Beat sociology: Ethnographic journeys in event spaces

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BEAT SOCIOLOGY: ETHNOGRAPHIC

JOURNEYS IN EVENT SPACES

by

Jonathan R. Wynn

Bachelor of Science
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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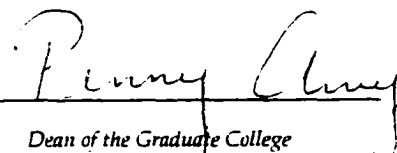
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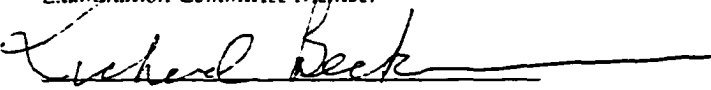
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ABSTRACT

**Beat Sociology: Ethnographic
Journeys in Event Spaces**

by

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Dr. Kathryn Hausbeck, Examination Committee Chair
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Beat Sociology: Ethnographic Journeys in Event Spaces proposes a new theory and methodology for Sociology to better investigate and describe the social experiences of individuals. I call this new set of theories and methodologies Beat Sociology—I have developed this project utilizing the work of Beat writers (Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs), as well as social theorists (particularly Walter Benjamin and C. Wright Mills). Drawing from critical theory, postmodernism and ethnography, I develop three central 'themes' that help facilitate my project: identity, space, and migrancy. Through auto-ethnography I explore three types of Las Vegas spaces: event spaces, casino spaces and Fremont Street. Las Vegas has gained sociological, architectural and philosophic relevance in recent years, and through Beat Sociology I explore these spaces as well as explore contemporary sociological issues—spatiality, identity, migrancy, technologies of control, epiphanies, events and objects.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO BEAT SOCIOLOGY

In the absence of an adequate social science, critics and novelists, dramatists and poets have been the major, and often the only, formulators of private troubles and even of public issues. (Mills 1959:18)

Postmodernism and Beatitude

We have entered a socio-historical moment that is distinctly different than those that preceded it.[1] There are varying views on what the characteristics are that define it, but many of those who believe that we have reached a new era refer to it as the 'postmodern moment.' With acceptance of this new era, through this thesis I develop a new theory and methodology that specifically addresses American 'postmodern' issues. I call this analytical framework Beat Sociology.

I intend to combine some of the characteristics of sociology with those of a particular literary heritage. In doing so, I address some of the shortcomings of both disciplines, and reinforce other qualities. There are multiple attributes of the Beat movement that sociologists can benefit from incorporating into sociological theory and methods. Similarly, the addition of social theory to Beat literature augments an already powerful

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[1] See Agger (1998), Bauman (1988), Harvey (1989), Rosenau (1992), Smart (1993), Turner (1990).

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exploration of human nature. The theory I outline in this thesis is a move away from traditional, academic metanarritive, towards a more fluid hybrid form of theory, perhaps best identified under the umbrella term: 'postmodern.'

The term *postmodern* is an illusive one in that it has multiple definitions and interpretations.[2] A composite form comprised of postmodernism and Beat is not a complete, unconditional acceptance of *all* values, issues and characteristics of both. Beat Sociology neither strives for nor offers a false unity between the factions of postmodern theory, nor does it embodies every value of Beat culture. I intend to select characteristics from postmodern social theory, as well as select aspects from Beat counter-culture, briefly describe their qualities, and combine the components together to form Beat Sociology.

The proposition of combining a literary movement and social theory may seem to be an unnatural crossbreeding of dissimilar species. This fusion of theory and/or method is not particularly easy, but there are recent examples of 'blurring' theories. Since the onset of an era Denzin and Lincoln refer to as "blurred genres" (roughly between 1970-1986), a combination of different paradigms, methods and strategies has now become slightly more acceptable (1994:9). They describe a multiplicity of forms of genre dispersal,[3] paired with new theoretical approaches such as poststructuralism, neo-positivism, neo-Marxism, micro-macro descriptivism, ritual theories, deconstructionism and ethnomethodology. The Beat heritage consists of many characteristics of postmodernism, and similarly, postmodernism offers components that enhances the social relevance of Beatitude. Later in this chapter I will discuss some of these similarities.

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[2] While Lyotard (1984) states that we are in the 'postmodern moment' or 'postmodern period', some believe that we have already passed this moment, and moved into a new one Denzin (1989) and Tyler (1987:xi).

[3] Denzin and Lincoln describe this genre dispersal as consisting of "documentaries that read like fiction (Mailer), parables posing as ethnographies (Castañeda), theoretical treatises that look like travelogues (Lévi-Strauss)" (1994:9).

Within this project I will offer this new hybrid theory and methodology, and then in later chapters *apply* it to a specific context, Las Vegas. By proposing and implementing a new social theory I travel into dangerous waters, but not necessarily uncharted ones. Any new science or literature only emerges "dialectically in tension with the old" (Agger 1989b:223) and the form of sociology I propose is no different. Beat Sociology relies upon the dual traditions of postmodernism and Beat counter-culture, but is also in dialogue with the traditions of mainstream American sociology[4], American Expressionism and Surrealism. Before outlining this hybrid theory, a brief description of some of the defining characteristics of postmodernity and Beat culture is imperative.[5]

Postmodernism. Defining 'the postmodern' is a difficult task, perhaps even impossible. For some, postmodernism is believed to have come to fruition with the blowing up of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis, Missouri on July 15th, 1972 at 3:32 PM. The building was modeled after Le Corbusier's 'machine for modern living' but was deemed uninhabitable by the low income people it was built for (Jencks 1992:24). For Isab Hassan (1974), postmodernism is a literary movement which focused mainly on the *late*-modernism of William S. Burroughs, Jean Genet, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett and contains subversive social and literary characteristics to it.[6] For some poets, it

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[4] From here forward I will adopt Agger's (1989b:6) definition of 'mainstream sociology' as the discourse dominated by a midwestern, quantitative empiricism that emanates from schools such as the University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, and Ohio State University.

[5] Agger refers to what I call a hybrid theory as *pandisciplinary*: a theory that utilizes "not only the deployment of methods and topics heretofore off-limits to sociology but also the abandonment of positivist theories..." (1998:12).

[6] Hassan notes that to understand the critical difference between modernist and postmodernist literature "...without a doubt, the crucial text is Finnegans Wake" (1974:43).

is a term for the avant-garde, experimental poetry post-World War II, first used by poet Charles Olsen in an October 1951 letter to Robert Creeley (Hoover 1994:xxv). Agger (1991) crowns Lyotard as the most notable 'philosophical postmodernist,' explicitly challenging grand narratives such as Marxism.[7] The difficulty of identifying the exact origin of postmodernism only reinforces a tradition that is itself difficult to define as an entirety. To add to the difficulty of definition, for every foundation point of postmodernism there are multiple interpretations of it.

Precursors to postmodernity in the social sciences include Critical theory, French Structuralism, Nietzsche, nihilism. Symbolic Interaction, phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics and romanticism (Rosenau 1992:13). I recognize the above aspects of postmodernity (rejection of academic discourse in favor of the literary, opposition to establishment, textual play, etc.) as being embodied within an entirely different heritage— the Beat Generation. By no means am I stating that Jack Kerouac is the father of postmodernity, but by focusing upon the largely 'academic' origins of phenomenology and Structuralism, contemporary social theorists may not appreciate or capitalize on literary movements such as the Beats as a potential source of understanding social experiences in a postmodern world.

Kincheloe and McLaren define the postmodern moment as "the contemporary era marked by a de-legitimization of the grand narratives of Western civilization, a loss of faith in the power of reason, and a shattering of traditional religious orthodoxies" (1994:142). David Harvey explains that one of the defining characteristics of postmodernism is in "its total acceptance of the ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and chaotic" aspects of society that modernism had previously denied (1990:44). Rosenau believes that some

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He finds the work of the Surrealists, Hemingway, Kafka, Existentialism, Aliterature, Genet and Beckett, pivotal as well.

[7] See also Best & Kellner (1990), Featherstone (1988), Harvey (1989), Huyssen (1986), Klinkowitz (1988), Newman (1985), Sarup (1989), and Turner (1990).

postmodernists "reject conventional, academic styles of discourse; they prefer audacious and provocative forms of delivery, vital and intriguing elements of genre or style and presentation" (1992:7). Postmodern writing is typically more literary than academic, and it advocates diversity rather than unity, and complexity over simplification. Postmodernism, to some "simply reflect[s] adolescent rebellion, midlife professional crisis, opposition to the 'establishment' by those who feel deprived of power" (Rosenau 1992:11). Postmodernism emphasizes an exploration of those groups who are marginal, deprived, and ignored.

Rosenau defines two types of postmodernists: 'skeptical postmodernists' and 'affirmative postmodernists.'[8] Skeptical postmodernists believe that there is no truth, and that all that is left for academics and intellectuals is textual play. The 'affirmatives' hold an optimistic interpretation of the world, proposing issue-oriented political action and non-ideological intellectual practices (Rosenau 1992:16). Kincheloe and McLaren define the 'skeptical postmodernists' as 'ludic postmodernists' and those postmodernists who add social and historical theory to skeptical textual theory as 'resistance postmodernists' (1994:143-44).

Within this binary framework, Beat Sociology is most affiliated with affirmative postmodernism, specifically a hybrid of critical postmodern characteristics and the literary techniques of Beat writers. While I believe that the postmodern moment should be defined as an era of simulacra and textual play as the skeptics do,[9] I do not harbor similar feelings of hopelessness. Instead, I believe these images and social components retain characteristics that can be critically analyzed. Agger outlines several characteristics of

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[8] Baudrillard, Derrida, and Lyotard are the most infamous skeptical postmodernists and affirmatives include radical and critical postmodernists, as well as queer, cultural and feminist theorists (Ashley 1997:64).

[9] Baudrillard defines simulacra as a copy of an original that never existed, we are unable to distinguish between the 'real' and the 'copy' (Baudrillard 1983b).

postmodern critical theory (1998:73-7) that are similar to my position towards postmodernism at large and the ideologies of the Beat Generation. However, I do not unconditionally subscribe to all aspects of Agger's critical theory, but there are several characteristics that are integral to Beat Sociology. First, postmodern theories develop a deconstructive discourse and while most identified with Derridian skeptical postmodernism, critical theorists utilize it to deconstruct "popular discourses and practices" to reveal their hidden agendas and political connections in the social world (Agger 1998:74). Secondly, critical theory empowers citizens through accessible language and the aforementioned analysis of the social world. Third, postmodern critical theory questions the possibility of scientism and the ability of scientific writing to accurately represent the social world (Agger 1998:75). Last, there must be a commitment to retain the Marxist notion of critically analyzing the contradictions in the social world. Beat theory, as I will elaborate upon in the following chapters, conceptualizes postmodernity, critically analyzes contradictions and social constructions through the social experiences of the individual and provides new re-presentations of the social world.

There are two particular postmodern elements that I wish to explore in addition to the four elements of postmodern critical theory: a conception of a postmodern, fragmentary and contradictory cultural landscape, and the experimental tradition of representation with roots in Surrealism and the work of William S. Burroughs. I am not interested in outlining the diversity of theories, nor in locating the exact origins of postmodernity, but for the remainder of this chapter I will identify a few key characteristics of Beat Sociology. Before outlining Beat Sociology, it is important to introduce the 'Beat Generation,' draw some connections between these aspects of postmodernism and aspects of Beat-ism, and examine the benefits of combining sociology and Beat literature in the era of postmodernity.

The Beat Generation. Beat culture developed in the early 1950's as a counter-mainstream movement. Mostly consisting of a group of middle-class intellectuals, most

abandoned their aspirations of higher education for a life devoted to writing. These authors and poets were predominantly male, lived mainly in San Francisco and New York City, and with the exception of Burroughs, had only brief brushes with the academic world prior to their 'beat-ism.' Some of their influences were jazz music, the poetry of Blake, Whitman, and William Carlos Williams, the literature of Goethe, Camus, Dostoyevsky,[10] and obviously Thomas Wolfe and James Joyce (McNally 1979:50). The term 'Beat,' first used by Kerouac, was intended to suggest "exhaustion, beatitude, and the jazz improvisation that inspired many of its writers" (Hoover 1994:xxix). As evidenced in their work, the Beats experimented with sexuality and drugs as much as they experimented with prose and verse. Beat writing is "public, direct, performative, ecstatic, agonized, oral, and incantatory. It is both irreverent and spiritually aware" (Hoover 1994:xxx). Aspects of Beat writing that can be considered 'postmodern' will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but a couple of brief connections between postmodernity and the Beats will help frame Beat Sociology.

The space(s) between postmodernism and Beat Culture. Similar to postmodernism, Beat culture was counter-mainstream, positioning itself counter-culturally, and politically counter-academic (Rosenau 1992:9-10; Agger 1998:26-7). Many relinquished any sedentary values in preference for an 'alternative lifestyle'—traveling often, on little to no money, living in each others apartments or attics, hitchhiking, holding down fleeting employment—if any. The postmodern philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari (1983 and 1987) promote 'nomadic' writing and thinking—the spirit of the nomad reflected in constant movement, deconstructing and reconstructing barriers and boundaries. There seems to be similarities between the Beat lifestyle and Deleuze and Guattari's nomad. The question then becomes: was 'beatic' writing 'nomadic,' is nomadic writing beat, or are they irreducible?

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[10] Harvey notes how Dostoyevsky and Goethe attempted to deal with 'postmodern' issues of fragmentation, ephemerality and chaotic change (1990:11).

Postmodernists question the values and politics of writing, experimental methods in representation, whether we can represent the 'Truth' of a social world at all, and the narrative forms used by conventional sociology as being able to adequately represent social experiences. Patricia Clough argues that data collection and quantitative forms of analysis need to give way for "re-readings of representations in every form" (1992:153). Similar to these 'postmodern' issues, the work of Burroughs (in <u>Naked Lunch</u> and <u>Blade Runner</u>) and Ginsberg (in <u>Illuminated Poems</u>) also question how we experience our daily lives, the methods through which conventional writing is formulated on the page, and our ability to represent the social world.

Postmodernity questions the solidity of social experience and the cohesiveness of culture, preferring a fragmented vision of social experience, as well as a fragmented identity of the social subject. Affirmative postmodernists believe that postmodern theory, reflecting society, is itself "unsystematic, heterological, de-centered, ever changing, and local" (Rosenau 1992:83). Postmodern writing experiments with new techniques of representation that not only offer a fragmented reflection of experience, but do so in a manner that questions the obvious (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994:154). Similarly, William S. Burroughs believed that his 'cut-up' method could uncover the hidden meanings in texts through the juxtaposition of clips of text. The 'cut-up' method is not unlike the Surrealist games (a connection that will be addressed in the next chapter), but also conceptualizes the world as *pastiche* —an image of the world that is a collage or quilt of fragments (Rosenau 1992:xiii; Jameson 1991:25). Susan Buck-Morss (1995:33) re-reads the early notes of Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project as "fragments of commentary," a pastiche of cultural objects and themes resembling the work of the Surrealists. Benjamin was a *flâneur*—one who roams through waves of text and image searching for meaning and contradiction (Frisby 1994:85). Burroughs was the Beat flâneur.

While modernist ethnography sought to establish the authority of the Western ethnographer (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994:250), auto-ethnography is a postmodern

technique wherein the ethnographer positions him or herself not as an objective observer, but an author who experiences the context he or she intends to describe. Vincent Crapanzano critiques Goethe as a model of the modern ethnographer, stating that in "Italienische Reise" Goethe should have jumped into the carnival he wished to describe rather than stand upon a balcony and observe from afar (1986:82). Kerouac's work, almost in its entirety is a description of his experiences through fictionalized biography that can be considered literary auto-ethnography. Beat writing follows the transformations of identity of the subject/author, documenting travels and epiphanic moments. The first 62 pages of Kerouac's Desolation Angels (1965) describe his meditations on 'Desolation Peak.' Similarly, Baudrillard's America (1988) is no doubt a series of loosely connected meditations and epiphanies as he travels across the United States. Rosenau (1992) refers to struggling with the predicaments of postmodernity as throwing oneself 'into the fray,' and unlike Goethe, Kerouac can be understood as participating in the carnival and throwing himself into the fray.

C. Wright Mills. A contemporary of the Beats was C. Wright Mills, a well established intellectual at Columbia and elite member of New York's Left. While not readily apparent, the work of Mills and the Beats contain similar characteristics. Because of his teachings and his books White Collar (1951), The Power Elite (1956), and The Sociological Imagination (1959), Mills grew to be regarded as a radical hero for students and an arrogant radical by colleagues (Lemert 1993:378-79). He was a major American Marxist, a contemporary of the Beats, and provided a powerful critique of the empiricism still dominant in American sociology.

There are several important connections that can be made between the Beats and Mills. Both found contradiction and inadequacy in the predominant ideology in their discourse. Mills saw empiricism as contradictory because while claiming objectivity it ignored that scientists themselves are human and therefore subjective. The Beats similarly

understood the prosperous postwar 1950's as an era of contradiction. Both provided powerful critique: Mills offers us the 'sociological imagination'—a connection of individual issues and larger social problems, while William S. Burroughs provided a 'cut-up' method of writing that deconstructed any text to uncover hidden meanings and contradictions.

I will continue these connections in the following chapter, but there are three vital issues necessary to touch upon prior to introducing Beat Sociology. First, Beat Sociology is interested in constructing a subjective construction of lived experiences, the "most fruitful form of self-consciousness." While Mills proposed the sociological imagination (1959) he did not actively *do* it. I believe that it is only when the Beat Sociologist establishes his or her sociological imagination and has become aware of the socio-cultural moment (be it postmodern or otherwise) can s/he explore contemporary sociological concerns. Second, by becoming the first major Marxist theorist in Sociology on this side of the Atlantic, Mills opened the door for utilizing European theories to critique American empirical sociology and Marxism, as well. Today, European postmodern theories again reach these shores, and again social theorists are utilizing them to critique Mid-western empirical sociology. Through Beat Sociology I contextualize these predominantly European postmodern theories in the American setting. Third, this project will address *how* Beat Sociology re-presents lived experiences through a methodology which utilizes the sociological imagination as it is contextualized in the postmodern moment. Answering the call of Mills (1959) and Agger (1998)[11] to expose the 'aura' of scientific writing, Beat theory is an attempt to undermine the dominance of empirical mainstream sociological work and the meta-narratives of sociological theory and ethnography through the utilization of Beat writing. In the following chapter, after an introduction to Beat Sociology, I will

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[11] Agger notes that the major difference between his critical theory work and the work of Mills is that while Mills believed that mainstream sociology could be rehabilitated, Agger addresses the "disabling, narrowing effect of discipline..." (1998:23).

explore further connections and issues between Beat methodology and Beat theory and the work of C. Wright Mills.

