces begin to move, organize, or demonstrate, such spaces cease being simple heterotopias of "difference" and instead become what I would term *resistant heterotopias*. The risk of the very poor transforming heterotopias of deviation into resistant heterotopias calls forth constant policing from city officials—social practices (such as police sweeps) that work to break up organized groups before they begin to form, through the enforcement of "public" space rules (Murray 1995).

The deployment of truth regimes, as administrative knowledges working through specific heterotopias, is evident in the panoptic regulation of homeless bodies through the integration of shelter services and rules, police surveillance practices, and arrest procedures that convert those who find themselves homeless into statistical data that can then be integrated with other service and or work opportunities. The dispersal of this type of network of power often remains invisible to housed persons in middle-class society but is quite obvious to those living on the streets. The nationwide deployment of shelters as homeless "barracks" speaks to the understanding of power and poverty through a militarization of schemes of control. In refusing to use shelters, the homeless encampment members of SHA and "Tranquility City" refused a place that reconfirmed their status as "spoiled identities." These identities were reinforced by the elaborate rule systems and punitive measures employed by many city shelters. Shelters were used only as a last resort when street locations became too precarious due to police activity in the area.

In applying Foucault's theory of power/knowledge to understanding the actions of those working in inner-city human service agencies, Dear and Wolch (1987) uncovered how "surveillance and disciplinary procedures of the Welfare State were articulated by and penetrated the routines" of professional social workers and community workers (12). With the move to deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill during the 1970s and 1980s, professional social workers faced a contradiction between caring for their patients and being forced to refer them to community workers out of their control as a result of state political

changes. Struggles over the decline of the welfare state, (e.g. the rise of Proposition 13 antitax legislation in California and the decline of state and federal welfare budgets) affected the ability of cities to take care of their very poor. These overt political struggles directly affected the spatial expression of power within cities, leading to what Dear and Wolch (1987) termed "service-dependent ghettos" that concentrated shelters, halfway houses, and group areas within a small, confined area of the city.¹⁶

The term *service-dependent ghetto* implies that the type of space produced concentrates and controls in a "total" manner those who receive services there. In fact service-dependent ghettos may be thought of not as a homogeneous terrain of surveillance and discipline, but rather as a terrain that is fractured, open to the possibility of resistance. The manner in which Dear and Wolch (1987) chose to analyze the treatment of service-dependent populations privileges a view of spatial power as overwhelmingly dominant and powerful, with little, if any, room for local resistances, fractures, or alternative spacings. On the other hand, Foucault does offer a model of local resistance through microactions. For Foucault, however, resistance remains localized and spatially distinct. Is this reduced version of resistance a product of Foucault's theory, or is it an empirical phenomenon? Perhaps a little of both. Current political forces have made it difficult to sustain any broad utopian resistance movements that could challenge the imposition of dominated space. Resistance is confined to perfunctory and spasmodic eruptions of protests. This weakened political perspective of resistance stands in contrast to the vision of liberation offered by Lefebvre's utopic spaces.

Unlike Foucault's power/knowledges and truth-regimes, Castoriadis's concept of social imaginary significations can explain the form within which Lefebvre's representations of space are constructed, the meaning of representational spaces, and indeed the way spatial practices are disrupted or smoothed out by the workings of dominant social imaginaries. This makes the integration of Lefebvre's and Castoriadis's theories of space useful in moving beyond a mere descriptive typology of urban spaces and toward an analytical examination of how social and physical spaces are assembled within our society. A social imaginary predicated upon a white supremacist and patriarchal perspective, for example, can set the boundaries of discourse within which expert technicians, engineers, and policy makers may conceive of race as black and gender as women, just as such imaginaries can alter representational spaces by giving form to the meanings of burning crosses or civil rights marches. Representational space, as shaped by social

imaginaries working through writers, artists, philosophers, and activists, can also provide the base for alternative imaginaries, utopic images; alternative representations that can collide with dominant social imaginaries worked out in the spaces of representation. Given these relationships, power and privilege in society will always emerge as a negotiated process between these three forms of space, informed by the struggles between dominant social imaginaries and counter social imaginaries. The social imaginary may be viewed as the bridge between representations of space, representative spaces, and spatial practices.

According to Lefebvre, the active development of private property disrupts the organic lived relations of everyday life, fragmenting the landscape, reducing space to fragmented, homogeneous, and hierarchically organized landscapes, creating an *abstract space* as opposed to developing personal and collectivized spaces (Martins 1982, 178; Lefebvre 1976, 83–84; 1979, 289–90; Gottdiener 1985, 121–32). The imposition of technical urban planning schemas, for example, restricts the multidimensional character of everyday life, fragments life activities, even as such schemas integrate transportation, energy, or housing developments. The inherent diversity of social-physical spaces is dominated by the imposed homogeneity of the “plan.”¹⁷ This is quite obvious from a cursory look at urban downtown redevelopment plans. The goal of downtown revitalization is not to increase the race and class diversity of city patrons, but rather to create an attractive consumer climate for those who have the money to spend. Given the socially unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige, particular racial/ethnic groups and class segments, will be privileged over others for inhabiting downtown spaces. Those who are poor and homeless will find an unsympathetic downtown climate in the newly redeveloped urban spaces.

The division of spaces, engineered through an intersection of private property interests with technical representations of space, produces distinct hierarchies of urban space organized around limited concepts of social life and cultural difference.¹⁸ And yet, even as city planners and developers seek to construct new abstract spaces within specific affluent markets, poor squatters can “seize” spaces in actions that directly refute the premises imposed by abstract space.

This increasingly chaotic expansion of abstract spaces, what I believe Lash and Urry (1987) incorrectly view as disorganized capitalism, calls forth a differently organized capitalism in which this chaos of production and reproduction is reorganized into containable sites. Abstract space mutates into a form where the very chaos produced by the advanced forms of production are used to create new markets, new

consumers, new relations of production, and new spaces, along with expanded forms of surveillance and control. Capitalist flexibility increases to accommodate this new global "chaos," another opportunity for investment, while casting aside whole segments of national populations, generating armies of the unemployed and legions of homeless wanderers. Those who are no longer useful within this new production/consumption system can be effectively isolated through expanded surveillance, and physical and social isolation. These radical spatial exclusions and concentrations, which Lefebvre understood as basic to the creation of industrial capital, are now assisted by advanced technology that accelerates control, surveillance, and consumption. Modern cities mutate into *hypermodern* cities. If hypermodern cities and regions are those in which social and economic tendencies specified in earlier periods are amplified and augmented, then how far can these social spatial polarizations progress before producing a reversal in capitalist fortunes and a crisis in political legitimacy? This can be answered only through the use of an active concept of social practice, a deployment of strategy and tactics, and not an overarching "logic," economic or otherwise.

The imposition of abstract space is not the result of some autonomous logic of capital but derives from strategies employed by groups and individuals acting on behalf of institutional interests within well-defined spatial and temporal boundaries (Lefebvre 1976, 28), strategies shaped by the dominant social imaginary of a given society. As city spatial boundaries change due to financial and or community conflicts, local officials may alter their strategies of controlling and producing space. Established social-physical spaces are organized strategically and historically, and therefore can be disrupted, negotiated, abolished, or assimilated through what de Certeau (1984, 34–38) termed "tactics." Official strategies are strategies that establish a place as "proper" in the eyes of city authorities and the general public. Authoritative control over, and division of, urban space "makes possible a panoptic practice proceeding from a place whence the eye can transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and thus control and 'include' them within its scope of vision" (de Certeau 1984, 36). This control is clear in the police practice of sweeping homeless encampments. But, such control is countered in the tactical resistances generated by those living in street encampments.

The rapid expansion of newly created spaces, new spatial distinctions, an "explosion of spaces," "results in a chaos of contradictory spaces that proliferate the boundaries at which sociospatial conflict appears" (Gottdiener 1985, 126). The emergence during the 1970s and

1980s of social movements based on identity politics derived from this "explosion of spaces," from the expansion and creation of new social-physical spatial boundaries.¹⁹ Similarly, as social inequality expands, new movements of the very poor and the homeless begin to appear at the borders of the newly created social and physical spaces. To expand struggles against alienation beyond the factory floor to the community is to extend the terrain of conflict from the factory to everyday life, to the social and physical spaces of the city. However, these expanding struggles can often work at cross-purposes. For example, unemployed workers who find themselves on the streets without a home often come into conflict with community organizations and homeowners' associations who want to keep shelters and mental health community clinics out of their neighborhoods. Fearing a decline in property values and crime, many otherwise progressive community groups often work to exclude shelters and group homes. The definition of who is and who is not acceptable to a given community, therefore, hinges upon the type of social imaginary operating within a given community, and this will be determined by the nature of social struggles occurring within the city. Conflicting social imaginaries can also generate conflicting definitions of acceptability, leading to clashing perceptions on a given social issue.