Beat Sociology

I am interested in exploring the benefits of combining some of the issues raised within the postmodern 'moment,' and the core 'values' of the Beats to produce a social theory and methodology that re-presents the social world in a way that is harmonious with lived experience, that uncovers new meanings and interpretations, and that strikes a balance between historicity and spatiality. Beat Sociology is a theory that incorporates a literary heritage with sociological theory and methodology to, among other things, produce connections between the lived experiences of the social actor and 'larger' social constructs or issues. Beat Sociology is aligned with critical postmodern ethnography in that both understand culture as "displacement, transplantation, disruption, postionality, and difference" (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994:153).

Through combining aspects of postmodernity and the Beat tradition, Beat Sociology *Americanizes* continental postmodernist sociology. To do so brings postmodernity into a more familiar context that can be better understood by those who are west of France. By placing the postmodern in terms of a field rich with American example and metaphor, aspects of postmodernity that were previously ambiguous become crystallized into forms relevant to and resonant with an American audience. One of the characteristics of postmodernity is an increased emphasis on *localized* knowledge (Agger 1998:36) as opposed to the grand narratives of modernism: to accept European postmodern theory without contextualization is to replace one grand narrative with another. Current forms of postmodernism are formulated in France, a culture that should not be assumed to be similar to our own. Beat Sociology contextualizes postmodern theory in an American context.

Beat Sociology is an exploration of the self, designed to facilitate a better sociological understanding of how the social actor interprets the world around him or her through a method of representation more consistent with lived experiences within and between social contexts. It is a methodology that reflects the fragmented context, experience and identity of the postmodern individual. I believe that Sociology should portray the lived experience of those it addresses, an objective that is lost in the empiricist project. To accept the postmodern worldview described above is to question the value of the autonomous author—if the postmodern subject is fragmented, the author becomes fragmented as well. To accept the postmodern worldview described within the paragraph above is to question the value of a linear, solidified text—fragments of social theory, photographs, sound bytes and literature would be preferred. Beat Sociology weaves together fragments of auto-ethnography, photography and literature—to represent a multi-textual world, multi-textually. Beat Sociology does not impose a coherent social experience, but evokes a new understanding of text(s), through the connections and experiences that the Beat author deems relevant.

Finally, postmodern social theories are often assumed to be apolitical (Rosenau 1992:166), or offer any number of possible political combinations "on the condition that you think that you are free to choose among them" (Jameson 1991:264). Unlike these conceptions of postmodern theory, Beat Sociology is *explicitly* political, anti-establishment and counter mainstream. Beat Sociology employs the revolutionary spirit of the Beat Generation, and therefore should be understood as a critique of current mainstream theories of sociology. The Beats found themselves in a post-war America that was different than popular images would lead a person to believe. The 1950's are conventionally known as an era that evokes visions of prosperity, picket fences and 'Happy Days'—but Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs were documenting an entirely different reality. Similarly, while Mid-Western, empirical sociology offers a purified version of our social world, Beat Sociology addresses and struggles with the conflicts and contradictions of everyday lived

experience ignored by the mainstream. Beat Sociology is intended as a critique of mainstream sociology. Much like Beat generation commentary on the mainstream, Beat Sociology critiques the larger academic context. In the place of 'clean data,' aggregates and numbers, that offer prediction and validity, Beat Sociology investigates a social world that is complex, confusing and difficult to classify. Beat Sociology offers a fragmented text and promises nothing more than to challenge the worldview of the reader, to disrupt the ideology of mainstream social theory.

What Does Sociology Gain From Beat Sociology?

I believe that both skeptical and affirmative postmodernisms are incomplete social projects. While I subscribe to the conception of postmodernity that skeptical postmodernists offer—fragmented, contradictory, and multi-textual, most knowingly do not provide an adequate means to understand the social world (Ashley 1997:65; Rosenau 1992:15). Unlike the skeptics Beat theory provides a means of understanding a core set of issues and concerns that I believe to be vital for understanding postmodernity. More specifically, Beat Sociology is a social theory concerned with issues of identity, the effects of spatiality, and the redefinition of the self as s/he moves within and between spaces— what I refer to as travel or migrancy. Similar to both ideological camps, Beat theory acknowledges the postmodern moment as having radical repercussions upon each of these issues and explores its effects. Unlike skeptics and affirmatives, Beat Sociology provides a specific theoretical framework: focusing on a finite number of concerns (or 'themes') that guide exploration. Beat Sociology branches out to investigate sociological issues of the postmodern author, transformations of self, historicity, social change, objects, technologies of control, and bodies. Beat Sociology navigates through the diverse range of effects postmodernism has had upon our social world not from a form of objective scientism nor the disembodied skeptical critique, but from the experiences of the individual.

More specifically, Beat Sociology contends that the discipline of American sociology currently lacks the appropriate tools to understand the experiences of the postmodern social actor. Both quantitative methodology and modernist qualitative methods attempt to describe the visible behaviors of the social individual through the abstraction and objectification of lived experience. The methodology utilized within mainstream sociology is "reduced to keeping records, documentation" (Agger 1989:107), chills and freezes social experiences (1989a:23) and suffocates social writing and thought (1989b:1). Within sociological discourse, measurements and data are to be considered 'precise' while interpretation and feelings are 'vague.' Beat Sociology addresses the 'dirty' areas of interpretation, feelings and other un-quantifiable subjects (spatiality, identity transformation, etc.) that would be terribly neglected by mainstream sociology. Agger's work criticizes scientific writing as not only being unable to provide an appropriate method, but also unable to adequately represent lived experiences.

I agree with Agger, who believes that scientific writing ignores its immersion in society and instead we should offer a critical, or oppositional text that, through its reading, "animates the text's hidden possibilities as well as empowers the reader not only to read but to write..." (1989:10). The employment of sociology and Beat writing provides a guide for adding a critical nature to our work, specifically ethnographic and auto-ethnographic work. Agger (1998:30) notes that critical and interpretive theories are similar in that they have differences with positivism. Beat Sociology is similar in anti-positivism and a desire to connect everyday life with social structures (Agger 1998:4-5), but different in that while critical theory encourages historicity, Beat Sociology intentionally undermines history through written investigations of *spatiality*. In addition, while the use of auto-ethnography is an option in critical and interpretive theory, it is a method inherent to Beat Sociology.[12]

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[12] Auto-ethnography is a method wherein the thoughts ideas and feelings of the author is explicitly integral to the text. This method has been brought about by a "crisis of representation" (Denzin 1994:10) within the postmodern moment, and will be addressed in

By ignoring the subjective "immersion in society" mainstream sociology devalues non-scientific social texts. Science perpetuates itself through distinguishing what is to be considered 'scientific' and what is 'non-scientific' (1989b:70). In the designation of this binary opposition, scientism maintains an academic indifference to issues such as media culture, travel and social spaces. The latter two issues are specifically addressed by Beat Sociology.

The utilization of Beat literature, poetry and photography are intended to facilitate the writing process for marginalized authors, decrease the need for the sociological jargon that both modern and postmodern social theory are criticized for, and therefore become more accessible and perhaps interesting to *all* social theorists, as well as the 'general public.' Beat Sociology, through detailing themes and issues that guide the generation of social theory as well as the application of it, becomes a theory of being as well as explanation of lived experiences

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The purpose of Beat Sociology is not solely to critique contemporary sociology, but to offer an alternative way to understand the social world. In the following chapter I will map how Beat Sociology improves upon some of the theoretical and methodological issues raised here. Chapter Two explores connections between the Beat movement and Surrealism, the work of Walter Benjamin and C. Wright Mills, the similar issues raised by these groups, and the direct influences of Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs on the theory and methods of Beat Sociology. Chapters Three and Four will build upon these influences, specifically delineating the components of Beat Theory and Beat Methodology, respectively. Chapter Five comprises the application of Beat Sociology in the site most

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Chapter Four. While Beat Sociology utilizes auto-ethnography, I do not believe that it is only a version of postmodern ethnography. Beat Sociology is a integrated method and social theory.

congruous with the social world that postmodernism and Beat Sociology addresses: Las Vegas, Nevada.

CHAPTER 2

BEAT SOCIOLOGY

Situating 'The Beat Generation'

Committed to vision and apostasy, the Beats did not name a region of their
own; they lived subterraneanly or on the road. Like their predecessor,
Henry Miller, they braved sentimentality and shared his wonder, lust and
spontaneity... (Hassan 1975:101)

By exploring Beats in greater detail, this chapter intends to further situate the socio-
cultural context of the Beat Generation. I will also make less than obvious historical
connections to Surrealism and C. Wright Mills that help to situate Beat Sociology with
counter-establishment artistic and sociological movements, in addition to the Beat counter-
culture movement. Before concluding this chapter with an outline of the key components to
Beat theory and Beat methodology, I will outline some of the specific influences that
Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs had on Beat Sociology.

The cast of characters. The primary core of 'Beats' consisted of Jean Louis 'Jack'
Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Seward Burroughs and Neal Cassady, with a loose,
varied outer circle that includes (but is not limited to) Gregory Corso, Lawrence

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Ferlinghetti, Peter Orlovsky and Gary Snyder. I will focus on the works of the 'holy trinity' of Beat writers: Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs. The three texts that are most identified with the Beat Generation, are Kerouac's On the Road (1957), Ginsberg's Howl and Other Poems (1956), and Burroughs' Naked Lunch (1959). I believe that their work is exemplary of the larger group, and sufficiently embodies the literary aspects Beat Sociology utilizes.

On the Road, Kerouac's second book, was written and completed in twenty days on a single continuous roll of long Chinese art paper that he had taped together to keep the flow of thought uninterrupted. The book was about Kerouac's travels across the country and the many adventures he had with Neal Cassady. Kerouac's verse was written spontaneously, but that should by no means imply that it was without rigor or discipline. His style, what he referred to as "spontaneous prose," is characterized by short, quick sentences and long explanatory paragraphs that capture the "rhythm of the high-speed road life as no author before him ever had" (McNally 1979:133). Kerouac, in his essay "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" defines his work as:

> Not "selectively" of expression but following free deviation, association of
> mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thoughts, swimming in a sea of
> English with no discipline other than the rhythms of rhetorical exhalation
> and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down on a table with each
> utterance, bang!... Never afterthink to "improve" or defray impressions...
> the best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from
> cradle warm protective mind... (Baraka 1963:343-44)

Allen Ginsberg did not adhere to the postwar poetic ideals of formalism and decorum, proposing a "return to the immediacy, egalitarianism, and visionary ambitions of Blake and Whitman" (Hoover 1994:130). He was also greatly influenced by William

Carlos Williams, who urged him to write of contemporary America. Ginsberg's poetry was greatly influenced by Kerouac's style, preferring honest, spontaneous expression. His most influential works are the aforementioned Howl and Other Poems (1956) and Kaddish and Other Poems (1961). The former piece begins with the now famous lines:

> I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
>> starving hysterical naked,
> dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix,
> angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry
>> dynamo in the machinery of night... (Ginsberg 1956:9)

Like the rhythm of the high speed road that resonate through the work of Kerouac, through his poetry Ginsberg kept the beat of the jazz musician. He wrote the bulk of the piece in one sitting, the form of the poem was influenced by "Kerouac and also by the long saxophone lines he had heard in jazz clubs" (Schumacher 1992:201). As he wrote his poetry, Ginsberg focused in on the rhythm and sound of his work. In his "Notes for Howl and Other Poems" Ginsberg explains that "the long line is used as a stanza form broken within into exclamatory units punctuated by a base repetition..." (In like fashion, Kaddish and Other Poems ends in a hymn). Throughout his life, Ginsberg continuously experimented with his verse, often it has taken on different forms in performance: with music, art, lecture, and incantation.

William S. Burroughs is perhaps the most interesting member of the group, and he is definitely the most controversial. Of all the Beats, he is considered the most academically accomplished, despite hating the "academic and social posturing" (Schumacher 1992:31). His 1959 novel Naked Lunch was prosecuted in the United States for obscenity, and was finally judged as 'not obscene' by a court of law (Ginsberg 1993:87). Burroughs experimented with alternative forms of literature, specifically the 'cut-up' method utilized in

his Nova trilogy—The Soft Machine (1961), The Ticket That Exploded (1962), and Nova Express (1964). The 'cut-up' process began as cutting two pages of prose in half, connecting the top half of page one with the bottom of page two, and the top of page two with bottom of page one, and then retyping them. The process was intended to create "a different level of thought, or consciousness" (Schumacher 1992:349). More complex experiments with the method would include fragments of news items, autobiographical notes and drug-induced hallucinogenic glimpses similar to Surrealist exploration of dreams.[1]

Counter-?

...underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts

and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors,

the unemployed and the unemployable... Thus their oppression is

revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. (Marcuse 1964)

'The Beat Generation' arose in a repressive era. The 'Happy Days' fifties were marred by a cloak of social conformity imposed through suppression, best embodied by

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[1] Burroughs studied at Harvard majoring in ethnology and graduating in 1936, he had a brief stint of medical school in Vienna, was drafted into the army, had jobs as an adman, a bartender, a private detective in Chicago and New York, and an insect exterminator. Although his paternal grandfather was the inventor of the adding machine, he only received a small monthly stipend from his family (McNally 1979:64). In 1951, Burroughs shot his wife, Joan Vollmer Burroughs, while attempting to shoot a glass of gin off of her head. Living in Mexico, murder charges were complicated, and he avoided jail. In 1953 he published Junkie, a narcotic autobiography, and with the help and encouragement of Ginsberg, followed it with his infamous work Naked Lunch (1959).

espionage trails and McCarthyism (Cook 1971:10). According to Ginsberg, Kerouac realized that "something really hard and terrible was coming to America" and that "the open road was no longer open for the wandering hobo saint... Kerouac had a very clear and direct picture of that hard military police-state that was descending on America" (Foster 1992:40). This feeling was combined with a growing new middle class who had a newfound postwar affluence. The labor movements of previous eras, which portrayed the American worker as "defiant and independent," as well as those that could remember the depression years, were all being incorporated into the middle class (Foster 1992:7). Resistance movements were nearly nonexistent, and in their place were growing sentiments of middle class conformity and bourgeois capitalist materialism.

Many of the Beats saw oppression and contradictions within this era and became disillusioned. They saw what Burroughs referred to as a "torsion" of contradictory impulses and fissures in society: the generation gap, separation in lifestyles, and particularly the separation of races (Cook 1971:21). The Beats rebelled, eschewing middle class values and goals. Instead they "searched for a way out" through literature and poetry (Foster 1992:xii). As they gained a reputation as poets and rebels, they were increasingly seen as a threat to conservative, corporate, suburban values. The Beat Generation became the voice of dissent for the decade—in 1959, Time Magazine called the Beats "the only rebellion around" (O'Neil 1959:115). The work of the Beats were largely seen as providing "a guide to ways out of a conformist civilization," particularly Kerouac's On the Road (Foster 1992:43).

The very act of writing was a struggle for many of the Beat writers. Kerouac was angered by the revisions made on his first book, The Town and the City. Through working on his next three books (On the Road, Visions of Cody, and The Subterraneans) he would "wage a stubborn war against the publishing world's insistence that he conform to their standards" (Schumacher 1992:133). The literature world was, at that time, dominated by a partnership between two factions—the Kenyon Review and the Partisan Review. Both

groups consisted of academic elitists who were funded by post World War university money, and neither group cared for, nor supported Beat writing (Cook 1971:11).[2]

Beat writers, even if they desired overwhelming popular appeal, would not have received it. Leslie Fielder (1982) concurs with Cook (1971) that the mid- to late-fifties were an era of censorship run rampant. Aside from attacking pot and left-wing politics, parents, congressmen, teachers, television and radio reporters turned on and tuned into rock music, J. D. Salinger's <u>Catcher in the Rye</u>, Superman, Wonder Woman, Archie, Ginsberg's <u>Howl</u>, and Kerouac's <u>On the Road</u> (Fiedler 1982:40-5; Cook 1971:10-11). The sixties alleviated a great deal of social and literary repression, but Fielder (1982) warns not to wax nostalgic. He notes that it was "by no means the era of an unchallenged 'permissiveness' which we now remember" (1982:46), as the comedy of Lenny Bruce, and Burroughs' <u>Naked Lunch</u> still came under conservative fire.

American Surrealists? In the last chapter I compared Beats issues with those that are commonly understood as postmodern. Through comparison it becomes apparent that the Beats should not be dismissed when tracing the influences and similar ideologies of the postmodern moment. However, the Beats have another, earlier European cousin: The Surrealists. While some have briefly mentioned that Burroughs' 'cut-up' method was inspired by Surrealism (Schumacher 1992:348) a deeper comparison of the Beats to the Surrealists is beneficial to establishing a case for Beat Sociology.

Surrealism arose in an era of modernist tension, responding to the contradictions between "internationalism and nationalism, universalism and class politics..." (Harvey 1990:33). Surrealism was, much like the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, a reaction to early capitalism and fascism spreading through Europe, and built upon the Dadaist movement. Dada was a critique of the "dehumanizing excesses of modernity" and the art

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[2] There was the notable exception of Norman Mailer, a member of the Partisan Review who later loosely affiliated himself with the Beats.

that reflected these excesses (Ashley 1997:6).[3] The Surrealist project was a reaction to a 'frightful disease,' the repressive shadow of Hitler, Dolfuss and Mussolini; a struggle against the conformity of the era between the two World Wars. Members of Surrealism's precursor, Dada—Breton, Eluard, Aragon, Péret, and Ernst were among the founders of the new school of thought. It became a revolution of everything, especially anti-establishment poetry and literature (Fowlie 1956:15).

Surrealists found their worldviews 'unadaptable' to the society that surrounded them. They believed that their social speech and actions were usually in contradiction, and that the neat patterns and interpretations of the realist movements were an insufficient means of representing the world (Fowlie 1950:15-20). Breton and others established a wide array of methods in which to 'expose' reality. In addition to experimentation with literature and poetry, they used cinema and art, but Breton believed the most vital component of the Surrealist movement was that it was as much a way of life as it was a play of aesthetics:

> When Surrealist methods extend from writing to action, there will certainly
> arise the need of a new morality to take the place of the current one, the
> cause of all our woe. (Breton quoted in Levy 1995:49)

'The Exquisite Corpse' is a Surrealist game, described by Breton; "three people draw three constituent portions of a body in succession, the second, not being aware of what the first has drawn, nor the third of what the first and second have drawn" (Breton 1974:32-3). Surrealists would call the result a 'phantom-object,' a mythic creature that

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[3] Tristan Tzara, a dadaist, made poetry by cutting words from newspapers and arranging them haphazardly across a page. Other dadaists used "cigarette butts, discarded concert tickets, and other bits and pieces of rubbish" (Ashley 1997:7), an idea that Burroughs utilized later in the century.

holds more than one metaphor for our use. As Breton states, the voluntary incorporation of contents within these 'communicative vessels' can have shocking effects. He describes a sketch that, despite his Surrealist sensibilities and drawing capabilities, turned out to "represent something terribly different"—a phantom image not entirely of his own making (1974:33).

Max Ernst, another Surrealist, would collage multiple media together to intentionally disrupt the viewers assumptions of reality. When Juan Gris, a peer of Ernst's, pasted newspaper onto a painting he "believed that they were grafting a chunk of raw reality onto a painting," but Ernst used multiple texts to create an unfamiliarity, the mystery and surprise of disjunction and juxtaposition (Ernst 1972:40). This was a sensibility of all the Surrealists; they valued the connections made through juxtaposition, used methods to unravel reality into new forms, and encouraged the spontaneous creation of poetry, image and thought.

In short, there are some obvious connections one can make between the Beats and the Surrealists. There are similarities in worldview, ideology and representation—each group offers a counter-establishment critique, believes in a complex and contradictory conception of the social world and offers new ways of representation. Methodologically, it is easy to trace the connection between Burroughs' cut-up method and Surrealism. The cut-up method that Gysin and Burroughs developed was, in fact, very much inspired by Surrealist games (Schumacher 1992:348). The process was intended to similarly "represent something terribly different indeed." Burroughs believed these moments of juxtaposition as being windows into the secret hidden meanings of texts. The use of cut-ups to explore his drug-induced state of consciousness and find these 'hidden meanings' is comparable to the Surrealist exploration of a dream-world as a method for uncovering a new consciousness. Both Burroughs and the Surrealists were interested in the dislocation of images and texts to find new meanings; the Surrealists were interested in the subconsciousness, while Burroughs was primarily interested in re-interpreting everyday consciousness. Kerouac

also prescribed a similar method of production, discussed earlier, that he called spontaneous prose. The cut-up technique has other Surrealist and postmodern sensibilities—it is non-linear, subversive, spontaneous and unconventional.

Some postmodernists prescribe bricolage as a means for cultural analysis, a method of representation that utilizes multiple texts or media. The bricoleur, or flâneur is one with "the ability to rearrange fragments continually in different patterns or configurations" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983:7). Mentioned briefly in the preceding chapter, Walter Benjamin was a flâneur, and was influenced by the Surrealist movement (Frisby 1994:85). Similar to the Surrealists, Benjamin was interested in conveying experiences in 'urban phenomena' and freedom (Buck-Morss 1989:33), but unlike the Surrealists, who toiled to uncover the dream-world, Benjamin was very much concerned with the material world. Benjamin trades interpretations of dreams for interpretations of spaces. William Burroughs, on the other hand, was deeply interested in a drug-induced form of reality, as well as Surrealist methods of interpretation through juxtaposition. Shield's notes that a Benjamin-like flâneur, would stroll at a leisurely pace "behind the fashionable amble of a pet tortoise" (1994:65). The mid-century, Burroughs/Kerouac-like 'Beat-flâneur' moved at the pace of the automobile. The fin-de-siècle Beat Sociologist (or postmodern flâneur) then moves at the speed of light, perhaps catching the fragmented fast-paced images of media technology.

In ideology, Surrealism, postmodernism and Beatism, are each reacting to a social order that they interpreted as oppressive and dangerous. Postmodern critical theorists specifically resist the positivist scientism of modernity,[4] the Surrealists were struggling with the defeatism of post-war Europe, and in a way, the Beats were struggling with the opposite end of the World Wars—oppression in affluence. The Beat movement was reacting against the 1950's conservatism that festered in American postwar prosperity. Interestingly, all three movements claim discontinuity and contradiction within their

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[4] Agger notes that 'more radical' postmodern writers oppose *all* forms of science, "natural and social, for their attempts to generalize about the world" (Agger 1998:46).

epistemologies. Following this discussion, contradiction can be understood as a powerful energizing force behind counter-culture movements. This idea provides a powerful argument for Beat Sociology, a theory and method that, similar to Surrealism and the Beat movement, searches for contradictions in this new era: postmodernity.

Kerouac: Keeping an I/eye on the road.

...a tradition of prose in America, including Thomas Wolfe and going through Kerouac, which is personal, in which the prose sentence is completely personal, comes from the writer's own person—his person defined by his body, his breathing, his actual talk. (Ginsberg 1974)

There are three essential components to the writing of Jack Kerouac that I utilize in Beat Sociology. Each component bleeds into one another and they are tightly interconnected. First, a continuation of a distinctly American literary tradition. Second, Kerouac places his persona at the center of the lived experience, and in writing about it, provides a thoroughly subjective text. Third, the text then becomes a means of traveling within postmodern American spaces, as well as through conceptions of American identity.

First, the work of Jack Kerouac has symbolized a continuation of the American expressionist tradition. Expressionist writing is "subjective, not solipsistic... it achieves a level of experience and understanding that is not merely personal but common..." (Cook 1992:15). Kerouac's work centers around personal experience and interpretations, similar to the qualitative method of auto-ethnography. Beat Sociology utilizes auto-ethnography as a pivotal component to re-present experience. In a return to lived experiences, Beat Sociology becomes not only a part of a literary tradition that moves through Emerson, Whitman, Wolfe, and Kerouac, but also an auto-ethnographic tradition that includes Ellis (1995), Richardson (1992), and Shelton (1995).

Secondly, Kerouac's attention to surroundings was sharp, detailed and personal. In his essay "Essentials of Modern Prose" Kerouac states that he would begin with an 'image-object' and then write in an "undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret-words, *blowing* (as per jazz musicians) on subject of image" (Donaldson 1979:531-33). Kerouac is exemplary at immersing oneself in the field, providing the kind of 'thick description' Clifford Geertz recommends (1973) and Denzin believes leads to thick interpretation (1989). This method of description, rooted in personal conviction and detail, is something that postmodernists Deleuze and Guattari appreciate. They write that Kerouac (as well as Ginsberg, Hardy, Lawrence and Miller) knows "how to leave, to scramble codes... to circulate, to traverse the desert..." (1983:132-33). Deleuze and Guattari bring up the last vital component in understanding Kerouac as a premier example of an American en route: in motion, in flux, in travel, and on the road. Kerouac injects himself into the text so that the exploration is not only through spaces, but through the self. The reader understands as much about Kerouac as the places he illustrates.

The driving force within the work of Jack Kerouac is travel and the call of the open road. Although it is surprising that Kerouac himself did not like to drive, he was no doubt a 'victim' of his own restlessness and 'suffering' from a need for movement (Cook 1953:5). Nonetheless, in On the Road, Kerouac privileges movement and the description of the world around him. Rarely in the book does he mention times; mostly he invokes seasons, which are then more an expression of mood than a chronological indicator. Kerouac described his experiences as a projection of space instead of an expression of time. Unlike most writings on Western history, Beat literature merits traversing spaces, American spaces over the unrelenting progression of time. In an exploration of On the Road, the reader sees multiple transformations of Sal Paradise (Kerouac), and should understand that what they are witness to is as much an exploration of the self of the 'author,' as an exploration of the American landscape.

The 'fictionalization' of Kerouac's auto-biography, allows us a privileged look into the author's constructions of identity. Beat Sociology similarly desires to explore the landscape of America, as well as the landscape of the identity of the American writer/sociologist/self. For these reasons, Beat Sociology utilizes auto-ethnography, a method in which the sociologist describes social experiences as well as his or her own interpretations and feelings (Ellis 1995, Richardson 1992, and Shelton 1995). This will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Ginsberg: Two children are threatened by a nightingale. There are two essential things I wish to utilize from Ginsberg—experimentation and the use of multiple media to present ideas, feelings and experiences. Howl was criticized as being 'shaggy' and 'tiresome' by some, and praised for redefining the boundaries of contemporary poetry. His most praised work could "not be defined, let alone judged, by the usual standards of criticism" (Schumacher 1992:258).

If Howl and Kaddish were proved to be experimental poetry, the later work of Ginsberg was no doubt pushing the boundaries well beyond the edges. After visiting India and Japan, he began to explore chanting his work, to an "invariable C chord." Experimentation continued through chanting Blake with an invariable F chord, sometimes moving back and forth. Upon the urging of Chogyam Trungpa, a Tibetan Buddhist meditation teacher, Ginsberg began spontaneously improvising poetry, a suggestion Kerouac had made decades earlier (Ginsberg 1975:ii). After hearing Ginsberg perform some improvisational poetry, Bob Dylan asked Allen to join him in the studio. He soon began collaborating with Dylan on several songs, (adding a third chord: G) some of which are included in Ginsberg's First Blues (1975).

In his more recent works, he began to explore in a more multi-textual exploration of poetry. First Blues (1975) wears the distinct, improvisational jazz influence of Beat poetry on its sleeve placing his poems to musical notes and measure. In Snapshot Poetics (1993)

he attempts to traverse his personal biography through his camera lens. In Illuminated Poems (1996) Eric Drooker's paintings and sketches accompany some of Ginsberg's work, providing breadth to an already rich stream of verse. These three texts are just an example of the desire to widen the already broad base of Beat work beyond the traditional roles of 'literature' and 'poetry.'

Ginsberg's experimentation with the written and spoken word, music, photograph and illustration, illustrate the contemporary need and ability to use multiple media in representing thought, theory and poetry. A presentation of words is no longer enough to describe the multifaceted experiences that an individual experiences today. The fragmented, multi-textual contemporary culture we reside in demands that we as sociologists consider that the written text is not the only method in which we can best represent contemporary issues. Beat Sociology struggles with the theoretical implications of this social world, and begins to explore the multiple possibilities of a new multi-textual social theory.

Burroughs: The newspaper that exploded. The Beat writing that is most advantageous for Beat Sociology is the work of Burroughs. To put the two in dialogue would provide a format, or perhaps anti-format, from which Beat Sociology can re-present experiences and theory.

Although the 'cut-up' method never became *the* major new writing technique that Burroughs and Gysin believed it would become, it was still an important progression of Beat thought. Burroughs felt that the method was a natural progression from his work in Naked Lunch, where he randomly sequenced the episodes of his life, breaking down the traditional structure of the American novel. To him, the idea was not far from the real life experience of a casual glimpse over a newspaper (Schumacher 1992:354). Soon, fragments of Shakespeare, Kafka, Eliot, and Conrad were juxtaposed with the work of Kerouac, Naked Lunch itself, photographs, and tape recordings. By leaving conventional methods and representations behind, Burroughs believed that we gain a powerful new perspective

on our "conditioned existence" (Hassen 1975:140). The more that Burroughs played with the method the more he began to feel that it was "as close as he could get to creating a dream consciousness, or 'a certain juxtaposition of word and image'" (Schumacher 1992:353). Burroughs states:

> It is unfortunately one of the great errors of Western thought, the whole either-or proposition. You remember Korzybski and his idea of non-Aristotelian logic. Either-or thinking just is not accurate thinking. That's not the way things occur, and I feel the Aristotelian construct is one of the great shackles of Western civilization. Cutups are a movement toward breaking this down. I should imagine it would be much easier to find acceptance of the cutups from possibly, the Chinese, because you see already there are many ways that they can read any given ideograph. It's already cut up.
> (Burroughs quoted in Schumacher 1992:354)

Burroughs and Gysin believed that "one could determine motives and secret meanings in the juxtaposed lines and images of the cut-up. Further, if one were to examine the juxtaposition of events in one's own life, one could find the hidden truth therein" (Schumacher 1992:355).

What is of great interest for Beat Sociology in the 'cut-up' technique is that it is a method with full intent upon disrupting the reader/viewers interpretations of objects, words, feelings and spaces. Although notably paranoiac,[5] the idea that the cut-up could

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[5] André Breton believed that Salvador Dali's greatest contribution to Surrealism was the "paranoiac-critical method"—a method of interpretation, but more importantly association of Surrealist objects, poetry, film, painting or anything. Naomi Schorr (1987) notes that Dali's critical analysis of Millet's *Angelus* is perhaps better than any 'serious' application of Sigmund Freud. The work of Burroughs can be understood as similar to Dali—it may be

uncover hidden meanings of texts and everyday experience is a powerful one not too unlike some qualitative methods (historical analysis, ethnography, ethnomethodology). By juxtaposing multiple methods and texts sociologists could begin to weave a much more rich analysis of everyday life. Burroughs understood that the 'cut-up' method was not much different than everyday life. If multi-textuality existed in the 1950's, it is even more the case today due to the rapid growth of our communication technologies. The newspaper that Burroughs was interacting with has now fragmented into televisions with picture in picture, teleconferencing, computers with hypertext, the worldwide web and virtual reality.[6]

The apparent reporter of postmodern architecture, Charles Jencks says that we carry a *musée imaginaire* with us in our minds, that is drawn from our experiences, knowledge from "films, television, exhibitions, travel brochures, popular magazines, etc." (Harvey 1990:87). Harvey and Burroughs would agree that it is inevitable for these fragments to begin to blur together, and at the same time offer as much interconnection as glaring gaps and inconsistencies. Burroughs exemplifies Fredric Jameson's ideal of the postmodern novel because it "not only resists interpretation, it is organized systematically and formally to short-circuit an older type of social and historical interpretation" (Jameson 1984:23).

French theorists, Deleuze and Guattari, describe the postmodern author in their introduction to Anti-Oedipus (1984) as similar to the author of the exquisite corpse. There is no single writer, instead there is a crowd. The author becomes the piece of paper to be

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dismissed as paranoid delusion, but his work contains a critical analysis of literature that other texts do not possess.

[6] Interestingly, in his chapter "On Intellectual Craftsmanship" C. Wright Mills suggests ways to 'loosen your imagination.' One of the ways to do so is to "simply dump out heretofore disconnected folders, mixing up their contents, and then re-sort them" in a new order (1959:212). This process is reminiscent of the 'cut-up'—although a slightly less random version. Mills was working towards a goal similar to Burroughs—he was searching for new connections and interactions between pieces of work in his file.

folded, the postmodern individual is already fragmented and cut-up. The notion of a fragmented world, fragmented author and fragmented text becomes central in the definition a Beat theory as well as a Beat methodology.

Returning to Mills. The work of C. Wright Mills is related to Beat Sociology in several ways, and contains some unlikely connections to Surrealism and postmodernity. While there may not seem to be a smooth transition between a discussion of Beat writers and Mills, a closer examination proves otherwise. I believe the work of Mills has four essential components that are invaluable to Beat Sociology: a desire to connect the personal with the social, an incorporation of European ideology (particularly Marx) into American academe, a critique of mainstream sociology, and a specific political agenda.

First, his most influential work, The Sociological Imagination (1959), attempts to make the sociological connection between lived experiences and larger social structures. He believed that he lived in a time marked by immense changes, alterations so fast that the human mind has a difficult time grasping them—"history now outpaces the ability of men" (1959:4). He believes that the "most fruitful form of self-consciousness" is one that understands the connections between historical events and the individual (1959:7). Mills explains that each individual has a set of 'troubles' that exist within the self, and the sociological imagination attempts to connect these concerns with larger 'issues' of public, or social, importance. Mills empowers the social actor—he believes that through the sociological imagination, the social individual *can* understand and critique his or her social surrounding through their lived experiences. This is exactly what Beat Sociology does: it is the sociological imagination in action. Beat Sociology provides a structure wherein personal, lived experiences and auto-ethnography can be connected to theories of architecture and sociology, as well as literature, art, and photography.

Second, Mills attempts to "unite the best of European and American classical theory" (Lemert 1993:379). His writings about Marxism, then considered to be radical

theories. have been mainstreamed—an integral component of many introductory level textbooks (Henslin 1991:19). Beat Sociology is not a return to Marxist thought per se, but it is a project similar to Mills' desire to bring European theory home. Beat Sociology is a combination of an American literary tradition with the largely European canon of postmodernism. This is an attempt to 'Americanize' postmodern thought, not to proclaim the United States as the center of postmodernity but to localize and contextualize social theories (for example space, identity and migrancy). Postmodernists, particularly Lyotard, champion the idea of localized thought deconstructing modern grand-narratives (Agger 1998:37). The influence and pervasiveness of Western thought and ideology, can be seen as one of these grand narratives. The apparent end of the Cold War has placed the West, particularly the United States, as victor. American postmodern culture and ideology has been globalized, the manifest "expression of a while new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world" (Jameson 1991:5). However, Fukuyama (1989) and Smart (1993:114) both agree that this Americanization has not placed the United States as the philosophical and sociological center of the world. While the very concept of a 'center' of postmodernity is a contradiction in terms, I believe that it is unfortunate that American Sociologists do not take advantage of their somewhat privileged position. Beat Sociology is an attempt to facilitate a better understanding of the American postmodern context.

Third, upon reflection it becomes obvious that Mills' sociological imagination was set up in contradistinction with American mainstream sociology, specifically the work of Parsons. He believed that sociologists have an inability to maintain an objective understanding of our social world, that the only way in which we can understand our world is through a subjective understanding of it. His work addressed the need for sociologists to understand the connections between their research and their personal biography. Mainstream empirical sociologists like to believe that their scientific endeavors are 'objective,' but Mills uncovers a denied, hidden subjectivity within scientism and

specifically mainstream sociology. Similarly, Beat Sociology critiques scientific writing and grand theories, proposing instead that we concern ourselves with subjective representations of lived experience.[7]

Last, Mills was reacting to a condition where the 1950's American was unable to understand the larger social conditions, sociological or otherwise. His opposition to the work of Parsons not only questioned the discourse of American sociology, but also that of the larger American society. This is similar to the work of the Beats: Mills was reacting to many of the same social issues of the era—contradiction, conformity and oppression within academia and in the larger social context. Mills believed that the social world was becoming increasingly difficult to retain a grasp of, a problem that Burroughs and the Surrealists were dealing with as well. The sociological imagination was an attempt to facilitate the social theorists ability to 'keep pace' with the social world.[8] However, beyond these connections between Mills and the Beats, there is a component essential to Beat Sociology, that distinguishes the work of Mills from the Beats. While the Beats were contra-mainstream and subversive within literary circles, C. Wright Mills was *explicitly political* dealing directly with sociological issues *within* academe. Similar to Mills, Beat Sociology is a political inquiry of social experiences within the postmodern moment. While it is important to make the distinctions between Mills and the Beats (of which there are more than a few), I believe it is much more relevant to discuss the ideas and concepts that are most useful for Beat Sociology.

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[7] Specifically, Beat Sociology is concerned with the difficulty of deciphering scientific writing (Mills 1959:25-33), the inadequacy of meta-narratives, or as Mills refers to them— grand theories and the belief in an "objective science" (Mills 1959:25-49).

[8] This condition has been further accelerated by the postmodern moment—Fredric Jameson notes the 'inability' of our mind to fully understand postmodern culture (1991:44).

Why Beat Sociology is 'Beat'

Beat Sociology struggles with what Denzin and Lincoln refer to as the "double crisis" of both representation and legitimization (1994:10-11) by (re-)formulating a new theory and methodology. Methodologically, Beat Sociology intends to take some of the experimental aspects of the Beat movement and incorporate them into ethnographic epistemology. Qualitative methodology, including ethnography, is at a crossroads, and is embattled with multiple crises of representation and legitimization (Lincoln and Denzin 1994:10).