The inability of communities to assimilate rapidly proliferating social-physical spatial boundaries generates antagonisms that work to isolate individuals and groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. However, growing community antagonisms can also provide new opportunities to integrate the newly developed spaces within broader oppositional spatial forms, a manifestation of the utopian gesture. Imagining what might be, the realm of the possible, the dreams of hope (Bloch 1986; Geoghegan 1987), also provides the visions necessary for social change. Struggles move directly into the community (tenants' rights), into the university (multiculturalism), into media organs, into the administrative apparatus, into the home, into the bedroom, into all crevices of everyday life. Integrating these struggles to prevent working at cross-purposes is the task of a developing vision, of the utopic gesture. In modern society, abstract space assumes a form acceptable to multinational capital—everywhere revealed and simultaneously concealed beneath a marketing culture specializing in flashier graphics, speedier messages, and louder sounds. For Lefebvre the crushing of lived everyday spaces by the imposition of abstract space results in the ghettoization of all sectors of society:

Social space became a collection of ghettos. Those of the elite, of the bourgeoisie, of the intellectuals, of the immigrant workers, etc.

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These ghettos are not juxtaposed, they are hierarchial, spatially representing the economic and social hierarchy, dominant and subordinated sectors. (quoted in Martin, 1982, 179)

These fragmented spatial forms, the ghettos, fragmented racially, ethnically, and by class, lead to the creation of new borders and hence new conflicts. From the margins come new contestations of established urban spaces—even when those margins now occupy center stage.

The “Fixing” of Partial Truths, Differences, Identities, and Bodies in Space

It is an illusion that society has comprehensive and relatively complete social divisions and social coordinations, because all coordinations, all divisions, are partial, ongoing, and strategic. Making final judgments about societal directions, ideology, or functions, is necessarily partial. This absence of final, total knowledge, of any final understandings of the social as a completed project, also means that all subject knowledge is partial (McLaren 1991, 1989, 1993; Collins 1990; Giroux 1988; Haraway 1988), whether it is the knowledge of city officials or of homeless street persons. However, even though all knowledge is partial, knowledge still requires coordination for city and state power to effectively produce and maintain specific configurations of urban space. Social power, expressed in the control over space and the power to define others, is neither manifested on a completely contingent, arbitrary basis nor managed in a totalizing fashion. Rather, the correspondence between social institutions of society (whether it is work, family, school, or the state) and some professed unity can be understood only in reference to a social imaginary that works through authoritative agents, as they perform their jobs.²⁰ And it is the social imaginary that acts to shape the direction, flow, and target of power and privilege, to shape the direction of interpretive understandings of specific arrangements of institutional coordinations. The partial nature of subject knowledge does not stop us from “fixing” truth to partial knowledges, a fixing accomplished in order to live and work in the world no matter how unequal that world may be. We entertain the illusion of social stability and comprehensibility in order to act in the world.

The coordination of partial knowledges and the “fixing” of that knowledge into an understanding takes place through the body’s operating within various urban spaces. The coordinated partial systems of discourses and practices make themselves felt on the body, inscribed on the body through social practices that McLaren (1989; 1991, 154)

terms "enfleshment." The body/subject, "a terrain of the flesh in which meaning is inscribed, constructed, and reconstituted" (McLaren, 1991, 150), is the "interface of the individual and society." For example, people living on the street, homeless persons, are not just neutral bodies, but subjugated bodies and resisting bodies moving through, sitting, lying down, and sleeping in, the social-physical spaces of the city, a negative trope for surrounding housed society. As we shall see in chapter 4, homeless persons and city officials play out their power differences in struggles over where homeless people should be: How should homeless bodies look, and where should they sleep?

How this "fixing" of partial truths occurs, the creation of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984), may be examined by looking at the social practices people engage in, often ritually, that reconfirm their initial understandings of the world. Often these practices are repetitive and work to maintain borders between types of knowledge by routinizing action (Giddens 1979, 128; 1984, 60–63). These repetitive border-maintenance actions are social practices that suffer from the body's own vulnerabilities and irregularities. People get sick, or they are hurt, challenging these everyday repetitive patterns. Homeless street people constantly challenge the routinized assumption of the "healthy," "active," and "housed" body, disciplined, focused, and hardworking, simply by sleeping on a city sidewalk.

Social institutions, social definitions, and the configurations of urban spaces shift and change, assuming new relationships through dynamic human activity expressed in the "fixing" of partial knowledges. These changes are often registered in both direct and indirect social struggles around issues of power, prestige, and privilege. In these struggles and routinizations, different societies will organize their social institutions differently, positing different categorical arrangements, different ways of judging the validity of particular forms of knowledge, different ways of judging the worth of bodies, homeless or otherwise. The hierarchies of social knowledge, structured by dominant social imaginaries, common in one society might be absent in another. For example, the preoccupation with distinguishing between deserving and undeserving poor, between who is and who is not to be labeled "homeless," common to Western European culture, is not necessarily going to exist in a different society, with a different social imaginary.

The fixing of particular ensembles of institutional meanings, of symbols and partial knowledges, of arrangements of urban space, through the social practices of individuals, reveals the workings of the social imaginary (Castoriadis 1987, 355). It is not simply an issue of ideology,