Vidich and Lyman (1994), and Richardson (1994), refer to the difficulty of directly capturing lived experience as a 'crisis of representation.' Agger notes that positivist, traditional representation was problematized by an 'influx' of new European and feminist approaches (1998:17). This moment questions the ability of the social sciences to adequately present the lived social world. A series of problems now arise: difficulty in conducting social research and then adequately reflecting that experience in writing (Stoller and Olkes 1987:227), in addition to raising old concerns of validity, reliability and objectivity. Clough (1992), Aronowitz (1988) and Richardson (1994) all question writing methods, and the problematics between fieldwork and writing. In reflection on this debate, Denzin and Lincoln conclude that "the world of real lived experience can still be captured, if only in the writer's memoirs..." (1994:10). Patricia Clough warns that often this crisis is only met by "a self-consciousness about writing" rather than questioning the method of which we 'do' fieldwork (1992:136). Beat Sociology addresses this question of representation by utilizing the auto-ethnographer as flâneur as well as incorporating a concern with representing the social world and the lived experience as reflections of one another.

The second, interconnecting concern raised in the postmodern moment is that if our ability to represent a situation is problematized, then so too is our validity, generalizability

and reliability. This has been referred to as the legitimization crisis. This moment complicates a social scientists ability to evaluate qualitative research within the postmodern era (Lincoln and Denzin 1994:11).

Beat Sociology does not stand alone as a theory or method that struggles with this double crisis. Agger observes that a "significant number of sociologists and anthropologists... draw from postmodernism in reformulating both social science research and theory in light of postmodernism's powerful challenge to positivist theories of representation, writing, and reading" (1998:18).

Formulating a Beat Theory

As Burroughs foresaw, the text-and-picture newspaper was just the beginning of the multi-media era that we live in today. Bernard Tschumi observes that "the world of cinema was the first to introduce discontinuity" (1996:197). Walter Benjamin agrees: the mechanization of art represents something completely new, it is a very distinct point in history (1968). The first re-presentation of a segmented world which contains multiple combinations and disjunctions. Benjamin quotes Georges Duhamel: "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images" (1968:240). With the technological advances of the camera and film, our realities have never been the same. "By close ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus..." (1968:247) we are no longer aware of the world around us. Our social world, once a 'familiar' continuous film sequence, has been fragmented into individual, incongruous frames. The postmodern moment is defined by a collage of images and sounds, or textualities.

Beat Sociology is framed by six key concepts, the last component is methodological, and is included here because Beat theory and methodology are deeply interrelated.

- We have entered an era that is distinctly different from previous moments, one most commonly referred to as 'postmodern.'

- This postmodern era is defined as being socially and culturally, fragmented, multi-textual, and at times contradictory and incongruous. These conditions problematize the ability of scientism to adequately research, systematize and represent our social world, and therefore new theories and methods are necessary to study it.

- The experiences of the social individual are vital for a sociological conception of the social world. Only through an understanding of how the individual interprets the world can we then connect experiences with larger sociological issues.

- The issues of identity, spatiality and migrancy are vital for a better understanding of the postmodern moment. Each issue is intertwined with one another.

- Unlike American mainstream sociology, European Social Theory is addressing the postmodern era. While European theory provides a necessary guide, it is important to contextualize postmodernity in an American context.

- Due to the inadequacies of modern, empirical science, this new theory must also propose a methodology that reflects this postmodern conception of society.

First, Beat Sociology believes that our social reality is fragmented, due to the complexity of communication technologies, cultural practices, social spaces, and new understandings of identity and self. Much like the Beat writing and the Surrealist project, Beat Sociology addresses the incongruity and contradiction between speech, social actions

and social spaces through juxtaposition, ethnographic investigation and theoretical connections. In turn, to sociologically represent the social world and the actors within it in a linear, cohesive fashion is to misrepresent. Instead of the linear, or modernist approach, Beat Sociology encourages the bricoleur, described earlier as the guide through multi-textual, multi-methodological work. Beat Sociology will attract those with an ability to utilize multiple methods to better describe a context, a social relationship, a feeling, an understanding.

One of the key questions of Mills' sociological imagination asks us what the essential components of our contemporary society are (1959:6). Incorporating the thematic exploration of Burroughs by Skerl and questioning the essential components of our culture offers a new way for interpreting the world. Beat Sociology addresses this fragmented, contradictory conception of the world, and questions what the repercussions of this postmodern world are through identity, space and migrancy. These issues are seen by Beat Sociology as powerful components of postmodern society and pivotal, underrepresented sociological subjects. Each are briefly outlined here, and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

The identity of the postmodern subject is in need of exploration. Beat Sociologists believe that it is foolhardy to assume that the fragmentation of the lived experience of this subject does not have affect the construction of identity. The postmodern moment has radically redefined the identity of the social actor, and I believe that sociology has not adequately incorporated these constructions. Iain Chambers notes that due to the dissolution of universals, identity becomes diffused as well (1994:23). Identity is as fragmented as the society that surrounds it. Central to Chambers's notions of a new identity, is *migrancy*. Identity is formed 'on the move.' In transition, *en route*, becomes a characteristic of the self. Beat Sociology understands that in moving through different spaces, the self is altered, or reconstructed in new ways. If those spaces are fragmented in composition, the social actor within them is fragmented as well. Beat Sociology

understands the postmodern subject as being similar to Benjamin's concept of flâneur—a social actor who floats through a sea of images and objects. Benjamin, the early twentieth century flâneur, was documenting the onset of fragmentation through the eye of the camera. Burroughs is positioned at the mid-point of our the century. Now there are videocameras, keyboards and web pages to address and the Beat Sociologist becomes the new flâneur at the end of the century.

Postmodernists contend that we inhabit spaces with a character different than those modernists dealt with—fragmented and incongruous with modernist thought. Jameson believes that this 'hyper-space' transcends "the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surrounding perceptually, and cognitively map its position..." (Jameson 1991:44). I disagree with the Hassan quote that began this chapter on one count, Beat writing did name a region of their own: they claimed the fringes, the edges, and the road as their own. This theory of postmodern space is central to Beat Sociology, this is the conception of space that it seeks to uncover a greater understanding of. What facilitates the interpretation of spaces and their meanings is the juxtaposition of different spaces, similar to the cut-up method, and to do so would entail travel.

What Beat Sociology takes from Kerouac is a focus on adequately describing context, a use of social spaces as a prime subject of investigation and an understanding that to explore space is to *travel through it*. Travel within different spaces reconstitutes the components of a travelers identity, s/he loses a familiar sense of place and experience, and therefore loses an intergrated sense of self. This process is defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1983 and 1987) as *deterritorialization*, or a deconstruction of the territories within the self. At the same time the identity is reconstructed, or what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as *reterritorialization*. A simple play on the word 'territory' produces a double meaning— referring to what Deleuze and Guattari understand as a transformation of identity, but also to the interconnected relationship that this process has with the spatial boundaries that

surround the individual. Spaces can be understood as a way in which the identity is deconstructed and reconstituted, and Kerouac knew this better than anyone:

> I walk across the hot road towards town, I'm going to buy a new pair of shoes—First I comb my hair... Then I start off... Yeah, the career of Jack the Great Walking Saint is only begun, holily he goes into banks and cashes government checks into traveler's checks... (Kerouac 1965:95)

The postmodern moment has been documented and dominated by European, mostly French theorists. As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, by adopting the ideas and examples of the Beat tradition Americanizes this largely continental set of theories. By 'adopting' the Beat tradition, and therefore utilizing the 'cut-up' method, I am returning to a tradition that was greatly inspired by French Surrealism. Although it may seem ironic and contradictory (and there is nothing inherently wrong with that), this provides an even stronger reason for selecting the Beat movement: Beat Sociology then becomes part of a tradition of incorporating European ideologies in an American context that includes the work of the Burroughs and C. Wright Mills.

Lastly, Beat Sociology offers a conception of our social world that is inconsistent with mainstream sociology. As it has become apparent through this preliminary discussion of Beat Sociology, mainstream sociological techniques for exploring the social world are not applicable, nor appropriate for an investigation of our contemporary era, in particular the areas of identity, spatiality, and migrancy. It is therefore vital for Beat Sociology to develop a methodology of its own to interpret and re-present a fragmented, contradictory, postmodern context.

Formulating a Beat Methodology

Similar to defining Beat theory, it is beneficial to outline the key components of Beat methodology:

- Beat theory has conceptualized the postmodern moment as being fragmented, incongruous and multi-textual. Beat Sociology reflects this theory within its methodology.

- If mainstream, Mid-western social theory is unable to adequately address the postmodern moment, new methodologies are needed to replace mainstream Mid-western empirical methods as well.

- By incorporating aspects of Beat literature (collage, cut-ups) and postmodern theory, Beat methodology is guided by two traditions of experimentation. The product of Beat Sociology takes form as a multi-textual, fragmented, biographical pastiche.

- The use of 'themes' provides a method to interpret and analyze the collage/bricolage form of the Beat text.

First, In devising a 'Beat methodology' I believe the most informative and useful manner is one that adapts to a theoretical conception of contemporary culture. As discussed in the previous section, Beat Sociology attempts to deal with a world that is fragmented, multi-textual, non-linear and complex. Subsequently, a Beat methodology addresses these characteristics through an exploration of fragmentation, multi-textuality, non-linearity and complexity. To represent this concept of the social world in a linear fashion would be imposing a system of knowledge that is incongruous with the subject matter.

By formulating a more specific 'method' to postmodernity, Beat Sociology frames social experiences in an analyzable, critical way. The difficulty of assessing current forms

of postmodernity has been a significant criticism. Denzin states that "[p]oststructural, postmodern, and feminist texts have been criticized because... traditional, external standards of evaluation (internal and external validity, reliability, objectivity) are not followed" (1994:511). Denzin rejects the above criticisms in that they do not understand the new 'postmodern sensibility.' Beat Sociology attempts to grapple with this sensibility not only through theoretical analysis, but also through implementing a postmodern methodology.

There are several characteristics to Beat methodology, each intertwined with the other, as well as issues raised by Beat theory: multi-textuality, fragmentation, and a reliance on lived experiences. Through each of these components, the reader should be able to envision the spirits of Ginsberg, Burroughs and Kerouac respectively. In particular, I would like to explore and utilize Ginsberg's multi-textuality, Burroughs' cut-ups, and Kerouac's verse.

It is apparent that Burroughs' cut-up method is an exploration of cultural fragments. His interest was in discovering the tensions and connections between seemingly contradictory fragments. By juxtaposing these pieces he believed he could find deeper meanings.

Similarly, Beat Sociology sifts through cultural fragments and creates the connections in-between, or 'beneath' them. The method is intended to explode linear thought into a multiplicity of intentions and meanings. It broke down the control and dominance that the writer had over his or her reader. Reading became a more "active exercise for the reader, whose own experiences, thoughts and interpretations would affect the words..." (Schumacher 1992:354). Beat methodology fully intends to disrupt the ways in which we have been trained to view the world and more importantly, to discover new connections and new interpretations of our social context, and social selves. The role of the reader does not materialize in the comprehension of a string of words. The reader is to

make the connections between these fragments of text, as well as connect them to his or her personal experience.

Ginsberg's textual play in later works, First Blues (1975), Snapshot Poetics (1993), and Illuminated Poems (1996), all explored different combinations of representation. Be they poetry, prose, photographs, illustrations, music or the spoken word, Ginsberg celebrated multi-textual method of exploring and presenting human experiences. Beat Sociology attempts to utilize multiple texts in the presentation of sociological fragments, to facilitate the reader's ability to conceptualize Beat theory and create connections to their own lives. Photographs and poetry are included with auto-ethnographic fragments and social theory to provide a rich field for interpretation by the reader.

Finally, using Kerouac's spontaneous prose and rapture of lived experience, Beat methodology utilizes auto-ethnography to provide the main text in need of interpretation. The lived experience of the author becomes the first step in the interpretation of the social world, as well as a subject of inquiry itself. The author, through self-reflexivity and the judgment of the reader, becomes another text that must be explored.

Beat Sociology utilizes auto-ethnography, a method that best conveys the feelings and interpretations of the individual. This is because it relies upon re-presentation of the feelings and interpretations of the author, rather than the author's interpretations of a subject's interpretations or author's interpretations of abstracted empirical data. Auto-ethnography then becomes, at one and the same time, an exploration of culture and the author. Beat Sociology, in turn, privileges this method by offering multiple tools, methods, texts for the 'writer' to better represent his or her world to us. The modernist written texts of Malinowski, Mead and Radcliffe-Brown would not adequately depict our contemporary, fragmented, non-linear social world. Acknowledging this conception of the world allows the Beat Sociologist to use the methods Ginsberg used and more. An exercise in 'Beat' auto-ethnographic work could produce texts that not only provide a better understanding of

an environment where the 'researcher' finds him/herself in, but also to do so in a language that is accessible to the non-sociologist or the non-academic.

A postmodern conception of the social world, fragmented and contradictory, problematizes a positivist/scientific understanding of it. Beat Sociology adopts a conception of the social world similar to how Jennie Skerl and Edward Foster conceptualize the work of William S. Burroughs. When exploring Burroughs' The Soft Machine, Skerl uses a thematic method for best understanding the fragments of text, uncovering sexuality, power and revolt as being 'central' themes (1985:52, 54, 55). Foster describes Burroughs' work as a "network of descriptions, truncated narratives..." that dissolve our traditional means of connection (1992:169). One can understand Ginsberg's Planet News (1968) as a set of thematically organized poetry (Schumacher 1992:521). Beat Sociology believes that utilizing explicit themes to uncover a network of relationships would provide a useful theoretical method of interpreting the social world.

Through this conception of social method, it is obvious that traditional measures of assessment are inapplicable. Particularly considering the position Beat Sociology takes against sociological language and scientism, new evaluative methods would be in order. If we return to Denzin, we can formulate a set of values and criteria that are in accordance with a 'postmodern sensibility.' Similar to the reaction to Ginsberg's Howl, when a poem, method, or idea tests the boundaries of convention, it can be difficult to determine its value. The judgment of Beat Sociology can now be based upon a set of established core values: the ability or inability of a piece of work to properly describe an environment, how believable the descriptions are, how much the reader accepts the author's presumptions, and how the work presents the social world in a way corollary to the actual context it was experienced in. Each of these concerns will be addressed and elaborated upon in Chapter Four.

Taping, Typing, Gluing and Nailing it All Together

Beat Sociology explores the effects the postmodern moment has on a sociologists' ability to adequately represent the social world. By questioning objectivity and truth, skeptical postmodernism problematizes modern scientific epistemology (Rosenau 1991:96). To presume an ability to represent encourages broad generalizations and an imposition of a specific representation of social experience that does not hold true for all readers. In the place of 'representation' Stephen Tyler prefers the term 'evocation,' which implies a freedom for the reader and the writer from 'facts,' descriptions, generalizations, and the troublesome notion of a singular Truth (1986:126).

Beat Sociology addresses the problem of representation, not with semantics but with a *method* that depends upon the experiences and interpretations of the reader. Beat Sociology utilizes multiple methods and texts juxtaposed against one another to reflect the fragmentary and incongruous postmodern social world and allows the reader to conclude on the believability and adequacy of the representation. Some Beat literature is exemplary of inter-textual presentation: Ginsberg combining poetry with music, Burroughs placing the work of Kafka next to Shakespeare. Beat Sociology, by utilizing multiple methods and exploring the identity of the 'author' grounds intellectual academic ethnography, and rightfully places postmodernism in the streets. By doing so, it not only provides a starting point for 'doing' postmodern sociology, but perhaps most importantly becomes more accessible to the non-sociologist academic and the non-academic public.

CHAPTER 3

BEAT THEORY

Of course what I felt then as an ape I can represent now only in human terms, and therefore I misrepresent it, but although I cannot reach back to the truth of the old ape life, there is no doubt that it lies somewhere in the direction I have indicated. (Kafka 1971:253)

Situating Beat Theory Within the Postmodern Moment

A marriage of sociology and Beat is not happenstance, but a progression of thought brought about by a new sociological context. Before addressing the key issues of Beat theory, I will begin this chapter by outlining the differences between 'postmodernism' and 'postmodernity,' and then describe the connections between postmodern critical theory and Beat theory.

Postmodernism, postmodernity and Beat Theory. Agger explains that between theorists, there are "varying positions on the break between modernity and postmodernity" (1998:45), that is not to mention the greater variation of opinion on the existence of postmodernity. Although the prefix 'post-' implies that we have surpassed the modern moment, Lyotard believes postmodernity to be a part of modernity (1988). Derrida sees it

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as a social and cultural theory while poststructuralism is a literary and textual theory (Agger 1998:46). Ashley combines the work of Baudrillard, Debord, and Jameson to describe postmodernity as a period of late capitalism that is defined by what Debord calls a "spectacle-commodity economy" (1997:11). Postmodernity is an era wherein cultures, politics and social theories are media-ted not by information but through spectacular advertising. Debord maps out the process of how we have reached postmodernity in three steps: the automatization of labor decreases the need for human labor, symbolic cultural objects become increasingly valued (Nike shoes for example), there is a disconnection between the value of an object and the labor used to produce it (in Ashley 1997:10). This finally leads to the production of symbols and signs by 'dominant corporations.' While few postmodern theorists agree upon the specific conditions of postmodernity, Agger lists a set of characteristics that include: a globalization of modes of production, a localized understanding of these global trends, the 'end of history,' the death of the individual, a 'polyvocality,' critique of grand narratives (such as scientism), a questioning of analytical polarities (such as male/female and Third World/First World) and a focus on 'otherness' (Agger 1998:36-8).

Postmodern*ism* is an ideology (or supposed lack thereof) that addresses these characteristics of postmodernity, or the postmodern condition. As I have briefly described in earlier chapters, postmodern social theories are generally separated into two groups: affirmatives and skeptics. Most postmodern theorists would agree that postmodernism concerns itself with "pastiche, blankness, a sense of exhaustion; a mixture of levels, forms, styles; a relish for copies and repetition; a knowingness that devolves commitment into irony; acute self-consciousness about the formal, constructed nature of the work; pleasure in the play of surfaces; a rejection of history" (Gitlin 1989:347). While skeptical postmodernists are self-absorbed without even pretending to be critically self-reflective (Ewen 1988), affirmatives are more political, critical and process oriented (Rosenau 1991:15).

As I stated in the previous two chapters, Beat Sociology is most connected to Rosenau's above definition of affirmative postmodernism. Ashley believes that postmodernists, in general, lack a 'spirit of resistance.' I believe that he is too quick to confine postmodern theorists to the skeptical perspective, ignoring the political and critical elements of postmodern social theories. Beat Sociology incorporates some of the political elements of critical theory to counter the overgeneralized assumption that all postmodern theories are apolitical.

Postmodern Critical Theory. Agger (1998) details the characteristics of a critical form of postmodernism, an affirmative postmodern ideology and a set of theories that I believe are most congruent with the concerns of Beat theory outlined through this chapter. Of Agger's eight characteristics of critical postmodern theory I believe that five are most applicable to set up a discussion of Beat theory.

First, critical postmodern theory develops a "deconstructive discourse theory capable of identifying and criticizing ideologies" (1998:74). Beat Sociology first deconstructs modernist notions of a singular, fix(at)ed identity and replaces it with a postmodern, fluid identity. At the same time Beat Sociology deconstructs the context of this individual into objects and political agendas through analysis of social spaces as mechanisms of control.

Interconnected with this deconstructive discourse, the second characteristic of critical postmodern theory addresses the linear, grand narratives of modernism. Through deconstructing modern ideologies such as scientism, critical theory "makes visible its assumptions and values," but does not abolish its value altogether (1998:76). Beat Sociology, like critical theory, seeks a relativism of these discourses. Throughout this project I am in constant dialogue with Mid-western empiricism as Mills was thirty years ago. Beat Sociology is not an attempt to render empiricism useless, but to make it just as relevant as other discourses. While I will not do so in this project, the Beat Sociologist is

liberated from a single discourse, and is free to use a form of positivism and place it next to poetry, architecture, and photography.

Third, critical postmodern theory values difference and opening sociological discourse to marginalized groups to "help eliminate some of the blind spots of male modernist theorists" (Agger 1998:74). Beat Sociology privileges the author's voice, encouraging the Beat Sociologist to begin with his or her own feelings and interpretations and to connect them to larger social structures, rather than beginning with a set of assumed sociological axioms.

Fourth, critical theory attempts to make sociological concepts and conditions accessible to individuals without an education in sociology. Agger notes that Frankfurt Theorists and French feminists are the best examples of challenging scientific prose in favor of other alternatives (1998:75). He notes that while this does not abolish scientific discourse altogether, similar to the idea of relativizing the grand narrative of positivism, this agenda is aimed towards demystifying and democratizing scientism. Beat Sociology, further challenges scientific writing by incorporating literary techniques such as the use of prose, poetry and epiphanies as descriptive techniques that are not necessarily more accessible but do broaden the pluralist postmodern discourse.

Finally, Agger believes that critical postmodern theories should "empower citizens who "read" to become authors who write" (1998:74). If we begin, as social theorists, to write in a way that is more accessible to the non-sociologist, we have already opened the door for them to begin to understand sociology. Beat Sociology encourages *everyone* to be a sociologist, just as Mills proposed in The Sociological Imagination (1959), to begin with personal problems and concerns and then connect them to 'larger' social issues like race, class, gender, modernism, postmodernism, industrialization and socialization. Beat Sociology then, by privileging the voice of the author, encourages the reader if not to write critically, at least to think critically and sociologically.

This chapter is concerned with building upon these basic five concepts through a deeper analysis of the postmodern self, social spaces, objects and the travel between and within these elements. Only with an understanding of these issues and an understanding of their theoretical context, do I believe that the Beat Sociologist can make a positive contribution to postmodern social theory. The utilization of critical components distances Beat Sociology from the skeptical postmodernist perspective, and is a response to the positivist criticism that postmodern theories are largely apolitical, nihilist, relativistic and esoteric. The incorporation of these elements effectively positions Beat theory to analyze the social world through a critical, postmodern, Beat eye/I.

Situating the Intermezzo. In the last chapter I outlined how aspects of postmodernism contain elements that are similar to the ideologies and social issues that C. Wright Mills, Walter Benjamin, the Surrealists and the Beats were dealing with at different points in this century. Through the combination of sociology and Beat writing, Beat Sociology opens up a dialogue not only between the two camps of Benjamin and Mills, but enters a conversation with all social theories and ideologies. Through an application of Beat Sociology, some of these components will be conspicuous, others may lie just below the surface of the text.

While identity, space, and travel are slowly being agreed upon as elements that help define the postmodern modern moment (Agger 1991; Denzin 1994), Beat Sociology makes them explicit, as well as making two important contributions to postmodern theory. First, Beat Sociology proposes a method in which the postmodern writer can navigate through the disjointed set of characteristics of postmodernity—an issue that will be discussed in Chapter Four. Second, Beat Sociology offers a theoretical framework through which the sociologist and the social actor can critically and politically, examine the postmodern environment. While European postmodern theory offers critique and comment on a general

notion of 'society,' Beat social theory (in the spirit of Mills and the Beat movement) provides a *localized* political foundation for exploring the American postmodern context.

By adopting European postmodern theories, American theorists are inattentive to the American postmodern context. I believe that there are several components, documented by theorists like Harvey (1990), Sennett (1994), and Soja (1989), that are absent in some skeptical as well as affirmative postmodern theories, but explicit in Beat Sociology. Specifically, here I am thinking of the issues of postmodern identity, spatiality and migrancy. I believe these are critical components of American postmodern society, but are neither explicitly a part of American postmodern theories, nor the direct subject of inquiry. The core of this chapter, then moves through these essential components for understanding American society: postmodern identity, spatiality in conjunction with historicity, and migrancy—as defined as travel through constructed spaces or through *transformations of the self*. This movement through the postmodern individual and postmodern space will frame the essential components of Beat theory in this chapter, and more specifically I will offer a social theory of the postmodern subject, a conceptualization of identity in transformation, a theoretical understanding of social spaces as an active component of the postmodern context, an architectural theory of utilizing space as a technology of control, a Millsian critique of American empirical sociology, and a critical analysis of the American context.

I believe that the best possible way to understand the social world is through the connections made between the lived experiences of the social individual and the world around her. I have already begun to address what constructs affect the postmodern individual, particularly the fragmentation and contradictions in society.

In this chapter I will elaborate further on four relationships concerning the *individual* and how they are beneficial for Beat Sociology. First, how a fragmented conception of the postmodern individual can facilitate the project of Beat Sociology. Second, expand upon the relationship of the postmodern individual and the spaces that

surround him. Third, provide a better understanding of the relationship between the postmodern individual and the objects that compose these spaces. Last, recognition that epiphanic moments of realization by the individual provide a window for the Beat Sociologist to make Millsian connections between the personal and social public issues.

Corresponding with this exploration of the individual, this chapter also elaborates on how Beat Sociology conceptualizes the postmodern *context*. I am particularly interested in three components of postmodernity that are interconnected with the aforementioned conceptions of the individual. First, how social sciences have privileged historicity in the place of spatiality, and how a new focus on social spaces can benefit our understanding of lived, social experiences. Second, how spaces and objects are used to manipulate these experiences using new technologies and mechanisms. Third, how contrived spaces and events create event spaces that affect the individual in specific, manipulative ways.

The four aspects of the individual and these three components of the postmodern context designate a range of points that I will connect, just as Mills suggests in The Sociological Imagination (1959). In Chapter Six, an application of Beat Sociology, I will use the issues and tensions of the individual and the social context raised in this chapter as landmarks rather than margins or perimeters to guide the exploration of social experience within the postmodern moment. It should be apparent that this interaction between the individual and the social environment is pivotal to Beat theory. Because of this relationship, I believe it is important to slowly alternate between the issues I addressed above throughout this chapter so that Beat theory unfolds as a reflection of this convoluted set of interactions.

I believe that Beat Sociology is in a privileged position—it resides in between these cultural, social and historically specific issues and components. The Beat text resides in between the individual and the larger social context. Deleuze and Guattari define this position as intermezzo, the domain of the nomad—this in-between physical and theoretical 'space' offers the Beat theorist (or any nomad) an infinite set of points to connect, pass

through and reconnect. Deleuze and Guattari describe how the nomad may reach a watering hole as a point on a line of direction, but that it is only a part of the journey:

> ...although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine... The water point is reached only in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only in relay. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:380)

This intermezzo allows the Beat Sociologist to move to seemingly disparate points and connect them together. In the 'in-between' Beat Sociology can connect the individual and context by any means the Beat Sociologist sees fit: poetry, glue, tape, photography, etc. By situating the intermezzo, I propose that Beat theory frames these connections and interactions through the set of themes and issues I will address within this chapter: connecting epiphanies and fragmentation, the postmodern individual and event spaces, relationships with objects and spatialities.[1]

The Individual Subject and Self

> It's me that's changed and done all this and come and gone and complained and hurt and joyed and yelled... (Kerouac 1965:3)

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[1] Due to the constrictions of proposing a written thesis upon a continuous stream of consecutive pages, this interaction cannot be represented as the interconnected heap of fragments that it is. I am however, self-aware of these obstacles and offer this disclaimer: I will now cautiously present a relatively linear, modern, progression of thought for purposes of clarity, beginning with the individual.

When 'the individual' has been addressed as a part of sociological dialogue it has been through an understanding of how his or her identity is socially constructed. Simmel understood the social actor as being a part of a 'web of patterned interactions'—that we can look at society as a series of connections between the individual 'atoms of society.' Symbolic Interactionists, following Mead's split of the Me and the I (1934), interpret the variable meanings of the social individual. Mead's Social Functionalism describes human conduct as being shaped by social instincts—a well defined tendency to act under the stimulation of another individual of the same species (Cook 1993:58). Through an understanding of functional objects that guide action and human action as being social, Mead sees the self as social object, not a social subject (Cook 1993:48-56). Rosenau describes this modern subject as a child of the Enlightenment, rational in nature and solidified in constitution (1992:46-7). This conception of a subject has in turn defined the modern author as privileged, the arbiter of meaning, the producer of truth (Rosenau 1992:27).

The modern subject, for Horkheimer and Adorno, became confined to a specific form of 'rational' thought. Docherty sees the modern subject as having been "reduced to an engagement with and a confirmation of its own rational processes" rather than with the material world (1993). The enlightened subject becomes disengaged with the ideological opinionated self (1993:8-9). The work of C. Wright Mills is against this notion of the subject, believing that we should return to the self as a basis of understanding the social world through the sociological imagination. I believe that this conception of the subject has been lost by critical theorists in the postmodern era. Beat Sociology places the self at the center of the text not to return to 'The Author' but to return social theory to making connections between the identity of the social actor and the social world.

Many postmodernists have explored how the individual has been affected in the postmodern context, largely in the form of questioning the role, cohesiveness, and existence of identity. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) explores her fragmented identity as a

Chicano-lesbian-poet-feminist. David Booth (1985) examines Nietchze's conceptions of a subject as a multiplicity. Iain Chambers believes that identity is created "on the move" (1994:25), an idea I will return to towards the end of this chapter. Deleuze and Guattari's work posits the modern neurotic subject has been replaced by a postmodern schizophrenic (1983 and 1987). Michel Foucault examines how social structures throughout history have inscribed themselves upon the body, defining and manipulating social identities (1977). For Fredric Jameson the subject has perhaps disappeared entirely (1991:16). If the subject has continued to exist, he believes that it is hard to see "how the cultural productions of such a subject could result in anything but 'heaps of fragments'" (1991:25). Kenneth Gergen further conceptualizes these fragments of the individual stating that we "become evermore saturated with relationships, we become increasingly populated with *fragments of the other* [his emphasis]" (1991:172).

Most skeptical postmodernists, including Jameson, desire to build upon the Lacanian persona as the postmodern individual: the schizophrenic subject loses the ability to make connections between the signifier and the signified, between effect and meaning, between past and present and future (Jameson 1991:26-7).[2] This conception of the individual allows for them to reject 'the subject' while still exploiting the perspective of the individual (Rosenau 1992:53). The skeptical postmodernist individual is anonymous, fascinated with the antiquated, "the exotic, the sacred, the unusual, and the place of the local rather than the general or the universal" (1992:54). The postmodern individual fluctuates, identity is fragmented into pieces. Agger notes that the identity conceptualized by Queer Theory and postmodern feminists is 'inherently fluid,' not the fixed binary gender roles that modernity assigns (1998:116).

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[2] There are critical differences and connections between the Jamesonian conception of the individual and the Lacanian conception, a discussion of which is well beyond the focus of this project. See Jameson (1988 and 1991) and Lacan (1977).

Jameson's conception of the individual as a heap of fragments makes it difficult to conceptualize, or re-present, the postmodern individual in the postmodern moment. This subject is of benefit for Beat sociology, but only in part. While it disrupts the modern subject, shaking it down into a rubble of characteristics, it also problematizes our ability to re-configure the postmodern individual. The work of Deleuze and Guattari help to visualize a brief form in the clouds: the ephemeral image of the fragmented individual. Deleuze and Guattari, similar to Lipovetsky, believe that the self is in a constant state of flux. How a person defines his or her identity is dependent on the context s/he is in. The people, spaces, and objects that surround the individual deconstructs him or her, what they refer to as *deterritorialization*, and then reconstructs him or her, or *reterritorialize*. In Deleuze and Guattari's <u>Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature</u>, they interpret the Kafkaesque subject as struggling within a multiplicity of social structures (1986:55), be they the familial, capitalist, or the judicial system. These systems, or structures that the self must struggle with are the reflecting glass through which identity is de-formed and re-formed. Deleuze and Guattari interpret the human-to-animal transformation as a pivotal point of identity transformation for the purposes of escaping these structures. I will return to the issue of identity transformation towards the end of this chapter.

Skeptical postmodernists believe that the subject is a construction of modernity, and that we ought to discard it along with the author (Rosenau 1992:47), and by no means do I propose a return to the modern subject or author. I do, however, believe that a social the subjective experiences of the social theorist can provide valuable insights into postmodernity and the condition of the postmodern individual. Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) foreshadow a need for the social theorist to actively engage and participate in the social world, an idea that Mills picks up on, but never consummates.

I have described postmodernity as fragmented and multi-textual, and within this section I have conceptualized the postmodern individual as portraying similar characteristics. It is crucial for sociology to conceptualize the postmodern individual as

being separate and distinctly different from the modern subject. Beat Sociology conceptualizes the postmodern individual similar to the fragmented, changing sense of identity that Deleuze and Guattari describe. I replace the static, solid individual that modernity has portrayed with the postmodern individual: fluid, in a constant state of flux. While this is a conception that can be designated as 'skeptical,' this is not the final step of understanding the individual in Beat Sociology. Through incorporating the Millsian critique of positivist scientism discussed in previous chapters, Beat Sociology sets the sociological imagination in motion, politicizing an otherwise apolitical theory.

My primary critique of Mills has been that he does not 'do' what he prescribes—connect personal issues with sociological constructs. The Beat Sociologist is the Millsian sociological imagination in action, s/he is self-reflexive of the postmodern context: aware of social fragmentation as well as the fragmentation of the individual. This process begins with this fragmented, multi-textual individual. Through this conception of the postmodern individual the Beat Sociologist can best understand his or her feelings, relationships and interpretations of the social environment and in turn, better understand social experiences. The Beat Sociologist acts within the postmodern moment, reflects upon it, and re-presents it in a fashion consistent with its aforementioned characteristics.

I believe that this fragmentation of the individual offers the Beat Sociologist the chance to connect his or her feelings and emotions to *anything*, a brick, a tire, an example of racism, a poem by Baudelaire. This conception is not the skeptical postmodernist version of an apolitical, lost individual, but a new conception of the individual. This individual can freely connect and reconnect with anything, critique and interpret any social object, any space, any sociological construction.

In the following chapter I will explore how, through a fragmented, multi-textual re-presentation of lived experiences, the Beat Sociologist does not construct the ruse of a fixed social world, nor a solidified representation of an author. With a conceptualization of a fragmented, reflexive, postmodern individual, it is now vital to conceptualize the social

world that the postmodern subject actively participates in. As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, we must alternate between the individual and postmodernity to best understand these relationships. Without doing an investigation of the postmodern social context similar to this investigation of the individual would produce only a partial project. One of the components the Beat Sociologist investigates and interprets are social spaces, and the interrelationship between the spaces and the individual. Before examining the postmodern characteristics of space, it is imperative to understand how a modern privileging of historicity has undermined a critical analysis of social spaces.

The Privileging of History

A transition has been under way since at least the end of the 1950's, which

for Europe marks the completion of reconstruction. The pace is faster or

slower depending on the country, and within countries it varies according to

the sector of activity: the general situation is one of *temporal disjunction* [my

emphasis] which makes sketching an overview difficult. (Lyotard 1986:3)

Lyotard here touches on an important note of caution: that any survey made within the postmodern moment, and especially those made about postmodernity itself, is likely to be a problematic endeavor. Due to 'temporal disjunctions' and the collapse of modern grand narratives, sweeping claims on postmodernity are subject to gaps, inconsistencies and contradictions that are not necessarily unfavorable. Regardless, a brief description of modern historicism is necessary to set up my argument that spatiality is an issue to be more closely addressed in this postmodern moment.

Modernity, or as Habermas calls it 'the modernist project,' seeks to "develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic" (1993:103). Through a gradual accumulation of knowledge, modern social forms

and structures are thought to become increasingly 'rational,' marginalizing the 'irrational' forms of myth, legend and religion. The modernist belief in linear progress, absolute truths, rational planning, and an accumulation of knowledge becomes the backbone of modernist historicity (Harvey 1990:35). The acceptance that linear progress can be tracked through time makes two assumptions: that the present, status quo is better than the past, and that objective historians can objectively represent past events. This conception of modernity has in this century become the subject of an "increasing critical reflection" (Smart 1990:91). Habermas believes that we have reached a critical point wherein we must decide to "hold fast to the intentions of the Enlightenment..." or give up the project itself (1987:326-27). I would like to briefly track one of the points where the fabric of modernity is unraveling: in its conceptions of time and historicism.

> From around 1880 to the outbreak of World War I a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space. Technological innovations including the telephone, wireless telegraph, x-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile and airplane established the material foundation for this reorientation; independent cultural developments such as the stream of consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, Cubism, and the theory of relativity shaped consciousness directly. The result was a transformation of the dimensions of life and thought (Kern 1983:1-2)

Sociology, and most of the social sciences, are notorious for a modern privileging of time, or historicity, over space. Edward Soja utilizes the above quote to explain how modernization began a spirit of progress, a reproduction of "social relations of production and distinctive divisions of labor" (1989:27). Modernity, for Soja, maintains a specific set of relationships between specific groups and specific modes of production through a

specific composition of space, time and being. Through this modern culture and consciousness "the historical imagination seemed resolutely to be erasing a sensitivity to the critical salience of human geographies" (1989:31). The most privileged historicism can be found in Marx's political economics. The process of modernization for Marx was the historical transition from feudalism to capitalism. history being the "emotive variable container" and spatialities an "unnecessary complication" (Soja 1989:32). This subversion of space in deference to history is by no means unique to Marxist thought.

Similar to Soja, Henri Lefebvre exposes the tradition of critical thought noting that from "Heraclitus to Hegel and Marx, dialectical thinking has been bound up with time: contradictions voice or express the forces and relationships between forces that clash within a history" (1991:292). Space, on the other hand, has not been considered to be a relevant variable of social phenomena. "Space... tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical..." whereas time has been understood as harboring a richness, it has been considered as "the revealing context for critical social theorization" (Soja 1989:11). This tension between historicity and spatiality will be explored further in the following section. It is how historicity has blinded the social sciences to the social individuals' interpretations of his or her surroundings that concerns me. There has been, however, a change (what Soja refer to as the 'spatial turn') in this process I believe to have been brought about by the postmodern moment.

The postmodern moment has called the conventional beliefs of history as the sole receptacle of 'richness' into question. primarily the idea that there is a knowable objective past (Rosenau 1992:63). Skeptical postmodernists believe that history is exhausted, that we are "at the end of history. post-history" (Baudrillard 1983a; also Kellner 1989:212). Stephen Tyler believes that in the era of postmodernity we have reached a point where "past, present, and future coexist in all discourse" (1987:199). The end of history calls an end to historical contextualization, social change, and progress. Affirmative postmodernists believe that history is in need of radical revision rather than its extermination. Some

propose "New History" that utilizes "deconstruction, subjective interpretation and a symbolic construction of reality" (Rosenau 1992:66), and propose micro-narratives in its place. New History does not adhere to the same modernist notions described earlier (linear progress, relations to production...), but instead 'locates meaning in the social' everyday practices of marginal and 'ordinary' groups. As opposed to a history of white, upper-class male victors, a feminist New History would perhaps explore the perspective of marginalized black women. Foucault offers a different technique to understanding 'historical' events: in the place of modernist grand narratives Foucault proposes genealogies. A genealogy is a method of investigating systems of discourse and domination backwards through history. Foucault does not search for origins, causality, synthesis, laws or Truths, but instead his research focuses on "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory..." (Foucault 1980:83). Affirmative techniques such as New History and genealogies offer a foundation for Beat Sociology by eroding the foundations of modernist historicism. These, however, are not the only attacks on historicism.

Agger again believes that the onset of new feminist and queer theories pose the greatest threat to historicity yet (similar to their effects on modern conceptions of identity), particularly the critique of the postmodern feminists (1998:116). They see historicity as just another grand-narrative, similar to Marxism, scientism or religion. Queer theories critique the historicized categories of gender, deconstructing the traditional notions of a historical content and gendered binary oppositions (1998:117). Both groups still emphasize the importance of understanding history, but not a singular history wherein the 'Truth' lies. Postmodern feminists and Queer theorists, unlike skeptical postmodernists, retain a belief in de-privileged histories. These theories are similar to Beat Sociology because, unlike New History, they provide a multi-pronged attack on modernism and scientism.

Through the first two sections of this chapter it has become apparent that Beat Sociology provides a critique of the modern conception of the individual and historicism,

as well. I believe that sociology is missing a pivotal component of the social environment by over-emphasizing history and ignoring spaces as relevant to the social context. Foucault reorients social theory from historicity to spatiality:

> The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, theme of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world... The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in an epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. (1986:22)

By holding spatiality as a critical component of its theory, Beat Sociology does not abolish history, but rather a form of historicism that ignores the larger socio-cultural context. I do not advocate an exile of history from the garden of sociology, but instead seek a balance between history and spatiality. Central to Beat Sociology is the investigation of social spaces, how social individuals interact within them, and how they affect the fragmented identity of the postmodern self. This type of investigation does not ignore history, but instead includes it as *a* component of the particular context, rather than the governing frame of influence. The next section explores how social theorists are beginning to understand social spaces as a relevant component of social context.

...spatiality is socially produced and, like society, itself, exists in both substantial forms (concrete spatialities) and as a set of relations between individuals and groups, an 'embodiment' and medium of social life itself. (Soja 1989:120)

Space is real, for it seems to affect my senses long before my reason. The materiality of my body both coincides with and struggles with the materiality of the space. My body carries in itself spatial properties and spatial determination: up, down, right, left, symmetry, dissymmetry... here is where my body tries to rediscover its lost unity, its energies and impulses, its rhythms and its flux. (Tschumi 1990:21)

Because historicity has been privileged over the affects of the built form sociology has failed to recognize a critical component of the context of the social actor. Edward Soja, in <u>Postmodern Geographies</u> (1989), attempts to reconnect history and the social production of space. By placing an emphasis on historicity, Soja warns us that we participate in an academic project that "submerges and peripheralizes the geographical or spatial imagination" (1989:15). Theorists like Soja, Foucault, Sennett and myself are not arguing for a subversion of time and to elevate spatiality as the new systematizing order, but to offer new understandings and interpretations of our social world through spatiality. Jameson states that this is not simply a shift of academic interest, but a shift from previous eras that is of great importance for us to document:

...I think it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of

space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism. (1991:16)

As I have stated, sociology has ignored the connection between social spaces and the social individual, and while I glean connections from a few sociological theorists, I am left to utilize theorists from other disciplines. The odd collection of social theorists that have explored the effects of spatiality include Freud (1961), Marcuse (1955), the Situationalists, Simmel (1971), Goffman (1961), and Foucault (1977), and provide an interesting heritage that Beat Sociology utilizes. Each has provided interpretations of the relationship the social individual has with 'city' and 'space.' Soja explains that architectural forms, what he refers to as "concrete spatialities," are always "wrapped in the complex and diverse re-presentations of human perception and cognition" (1989:121). I understand the work of Sennett and Foucault as vital explorations of these connections, or 'wrappings.' I believe that it is through a balance of history and spatiality that we can best understand the postmodern moment. For example, William Sennett's book, Flesh and Stone (1994), offers a history of the city as told through the bodily experience of its inhabitants. This idea of contextualizing the social individual, paired with a Millsian, active sociological subject, places the Beat sociologist in site—directly into the postmodern context. The social researcher activates her sociological imagination within a broader sociological context, including space to Mills' connections to larger social structures. Beat Sociology colors in the faded context that surrounds the social individual, providing not a different focus of sociology, but a broader scope.

William Sennett unravels the historical relationships of the architectural form and details how the social body has been influenced by the built form in Western societies. In Flesh and Stone Sennett explores how built forms have historically been interconnected with our conceptions of the body and the self. Early Greek theaters, for instance, were designed not only to carry the actors voice, but to set up a specific position of the actor

through the spatial arrangements of orchestra and seating, reflecting a concept of an authoritarian subject (1994:59). The components of the Pantheon (a central walkway, a large niche and dome) all correlate with a geometry of the body: the walkway forms a 'spine,' the dome forms a 'head' and the oculus forms an 'eye' (1994:102). Vitruvius demonstrated how this body geometry can be carried out in building temples and public buildings, and Romans continued this logic in city planning as well. When building their Empire, this geometry was imprinted upon the conquered landscape often at the expense of the existing vernacular style. While the Pantheon was designed to reflect a particular understanding of the body, the Roman urban design can be understood as a mechanism of control for an entire empire. Examples of a modernist 'urban revision' include Haussmann's 'creative destruction' of Second Empire Paris and Robert Moses' New York after World War II (Harvey 1990:16). This use of space as a mechanism of control will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

The work of Foucault, Sennett, and Soja understand social space not as a neutral, inert set of objects, but a coercive force in the social world. There are new architectural and social phenomena that have dramatically altered the construction of postmodern spatiality. In particular, public social spaces are increasingly becoming privatized, and 'consumer-culturized.' Urban planning committees and city boards have allowed for the public spaces of our environment to become a part of the fabric of late capitalism. This 'privatization' of public space has compromised any social neutrality. Although public, social spaces have always been designed for a purpose, privatization, is created for the *specific* economic gain of a *specific* class. David Harvey states that "[s]patial and temporal practices are never neutral in social affairs. They always express some kind of class or other social content, and are more often than not the focus of intense social struggle" (1990:239). These "shamelessly market-oriented" spaces are created for the economic profit of a corporation comprised of most likely white, upper class businessmen (1990:77). These new social

structures guide the plan and design of architectural structures. a suburban shopping mall has a singular program: to facilitate consumerism. If the Roman body was reflected in the architecture of buildings such as the Pantheon. the postmodern body in Las Vegas can be understood as similar to Jameson's heap of fragments.

Similar to ideas touched on earlier in the chapter, Jameson's schizophrenic postmodern identity is not only helpful for an understanding of how the social individual is constructed. but also to help us understand how we define our surroundings (1991:26). Schizophrenia—the inability to reconnect a signifying chain that has been reduced to "a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers," makes it difficult for us to fully comprehend and interpret our environment (1991:26). Jameson makes a loose connection between this 'rubble' of space and the 'heap of fragments' of postmodern identity—a connection I believe has been more clearly defined by Henri Lefebvre.[3] Before making a jump from the schizophrenic postmodern subject and the postmodern spaces that Jameson, Harvey and others describe, a connection must be made between the two.

While critical theorists have focused correctly on the contradictions of everyday life, Lefebvre adds a component that they have not included as a part of our 'everyday' life: space. Henri Lefebvre fills this gap by offering a Marxist interpretation of spaces: the forces of production. domination and appropriation play out in the realm of social spaces, creating appropriated spaces and dominated spaces (1991:343). He notes that these designations of dominant and appropriated spaces are fluid, in a state of conflict. To fragment the spaces into components, one can find the conflict between the "disconnected

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[3] Jameson believes that an understanding of postmodern space is complicated by increased fragmentation and contradiction, so much so that in the postmodern era "representation of space itself has come to be felt as incompatible with the representation of the body" (1991:34). I read this to mean a *modern* representation of the body due to the fact that he continually reflects on the fragmentation of the individual in correlation with similar conditions of postmodernity.

content" (1991:318). To offer an example, I will utilize Tschumi's architectural theory. In a design competition for a county hall in Strasbourg France, instead of demolishing an older building on the site, Tschumi treated the existing historical landmark as a fragment of the project. The resulting assemblage then retained a "poetic dimension," and the other newer elements play in juxtaposition with nearby postwar facades (Tschumi 1994:307).

This is an adequate example not only of conflicting 'disconnected content' in postmodern spaces, but also an example of the balance between historicism and spatiality that Beat Sociology adheres to. Here Tschumi provides an example of how multiple fragments can come together to formulate a postmodern product: pastiche of old and new, the juxtaposition of seemingly incongruous segments woven into a collage. Lefebvre believes that a fragmented spatial arrangement such as this abstracted compartmentalization, falls upon the human body.[4] If space "offers itself like a mirror to the thinking subject," these contradictory spaces are reflected upon the identity of the social actor, or as Lefebvre states: the subject "passes through the looking glass and becomes a lived abstraction" (1991:314). Lefebvre makes a pivotal, critical connection between the fragmented conception of self and postmodern spaces, a connection that Jameson lacks.

Correlating his conception of the fragmented postmodern individual, Jameson notes a that there is a similar "mutation in built space itself" (1991:38). Postmodern architects, including Gehry, Graves, Moore and Venturi have begun to create spaces that we, as subjects, are incapable of fully comprehending. Postmodern architecture dissolves 'modern' space and replaces it with hyperspace. Dear defines hyperspace as a fragmented, disorganized pastiche: a hodgepodge, crazy-quilt composition (Dear 1986:367-84).

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[4] Lefebvre's idea of compartmentalized space affecting the construction of the individual is similar, but inferior to Foucault's more useful discussion on the panopticon, which I will address in the following section.

According to Jameson our "perceptual equipment" is unable to adequately comprehend these spaces (1991:38).[5]

While an 'ideal' of a postmodern space may be a contradiction in terms, if we were to conceptualize one, Foucault's conception of a *heterotopia* is perhaps as close as we may get. Foucault describes the heterotopia as being capable of "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible..." (1986:25). Harvey understands Foucault's heterotopia as "an impossible space" of a "large number of fragmentary possible worlds... incommensurable spaces that are juxtaposed or superimposed upon each other" (1990:48). Through Foucault's interpretation of the panopticon, we should be warned that the construction of the individual placed under a constructed system can become fragmented into easily manageable components. I do believe that it is beneficial for this discussion to construct a postmodern space, building upon this vague theoretical conceptions of fragmentation, multi-textuality and contradiction.

To create a 'postmodern space' we could theoretically take some issues characteristic of postmodernity, such as fragmentation and multi-textuality, and formulate a social space. Umberto Eco uses the example of a ghost town as a postmodern space. This space might advertise a 'real' ghost town, while the actors that play scripted roles wear the same Gap blue jeans the tourists do (Eco 1993:203). This postmodern space might be built with multiple materials, granite walkways (stone transported from central Pennsylvania), wood cabins (lumber from the Pacific Northwest), a layer of simulated wood paneling on the inside of the cabins to make it look realistic, and palm trees (from Southern California). This postmodern space might have a gift shop that sells cigars (from Italy) next to a plastic Statue of Liberty (made in Singapore). This postmodern space might have a Starbucks

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[5] Jameson's comments on our inability to keep pace with current architectural progressions, harkens back to Walter Benjamin's work "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1968), a text I will return to later in the chapter.

coffeeshop and a Taco Bell—completing the juxtaposition of incongruent spaces and images.

A postmodern individual in the space described above would eat an 'authentic Mexican' burrito made with beans she could get at the Albertson's grocery store, with an Italian cigar in her blue jeans pocket relaxing under a palm tree that was grown six hundred miles away, wondering if she should send the toy Statue of Liberty to her girlfriend in Indonesia express mail or bulk. Inevitably she'll 'talk' to her tonight over the internet, anyway. This scenario does not sound far-fetched because many of us oftenoccupy space such as this. Jameson would believe that this is an example of how the contemporary or postmodern individual possesses the ability to navigate an environment with such radically conflicting and incongruous juxtapositions, without fully comprehending it. This is a radically different (re)formulation of the social actor, as sociologists, we should be vastly curious as to what the ramifications of this environment has upon identity. I believe that parallel to Jameson's evolution of space from modernism to hyperspace, we have *begun* to 'evolve' from a modern individual to a postmodern one.

To critically investigate the space described above, there are several aspects that cannot go unnoticed.[6] The people who visit this tourist attraction are not casual passerby's, but most likely a middle class family of consumers. As they leave their air-conditioned, four door Saturn SL1, the kids groan at the idea of seeing more school stuff, only this time baking in the eastern California desert sun. Believing that the ghost town is a real historical landmark, the artifacts specifically placed in the shops to make it 'look real' were manufactured in a Third world country. The kids ask their parents if cowboys used to wear Gap. Unlike the tourists, the person working behind the counter at the concessions stand is a minimum-wage worker. She wakes up at five in the morning to drive an hour to work,

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[6] I would like to point out that there are several issues here that, while this is an exercise of 'postmodern' space, there are also 'classical' sociological issues such as race and class in addition to the more 'postmodern' issues of identity, representation and hyperrealism.

and put in a ten hour day that offers no benefits and no security. This very brief exploration of a phenomena that occurs everyday has already uncovered how a postmodern space can define class relationships (between middle-class consumer and low-class employee), find contradictions in postmodernity (a coffeeshop and taco shop under one roof), blur the line between real and fake (authentic burritos bought from a supermarket), and the line between historical fact and capitalist fabrication (a historical site sponsored by Pepsi and Taco Bell).

Increasingly the social individual is asked to navigate through these contradictory and confusing images, a ghost town is just one of millions of possibilities. Lefebvre (1991), Jameson (1991) and others believe postmodern spaces are, and society at large is, comprised of such structures. The social actor sifts through these conflicting images, symbols, signs and programs juxtaposed against one another, and slowly become (de)sensitized to the (dis)connections and contradictions within.

Baudrillard understands the social world to be composed of 'all surface' (Smart 1993:123), I would disagree, but only in part. While surface and the textual play of symbol and sign contribute to the composition postmodern spaces, it is unlikely that many critical theorists subscribe to this extreme skeptical postmodern view and instead contend that there are deeper connections to be made. In an exploration of the thin layer of content just below the surface a Beat Sociologist can uncover hidden (and perhaps not so hidden) meanings, connections, histories, and relationships of a space to larger sociological structures. Beat Sociology encourages critical investigations of social spaces and the social individual. I heed Soja's warning: that these spaces are not inert, but active in the everyday life of the individual. I believe that a definition of how the Beat Sociologist investigates social spaces must include an understanding of how spatialities act upon the body of the individual.

I believe that the self-aware, fragmented individual that Beat Sociology conceptualizes has the best opportunity to understand and represent these social spaces, through a similar understanding of herself. The Beat Sociologist must first be self-reflexive about his or her fragmented, multi-textual, self and then second, understand larger social

conditions and problems. I believe that the schizophrenic conception of the Beat Sociologist given earlier in this chapter offers a freedom from oppressive systems of organization (linguistics, binary oppositions of gender), but should be cognizant of spaces as possible mechanisms of control. Spaces similar to the 'Taco Bell ghost town' are constructed and their images are contrived. Multi-national corporations can capitalize on the fragmented attention and fabric of the individual (Be like Mike: Drink Gatorade). I believe that spaces are similar to advertising, in that they can be utilized as powerful mechanisms to influence the identity of the postmodern individual: characteristics like passivity, consumerism, and fragmentation. The Beat Sociologist, aware of these issues is best equipped to critically analyze the social context he finds himself in.

Technologies of Control

The true goal of Haussmann's works was the securing of the city against civil war... The width of the avenues was to prohibit the erection [of street barricades], and new streets were to provide the shortest routes between barracks and the working-class sections. Contemporaries christened the undertaking as "strategic beautification." (Benjamin quoted in Buck-Morss 1991:90)

Walter Benjamin gives the example of reaching for a lighter, or the working of a spoon, as mundane events that under the intervention of the cameras eye reveals hidden rhythm and meaning. He understood this to be the first manipulation of time and space. "With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended" (1968:238). With these new technologies, Benjamin's fellow Frankfurt school theorist, Herbert Marcuse believes that "...reality surpasses its culture" (1955:56). Technological,

mechanical conceptions seep well beyond these simple antidotes, according to Marcuse, these technological advances become political and ideological advances. "Technological rationality has become political rationality" (Marcuse 1964:xlviii). Technology reaches every aspect of our lives, from our jobs to our needs and desires (1964:xlvii). These were not just new formulations of space and time, they were *mechanized* formulations, the hand of technology reaching deeper into the individual. Technology re-creates *how* we view our realities: with camera angles, background music, fade-in, fade-out, scene by scene scripts, frame by frame action. Benjamin and Marcuse offer a way of understanding how technologies permeate or invade our social constructions of reality. The built form, in its technologies, should not be left isolated, without sociological investigation. The effect of technology or industrialization has been under the investigation of sociology, the camera being but a part of the larger context, but rarely have social spaces been analyzed as being a technology that controls the individual. Beat Sociologists turn a critical eye to these spaces. Beat Sociology investigates how the act of building within a capitalist system benefits a specific class by controlling those who move through it.

While Benjamin and Marcuse begin to investigate how new technologies frame the ways in which we understand our social world, spatialities might also be subject for inspection. In this particular section, I intend to outline how spatialities, through a re-reading of Foucault, can be seen as the producers of control and possible economic gain does not designate contemporary America as an epoch entirely different from previous ones.

Through his work, Michel Foucault has examined mechanisms of control—for example mental illness (1965), language (1973), and social spaces (1977 and 1982). Part of <u>Discipline and Punish</u> focuses on Bentham's panopticon: an architectural mechanism that "arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and recognize immediately" (1977:200). In its multiple forms, the panopticon not only allowed corrections officers to see every inmate action, but it also allowed the guards to be *unseen* through blinders or

glass by the inmates. Foucault describes how the panoptic eye that fell upon the inmates soon became their own; the panopticon "induces the formation of habits of *self -* surveillance and *self* -policing" (1989:59). The segmentation of space within the prison correlates with the new fragmentation of the inmate individual, constructed by the gaze of the unseen observer. Here we can begin to understand how the identity of the inmate was (and therefore anyone who occupies a panoptic space is) altered through a specific architectural configuration. Foucault's discussion of the panopticon begins to solidify how the individual becomes the 'heap of fragments' that Jameson mentions, but does not qualify.

Within the panopticon, the arrangement of the inmates was deliberate, the effects of power contrived through the "individualizing observation, with characterization and classification, with the analytical arrangement of space" (1977:203). If we were to search for the panopticon in contemporary times we would not have to look further than 'common' surveillance systems. By placing the panopticon above, the 'inmates' are made entirely visible, but the power of visibility/invisibility is solidified and mechanized. Through this new configuration, there is a new privileged position. Foucault notes that the panopticon should not be mystified, that it should be understood as a "figure of political technology" (1977:205).

I am interested in the panopticon because it has laid out a template for other architectural mechanizations of control. To again consider the work of the Frankfurt school, Marcuse warns that technologies guide our politics and ideologies. A critical read of the panopticon shows how the mechanization of the panopticon into surveillance systems define the program (or politics) for other architectural spaces and is then internalized into the ideologies of the individual. While buildings are designed for surveillance, security and consumer measures under a late capitalist system, the identity of the subject becomes mechanized, internalized. Similar to the panoptic prisoner, the logic of the camera and the capitalist system falls upon its subject: the subject is digitized,

controllable, and consumer oriented. Novelist Don DeLillo states that individuals "learn to see things twice," we conceptualize ourselves and then we internalize how the camera and consumer society conceptualizes us.[7]

Docherty uses the example of Hamlet stating that "the time is out of joint," and that the body of Hamlet becomes a central point in the play, becoming disjoint as well (1993:21). If time can be understood as containing the ability to disrupt the constitution of the body, then so too can social spaces, let alone entire cities, act upon the body. I believe that fragmented spaces can also have an effect upon the body. In the 'Docile Bodies' chapter, Foucault examines the effects of time tables and the "organizing cells, places, and places... that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical" (1977:148). In the chapter 'Panopticism' he presents how these constructions are put into action on the larger scale. He describes England under the cloak of the bubonic plague—how towns were transformed into systems of control. When the 'black death' hit a city at the end of the seventeenth century, a 'strict spatial partitioning' was put in place to keep contact between townspeople to a minimum. Distinct quarters were defined, the penalty of death for those who attempted to leave town, orders to stay indoors, with rations being distributed through windows—entire cities were placed under house arrest. Cities became "segmented, immobile, frozen space" (1977:195). The plague occupied spaces and was combated with 'order.'

While the investigation of individual spaces, rooms and buildings are critical for Beat Sociology, the Beat sociologist should always be aware that the panoptic logic of control is not necessarily confined to these spaces. Foucault's description of the plague city, is similar to Haussmann's Second Empire Paris—the destruction of buildings and neighborhoods to provide wide avenues, making a straight line between army barracks and

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[7] John Berger's Ways of Seeing (1977) describes how some women learn through art and publicity to internalize the male gaze, and is strikingly similar to Foucault's description of how inmates internalize the panoptic gaze.

low-income neighborhoods (Harvey 1990:17-8). The increasing scale from panoptic prison to plague town to the city of Paris provides a reminder that the scale of investigation into mechanisms of space need not be fixed to one. The inverse of this increasing scale, Hamlet, a 'modern' play, acts out how Foucault's conception of the panoptic effects the micro: the social body of the individual. Docherty's use of Hamlet also provides a model for the postmodern subject under any similar disruption of the social fabric: spatial, temporal, ideological, political, economic, social and cultural.

Through this chapter I have outlined the importance of the individual and social spaces, for subjects of investigation for Beat Sociology. I briefly touched upon the city as a larger configuration of social spaces, but there are *smaller* components of social space that need to be explored in greater detail: the objects that construct them. Simmel understood that individuals were not the smallest increment of a society, but that objects are the molecular level that need to be investigated. While I have begun to examine how spaces are juxtaposed and contradictory, a brief discussion built upon the work of Simmel shows that objects must be included in the subject matter of Beat Sociology.

Objects as Actants

Strange how he was compiling a record of the object's recent forward motion while simultaneously tracking it backwards to the distant past...
(DeLillo 1997:318)

Architectural spaces are constructed by objects—concretized spaces are built with cast concrete and glass, steel and plaster, neon and lightbulbs. Architecture students are more or less trained in how to use these materials. Objects create space, different configurations of objects produce different spaces. Through interpretation of these objects, individuals can glean clues about the function of a space, but before that can be done we

must understand the connections between objects and the social actor. The work of Georg Simmel offers a starting point to understand how we interact with objects.

Simmel saw our social experiences as being a "web of patterned interactions" (Simmel 1990:177). He wanted to look at the individual 'atoms of society' and their patterns of interaction, as opposed to the entirety of human existence. These atoms for Simmel were the individual subject (1971) and symbolic objects (1990). Through his exploration of one of the most influential objects in The Philosophy of Money (1990), he opened the door to a better sociological understanding of how social actors place importance on some objects and not others, and how we interact with important cultural objects. The importance of this is that money as an object in itself embodies *abstract economic value*, and has significance based on what it *symbolizes*. Simmel notes that there is nothing inherent to objects like money, that makes it valuable.

Through his discussion on the value of money, Simmel notes that the existence of objects, and the relations between them are completely accidental, that some culturally valuable objects are destroyed by nature and some that can be seen as worthless can be withheld, only proves the arbitrary nature of these relations. The fact that we, as human beings, put a distribution of values in a hierarchical order is a social action, what is not natural is the way in which we determine values for objects and forms. It is not the focus of this thesis nor is there a need to get into a discussion that we 'value' objects as a psychological fact, but to realize that objects are not inherently neutral, inert, or static.[8] Similar to Soja's warning that we should not understand spaces to be 'fixed, dead, undialectical....' objects should similarly not be beyond suspicion with respect to their affects on the social individual.

Simmel abstracted the concrete forms of social life, for this his work has been labeled as 'formal sociology.' The idea of separating forms from their individual realities

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[8] Simmel does explore the psychological reasons of why we value some objects, such as money, and not others (1990:63).

by no means denies the importance of the context in which they are found. Simmel believed that they have an existence distinct and different from reality. He was aware of the 'tainted' nature of these forms, that they are never pure. Each social element itself contains multiple elements, and within these objects there are multiple forces that interact and at times interfere with one another. Simmel helps us see that these forces, interrelationships, objects and spaces "...form a unified whole which has to be broken down by our interests into a multitude of independent series or motives to enable us to deal with it" (1990:80). Through breaking down spaces into these components, the Beat Sociologist can investigate these forces and interrelationships for connections and contradictions.

Don DeLillo's novel, Underworld (1997) is a genealogy of objects. Tracing backwards in time, DeLillo follows the course of a powerful 'real-life' object through fictional and 'real-life' events—the baseball that Bobby Thomson hit for the game winning triple to put the New York Giants over the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1951 World Series. Thomson's home run, made in the bottom of the ninth has been called 'the shot heard around the world,' interestingly, it was the same day that the Soviet Union tested their nuclear bomb—October 3rd, 1951. As the reader moves through Underworld the baseball becomes a symbol not only of victory for Bobby Thomson, but also of utter defeat for the Dodgers pitcher Ralph Branca. DeLillo documents an irreversible point in our culture when the meaning of objects becomes fragmented into multiple meanings and interpretations. He even points out that the radioactive core of an atomic bomb is the exact size of a baseball (1997:172). Fredric Jameson claims that there has been a mutation in the world of objects, therefore in the "dis-position of the subject," it is DeLillo's contention that he has documented this moment (1991:9). The newspaper headline is split: 'Giants Win!' on the left, 'Soviets detonate Nuclear Bomb' reads the other side.

To validate the value of a baseball, the owner must trace the lineage of the object back to the origin. DeLillo maps the course of this object backwards in time to October 3rd, 1951, the last day of the World Series. Similar to the work of Foucault, DeLillo examines

the object as it effects and connects the lives of central and distant characters with each other, as well as with cultural, historical landmarks: Lenny Bruce connected with J. Edgar Hoover, Mick Jagger connected with Kennedy, Thomson connected with Oppenheimer (1997:501-637). The baseball takes the place of Foucault's social body: as Foucault traces backwards in time, noting the disjunctions and shifts in treatment of the body, so too does DeLillo trace the baseball as an object of investigation.

Underworld is by no means a linear text, not only is it an archeological dig backwards in time, but it unravels into multiple digs at once. The text becomes a series of fragments, seemingly loose and messy. Like a baseball hit so hard that the leather flies off, fragments fly by: in one fragment there is a report on the news about the 'Texas highway killer,' the next fragment is Nick Shay washing dishes with his mother (1997:218). Shay is one of the central characters, and is employed as a waste management officer, his job: the collection, organization and distribution of discarded, sometimes toxic, objects. Through Shay, we uncover the underworld of materials and objects that lay just below our plane of existence. We read as he attempts to trace the lineage of the Branca-Thomson baseball, and as DeLillo traces the relationships it brushes against.

Bruno Latour (1988) describes the power inherent in objects. Instead of referring to generic 'forces' be they "a subject, text, object, energy or thing," Latour offers "actants" (1988:159). Actants are neither a whole nor parts, they can test themselves against one another, they gain strength by associating with other actants and become a new form. Actants can form a network together, distant points can suddenly "find themselves connected" (1988:170), reminiscent of Simmel's investigations into webs of patterned interaction. These actants establish pathways between one another that we can follow. Through a better understanding of objects as 'actants,' the Beat Sociologist can, through the interpretation of a space constructed of these object/actants, trace the connections between distant concretized spaces, as well as being able to trace the connections between objects with individuals, spaces with social theory, social theory with poetry. Through

these connections we could uncover DeLillo's underworld, but DeLillo offers us a last warning: "You can't precisely locate the past..." (DeLillo 1997:323), only the present. While skeptical postmodernists, like Baudrillard, do not believe that we can even locate a present, I believe that the Beat Sociologist can through connecting the social individual with spaces and objects.

Jameson documents the contradiction between this nostalgia for past objects as 'referents,' and the postmodern moment (1991:19). DeLillo taps into a powerful object, there is perhaps no greater American nostalgia than for baseball. While it conjures images of hot dogs, peanuts, and a 1950's vision of Americana, the converse image is portrayed by the radically different imagery of the Beats. Through the inner contradictions of something as seemingly inert as 1950's nostalgia, we can witness how we are "increasingly incapable of fashioning representations" of the past, let alone our own current experiences (Jameson 1991:21).

The 'theoretical' work of Jameson and the 'fiction' of DeLillo delves into some of the difficulties and contradictions that can be found within the postmodern moment. Their work hints at the need for sociology to investigate the contradictions within and of postmodern objects. I believe that contradiction provides a window into deeper meanings and connections that are otherwise hidden. Beat Sociology maps out these contradictions and objects as a component of representing our lived experience, vital for a critical analysis of the postmodern moment. Much like Burroughs' cut-up method, Beat theory specifically addresses these contradictions by juxtaposing objects next to each other. To return to my discussion in Chapter Two, Burroughs believed that by juxtaposing texts together, we could reach beyond our "conditioned existence" to reveal hidden truths (Hassan 1975:140). In a similar spirit, I believe that as the Beat Sociologist sets various objects against one another new hidden meanings can appear. By no means do I believe that therein lies a Truth as Burroughs seemingly suggests, but I do believe that these juxtapositions can provide the

social theorist with an opportunity for new interpretations and understandings of social experiences.

In the following chapter I will explain that not only does Beat Sociology juxtapose objects and images, but the fragments themselves. Beat method allows the 'author' to configure ethnographic fragments next to photos, poems, social theories, to further explore contradiction and meaning within spaces—be they academic or architectural or otherwise.

The Postmodern Event

If the social individual is affected by the characteristics of postmodernity, if she or he is induced into a postmodern logic that consists of multiple texts and fragmentation, the postmodern individual would have characteristics that are radically different than those of the modern individual. The modern conception of the "alienation of the subject is displaced by fragmentation of the subject" (Jameson 1991:55-66). Postmodern architecture entangles and obscures "the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively map its position..." (Jameson 1991:44). He refers to this new 'mutation' of space as hyperspace, and that we do not possess the capabilities to fully understand it. We have been accustomed to the architecture and spatialities of modernism, and have not 'evolved' beyond it.[9]

Postmodernism to Jameson is a reduction of experience to a series of 'presents.' Human experiences are "powerfully, overwhelmingly vivid and 'material': the world comes before the schizophrenic with heightened intensity...glowing with hallucinatory energy" (1991:1-55). Harvey believes that because of this, the human consciousness is "constructed through the immediacy of events, the sensationalism of the spectacle (political, scientific, military as well as those of entertainment)" (1990:54). Tschumi would refer to

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[9] For an excellent discussion of event and the "Post-Modern Agenda," see Jencks (1992).

these spaces as an 'Event-City.' An 'event' for Tschumi, is any activity, incident or occurrence. Specifically they can include "moments of passion, acts of love and the instant of death" (1990:98). In his text, Event-Cities: Praxis, Tschumi "constantly confirms that there is no architecture without action or without program," there is no space without event, no event without space (1994:11). The current forms of architecture for Tschumi are as much about the events that occur within them as the spaces themselves. If this is the case, the actions, movements and relationships that occur within spaces are worth investigation.

The 'contrived depthlessness' that Jameson believes to define postmodern architecture is the aesthetic of choice for consumer culture. Traveling through these 'event-spaces' the postmodern individual experiences one 'manufactured epiphany' after another, all for the economic gain of a specific group, at the expense of another group—the lower class service worker. The suburban shopping mall is a line of windows into new consumer experiences, an architectural construction to put the least possible space between 'Winter Sale Events.' The string of continuous presents in the late capitalist consumer culture can be seen as the continuous storefronts in a shopping mall, or the string of gifts under the plastic Christmas tree.

I believe that these moments are central to understanding postmodernity and how these spaces shape and affect our lives. These events alter our worldview through constructing our lived experiences in a specific way: a contrived consumer experience. With the conception of a Beat Sociologist as an active interpreter of his or her social environment, it is not only the social spaces that that s/he should be concerned with but the activities that occur within them as well. This is not intended to sound redundant—Beat Sociology focuses on not only the walls, the length and breadth of a space, but what occurs within them. I believe the postmodern moment(s), and therefore the consciousness of the postmodern individual to be constructed by a stream of these activities that are not merely a series of roles and interactions but a very specific, intended, contrived set of experiences. Much like the ghost town, the postmodern individual moves through event after event, each

with a price, each with an agenda, each worthy of investigation. Central to the concerns of Beat Sociology is the documentation of this string of continuous presents, or events.

Epiphanies in Motion

When I get to the top of Desolation Peak and everybody leaves... I'd come

face to face with myself... I had to wait to see the face of reality—and it

comes... (Kerouac 1965:4)

These 'events,' contrived or otherwise, build our memories through the experiences we have with them. We take pictures of these 'Kodak moments' and we tell our friends the stories. It is not a prerequisite for these moments to be life changing, they can be the everyday occurrences. These moments alter the construction of the individual, they build our identity. These events or 'epiphanic' moments, are significant for Beat Sociology because of this pivotal role in how our social identity is constructed. Beja defines an epiphany as "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether from some object, scene, event, or memorable phase of the mind—the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it" (1971:18). Epiphanies are revelations, the everyday experience or the life-altering, but they are also *representations* of our lived experiences.

The use of epiphanies is not a new point of interest for an understanding of the individual—they have been a component of poetry and autobiography for centuries. However the study and interpretation of epiphanic moments is relatively new to literature and most certainly new to sociology. Beja notes that prior to Joyce and Conrad, few novelists used "moments of revelation" as an essential technique to understand the subject

of the text (Beja 1971:20).[10] and Joyce's use of epiphanies have had a particularly pivotal affect on the conception of the literary subject. In his novel, Stephen Hero, Stephen describes an epiphany as "...a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (1963:122). These moments need not be earth-moving occurrences, but can happen in the everyday, one may seem "trivial while it occurs and assumes an importance only long after it has passed. These moments of change perform at least two functions—they offer a privileged view into the identity of the character, and denote a moment of transition for the individual.

First, when concepts of a previous self and a new self begin to crystallize in an individual, epiphanies can offer a window into the deeper feelings for that person/subject/character and how s/he interprets the meaningful elements of his/her world. Bidney believes the importance of epiphanies for novelists is in offering the reader an opportunity to "locate meaning in enigmatic but vivid instances" (1997:1). Throughout Kerouac's work, for example, there are hundreds of instances of epiphanic moments. In the beginning of Desolation Angels (1965) Kerouac describes the moment of transition in the quote above. These moments "often serve as a unifying or integrating device, instantaneously bringing together many of the main threads of a novel" (Beja 1971:22-3). While this sounds contrived and ephemeral, I believe that not to be the case at all. I understand these moments to not only tie together the disparate points of a novel, as Beja suggests, but they also tie together our understanding of the disparate points that construct the individual as well.

Secondly, these epiphanic moments are moments of transition, they are moments of *travel* through the space of the self. Bidney contends that epiphanies are composed "primarily of elements, *motions*, and/or shapes [my emphasis]" (Bidney 1997:5). While Kerouac immediately comes to mind with his string of thoughts on the open road, Sandra

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[10] Beja does mention the exceptions of Stern, Flaubert, Dostoyevsky and Pater as novelists who did utilize epiphanies in their work (1971:20).

Johnson notes that movement in epiphany is central to earlier writers like Wordsworth and Eliot. Johnson believes that motion is the dynamic which 'underlies' epiphany, even as Coldridge describes "silent icicles" the "true epiphany vibrates" (1992:73).[11]

These two ideas—epiphanies as construction of the self and as movements through the self, seem confusing and are in need of application. Deleuze and Guattari offer an example of epiphany in a rereading of Franz Kafka. One of the themes of Kafka that Deleuze and Guattari focus on is the ways in which the Kafkaesque subject alters forms and adopts new identities. The transformation from man to bug, in The Metamorphosis (1971) for instance, as Gregor Samsa 'escapes' from the Oedipal family and his suffocatingly bureaucratic job. Through a journey of identity the subject can be tracked in relations to the structures, even if they are not readily evident. Before attempting to 'track' the movement of the postmodern identity, it is critical for Beat Sociology to understand Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of transformation.

Identity transformations are not acts of flight (as per the popular read of Kafka), but an act of *becoming*. For Deleuze and Guattari these acts of becoming are *epiphanic moments*, inherently movement as a shift in identity. These epiphanies in Kafka's work are vividly rendered moments wherein the reader is offered a window into the identity of the subject.[12] Throughout the work of Kafka the reader finds series after series of triangulations (not 'simply' in the Oedipal form) and continually finds epiphanic moments of 'becoming.' Deleuze and Guattari see a proliferation of triangles surrounding the subject, and through these multiple triangulations the identity of the subject can be tracked. The Beat Sociologist explores the postmodern moment by understanding the points on

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[11] Johnson also notes that these movements of epiphany occur in the rereading of a text— the "movement of the moment within the reader's psyche is violent activity" (1992:74). I will touch upon the rereading of Beat Sociology in the next chapter.

[12] This transformation is not reducible to Kafka's work, Deleuze and Guattari use Melville's Captain Ahab as an example of a "becoming-whale" (1986:36).

these triangles: the individual as one point (or multiple points along the circumference); spatialities, objects, texts as other points. Travel, migration, deterritorialization and reterritorialization occur in the circumference of this geometric form. The movement for the individual from one point to the next is energized by epiphanies. To now incorporate the ideas of postmodern space discussed earlier, we can now understand transformations of identity as becoming intertwined with spatialities. I understand the transformation of the individual that Deleuze and Guattari describe as occurring within architectural spaces. Tschumi describes this flux between space and identity—spatialities "disrupt and disfigure but, simultaneously, reconfigure, providing a rich texture of experiences that redefine urban actuality" (1994:13). Similar to Tschumi, I believe that spaces play a critical part in the transformation of identity, but also in our ability as social theorists to track the movement of identity through relationships with spaces and objects.[13]

I can now return to Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization discussed in Chapter Two, concretely applying these movements as shifts in identity. The act of 'becoming' marks a change in identity, an "ensemble of states, each distinct from the other, grafted onto the man insofar as he is searching for a way out" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:36). This action is a *process* —the 'becoming animal' is a movement not away from the rigid family triangle, in the case of Gregor Samsa, but a line of desire towards "new levels, zones of liberated intensities" (1986:13). This is the process of deterritorialization—a deconstruction of the fragments that compose the self, and simultaneous reterritorialization—a reconfiguration of those fragments making new connections with old components as well as new connections. It is my contention that

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[13] In 1974 Tschumi used literary texts for architecture students to use as inspiration for architectural events and programming. Some of the texts included were Calvino's Invisible Cities (1972), Joyce's Finnegan's Wake (1939), and Kafka's The Burrow (1971). The unfolding of literary events proved to run parallel "to the unfolding of events in architecture" (1990:92).

through experiences within postmodern spaces the individual reterritorializes with a new set of components: these components have a logic different from those in previous eras. This postmodern logic of fragmentation, multi-textuality and contradiction reconfigure the postmodern self. We have now come full circle to the beginning of this chapter: a construction of the postmodern self through a specific conception of the postmodern context. A postmodern set of spaces along with the events that occur within them, cause a set of contrived epiphanies in the individual, causing him or her to deterritorialize and then reterritorialize a new configuration—a fragmented, multi-textual and contradictory identity of the postmodern individual.

With an understanding of this process of becoming, the Beat Sociologist can now utilize these events and epiphanies as theoretical markers of the postmodern self. I believe that these moments, in conjunction with objects, images and event spaces offer landmarks for the Beat Sociologist and for the reader as well.

Bodies in Motion

Fragments of architecture (bits of walls, of rooms, of streets, of ideas) are all one actually sees... There is always a split between fragments which are real and fragments which are virtual, between experience and concept, memory and fantasy. These splits have no existence other than being the passage from one fragment to another. They are relays rather than signs. They are traces. They are in-between.

It is not the clash between these contradictory fragments that counts but the movement between them... (Tschumi 1990:58)

The fragments Tschumi describes are intended to portray architectural spaces, but through my discussion of the events that take place within spaces, it would appear that we

can understand these fragments as contradictory events as well. The last portion of Tschumi's quote above states that we should be interested in the movement between fragments, between spaces and between events. This also connects us back to my read of Deleuze and Guattari—that we can trace deterritorialization and reterritorialization of identity through spatialities, events and epiphanies. The movement of this chapter, an importance of space in the construction of identity has brought us to a new significance of travel between and within spaces. While I am not willing to completely slough off the critical component of Beat Sociology by ignoring the contradictions in objects and spaces as Tschumi suggests, I will agree that travel or migrancy is a pivotal component to better understanding our social world and the social individual.

If there has been a lack of critical analysis of space, investigations into the experiences of movement within spaces is destitute. Bernard Tschumi notes that architectural theories have ignored the effects of pleasure and excess (or the pleasure of excess), and has "always claimed (at least officially) that architecture should be pleasing to the eye, as well as comfortable to the body..." (1996:125). I contend that transition from space to space has specific effects on the individual. Tschumi notes that spaces, at times, do violence upon social bodies—a concept ignored not only by sociologists, but architects as well.[14]

Through our passages in space, "...and the sense of place and belonging that we construct there, our individual stories, our unconscious drives and desires, acquire a form that is always contingent, in transit, without a goal, without an end" (Chambers 1994:25). While Beat Sociology begins to bring issues of spatiality to the sociological discourse, it

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[14] Tschumi notes that this violence can be divided into two categories: *formal violence*— which deals with a conflict of objects and *programmatic violence*— which deals with the actions events and programs that "by accident or by design, are specifically evil and destructive" (1996:132-34). Both of these ideas are central to topics that have been covered earlier in this chapter.

was of primary importance for the Beats all along. Travel across the country was central to Beat life and work, repercussions of this spirit affect the Beat representation of these lived experiences. The work of Kerouac is not only about his travels across the country with friend Neal Cassady, the form follows the content. The rhythm of the text follows the rhythm of the road, the reader can hear the whir of the highway. The 'form' though, is not necessarily the form of the words on the page (although this is the case), through this representation, the reader also constructs or 'forms' the identity of Kerouac: a sense of longing, identity seeking epiphany, a deep desire for making connections across vast expanses.

In the last section I began to explore how epiphanic moments can be understood as 'windows' into the identity of the individual. They are moments of change, they are moments of transition, they are moments of travel through the self. Social, constructed space offers a concrete form through which we can understand the forces that are intended to act upon the body and the individual. While epiphanic moments are the glass (reflective or not), constructed spaces are the form that literally frames these moments. As the body moves within these spaces transitions occur, in moving from one space to another a built-in or contrived epiphanic moment can occur. Spaces can be constructed to control our bodies, our pocketbooks, and our identities. To travel within the 'Event-City,' and to subject oneself to the series of built-in epiphanies becomes a critical moment for the subject. If that is the case, it is vital to study how the social actor sees, interprets and moves through these spaces. These spaces not only affect identity and movement, but the body as well:

> Space—my space—...is first of all my body...: it is the shifting intersection
> between that which touches, penetrates, threatens of benefits my body on
> the one hand, and all the other bodies on the other. (Lefebvre 1991:184)

Travel, as an action between the body and concretized spaces, then becomes a relevant site of inquiry as a way to better understand social spaces and identities. Jonathan Raban understands that the city space offers reference points for understanding the social individual as s/he travels through it.

In Soft City, a novel about London urban life in the 1970's, the author's strong correlation is developed between the identity of the city dweller and the city—Raban speaks to the urbanite: "[d]ecide who you are, and the city will again assume a fixed form around you. Decide what it is, and your own identity will be revealed, like a map fixed by triangulation" (1974:9). While the complete autonomy of action the individual possesses for Raban may be suspect, he does begin to describe how individuals can understand their social world. Through spaces, social actors can determine aspects of their environment that are of relevance to them. Through reflecting these characteristics of the social space, s/he can determine similar characteristics of her or his identity. By traveling between alternate spaces the individual can construct different components of self, what Raban refers to as a 'triangulation' of self, reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's reread of Kafka.

Those that walk the streets of the city, people in motion, understand the importance of city spaces. Michel de Certeau describes the city dweller as *wandersmänner*, people "whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read about" (1984:93). The social individual acts out these trajectories and interrelationships within spaces, creating a written story as s/he moves along. For de Certeau, the walker writes a "long poem" that traces out the "triangulations" that Raban explores (1984:101). This is exactly what Beat writing was struggling with, long poems about the city and the road. Kerouac was not the only Beat author that should be attributed with a sense of travel within the text. Ginsberg's Planet News (1968) was praised for its "sense of movement," and that gave a feeling that "the reader was following the prophet-wanderer on his quest" (Schumacher 1992:521).

For the Beats, movement can be understood as an essential component of their spirit of resistance. Beat Sociology makes a more direct connection between resistance and movement. To begin, David Harvey describes that a way to counteract the systematized organization of space and time is through "movements of opposition" (1990:238). As a counterculture movement the Beats were no doubt prescribing these 'movements of opposition' through action and in their writing. Critique in motion, or more precisely the social actor who ignores established boundaries, for Deleuze and Guattari is a unique position to be exploited by the social theorist, the position of the nomad.

The life and space of the 'nomad' as Deleuze and Guattari describe, is in the in-between, the intermezzo. While sedentary spaces are defined by walls, enclosure and not-enclosure, nomadic space is local and deliminated (1987:382). The nomad is distributed across space, and by being "deterritorialized par excellence" (1987:381) s/he understands the repercussions and politics of reterritorialization. The identity of the nomad is not constructed by the homogeneity of spatial arrangements, but through the differences, through change, through movement (1987:xii). To return to a Kafkaesque model, the nomad is continually 'becoming': self-aware of epiphanic moments and (similar to the Beats) willing to report them. I believe that this is the Beat Sociologist: constantly moving, interpreting, connecting, deterritorializing and reterritorializing.

Brian Massumi agrees with Deleuze and Guattari, and understands this nomadic state as a privileged position as to a better method to understand the social environment. He believes this to be the case because the nomad "synthesizes a multiplicity of elements" not by offering a closed "equation of representation," but an open one (1987:xiii). The nomadic equation for a space would not be 'Cast concrete wall + opening + door = entrance' but an open equation: '... + wall + kimono + foot + fertility doll + postmodernism + etc...' The nomad, the traveler, the Beat Sociologist retains the ability to move from space to space to space, from philosophy to sociology to literature. I agree with Massumi that this is a privileged position, it frees the social theorist to explore any space/object/theory/site s/he

desires. Similarly, nomadic writing frees the author from the academic confines of sociological writing, notions that resonate well with Beat Sociology. The effects and components of nomadic/Beat Sociological writing will be discussed in greater detail within the next chapter.

Mills: From the Margins, to the Center, to the Intermezzo

Beat identity is a form of postmodern identity. The Beat culture was exploring identity, multi-textuality, fragmentation and representation in a localized context on this side of the Atlantic forty years ago. The Beat individual was among the first American postmodernists. Ginsberg's poetry, Kerouac's auto-ethnographic search for identity, Burroughs' cut-ups, all explore aspects of culture and identity left untouched by sociologists. Beat was postmodern before postmodern was cool.

Beat space is a form of postmodern space. It is a space that is in need of being addressed, traveled through, and analyzed—not skirted around. These spaces race past the observer as if they were along the side of the highway, they blur and reconfigure in the corner of the eye. Sociology has not retained an interest in space, a critical eye has not focused on the social relationships formed within concrete spatiality. When Jameson states that our perceptual equipment is unable to address our social context, I am not so sure he is addressing the general public, but rather academia. Sociological discourse is surely inadequate to investigate the postmodern identity in the postmodern space, but Beat discourse, however, does. These spaces are in need of interpretation through ways not congruent with traditional academic ways. They need to be interpreted through the eyes of the subject, through the direct observer, through the Beat. The Beat Sociologist as I mentioned in the last chapter is the flâneur, the collector of these 'heaps of fragments,' and it is through these conceptions of spaces and objects that s/he must do it. Through defining these elements of postmodernity as dominant, I have set up for the Beat Sociologist

theoretical landmarks to guide thought and investigation, but not to control. This chapter has set up the points where I believe critical thought is needed to uncover the connections and contradictions of the postmodern moment. These discussions of spaces, objects identities and epiphanies are a means of entry into postmodernism, gateways not adequately addressed by critical theory.

Using the work of C. Wright Mills, Beat Sociology re-orients postmodern theories by understanding the social world through the issues and subjectivities of the individual as they are connected to the public, the social and the historical. Again, it is important to stress that while Mills prescribes the sociological imagination as the path on which sociology should travel, he never treads upon it himself. Only in the appendix, a chapter "On Intellectual Craftsmanship" does Mills begin to leave traces of his identity. Tucked in the back of The Sociological Imagination the 'I' of Mills begin to 'do' the sociological imagination: "I feel it useful... to report in some detail how I go about my craft" (1959:197). "I have to say, you may get better work out of yourself when you read really bad books" (1959:199). Beat Sociology focuses in on understanding the *everyday* experiences and feelings of the social actor, stepping far beyond filing systems and reading bad sociology textbooks. Beat Sociology is a bridge for the sociologist to connect the postmodern individual and postmodernity—a Millsian connection between the private and the social, the epiphanic moments of the individual and the event spaces around her, individual relationships with objects and the fragmentation of society, etc. I believe that in a way, Beat theory completes the 'becoming' of C. Wright Mills: from a marginal Marxist theorist in American academe, to being subsumed into the center of academic thought and lost, to a political, critical, useful position in between social theories and movements. Beat theory utilizes Mills' sociological imagination to provide connections. These connections of the in-between are not only between the individual and her larger sociological context—for instance connecting ethnographic epiphanies with event spaces, but also between different theories and methods (critical theory and ethnography), across disciplines of sociology,

philosophy, art, and literature (pairing DeLillo with Baudelaire), and connections between the 'author' and the 'reader.' Postmodernity has fragmented experience and thought, Beat theory works towards mediating between the multitude of disjointed bodies.

Deleuze and Guattari feel that one of the ways to deterritorialize an object or concept is to move from the center to the edges, to move "from the new center to the new periphery, falling back to the old center and then launching forth to the new" (1987:53). Grounding this project in the work of C. Wright Mills is theoretically a sort of homecoming.[15] As I stated earlier, the work of Mills was largely seen as radical in his day. Today it is a central part of our American sociological tradition. Beat Sociology utilizes his sociological imagination to establish an 'in-between' moving him again—this time from the center to the intermezzo. This move deterritorializes Mills again, and re-situates his concepts in a Beat social theory, that I believe best explores our social world.

Similar to the journey Mills has traveled, Beat Sociology offers the author and the reader an opportunity to deterritorialize themselves as well. As they observe and read, they then are given the opportunity to deterritorialize and then reterritorialize themselves in new ways. These themes and concepts of spaces, objects, epiphanies and identities offer a new system of connections or reterritorializations that the Beat Sociologist can make. The author gains the opportunity to use these themes and concepts to move from the 'center' of academe, to the margins of society, to produce the Beat text. The Beat text resides in the in-between—the Beat text is the intermezzo. A word of caution however, the Beat text is only a temporary reterritorialization of the author. The text changes every time it is read, with each reading it is at the same time re-written with a new set of connections, experiences,

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[15] Chambers reminds us that for the Deleuze and Guattarian nomad, there can be no such return event. The nomad is "[a]lways in transit, the promise of a homecoming—completing the story, domesticating the detour—becomes an impossibility" (1994:5).

events, objects and epiphanies. Much like the Deleuze and Guattarian 'open equation,' the Beat text is an unwrapped one.[16]

It should be apparent that I believe one of the ways that Beat Sociology makes these connections is through incorporating core Beat ideals to better explore individual interactions between postmodern spaces. In the spirit of Kerouac, I feel that Beat Sociology is as much an exploration of spaces as it is an exploration of the self. I believe that a great deal of Beat literature and poetry presents an exploration of identity, representation of lived experiences, relationships with objects, and epiphanic moments that could be of benefit to sociology. This chapter has opened up new elements not addressed by sociology: the postmodern identity, event spaces and epiphanic moments. Beat literature provides a method, style, and ideology that redirects the sociological project towards these issues. To practice sociology without understanding the individual, and in a manner inconsistent with how it was experienced is to lose those who you wish to examine and those you wish to address: the non-sociologist. The use of Beat literature and poetry reconnects sociology with lived experiences and returns to a form that is more accessible to the non-sociologist and at the same time undermines scientific discourse.

Beat Sociology attempts to unravel some of these interactions between the built form and the social experience of the individual differently. To explore these connections Beat Sociology uses the eyes of the observer, the social individual. Unlike Foucault and Sennett, who examine spaces through a historical lens, I attempt to experience spaces myself, and re-present them through auto-ethnography. By experiencing the spaces myself I skip a step Foucault and Sennett make, the account becomes my own. Auto-ethnography is a vital component of Beat Sociology in that it is an exploration of social spaces and events, and at the same time an exploration of the self. I believe that the social theorist must be aware of the postmodern condition of his or her self, be able to connect those

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[16] Not dissimilar to Tschumi's discussions in Architecture and Disjunction (1997), Event-Cities: Praxis (1994), and Questions of Space (1990).

characteristics to larger social constructs, and then be self-reflexive about the interaction s/he has with social spaces, objects and events. As I have stated continually, Beat Sociology is the activation of the sociological imagination in the postmodern moment.

The question becomes, exactly how does the social theorist actually *do* this. As I stated at the beginning of this section, the theory of Beat Sociology and the methodology are intricately connected. The theoretical aspects of Beat Sociology are similar to those in Symbolic Interaction—theory as intertwined and inseparable with the methodological approaches it prescribes. To separate them, perhaps, obscures issues I have claimed as relevant in this chapter: identity, social space, travel, epiphanic moments. If one were to take Mills' advice, and I do, s/he would begin with the social individual. To place the experiences of the social theorist, Beat Sociology begins with auto-ethnography—a technique that blurs the line between biography and ethnography. I began this chapter with the identity of the postmodern individual, and that is where I begin the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

BEAT METHODOLOGY

So that it is impossible for me to consider a picture as anything but a window, in which my first interest is to know what it *looks out on* ... for there is nothing I love so much as that which stretches away before me and out of sight... What am I doing here, why have I to stare this person in the face for so long, of what enduring temptation am I the object? (André Breton 1974:11)

The question, rather, is whether the pieces can fit together, and at what price. Inevitably there will be monstrous crossbreeds. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:157)

Now that I have detailed the theoretical framework of Beat Sociology, the question remains: how does one go about *doing* Beat Sociology? I have touched upon several precursors that need to be elaborated upon with the expressed purpose of formulating a Beat method. While C. Wright Mills and Fredric Jameson are central to Beat theory, perhaps the two pivotal characters for this chapter are Walter Benjamin and William S. Burroughs—an unlikely duo indeed. Beat method focuses upon two concerns that are

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central to any methodological endeavor in the postmodern moment: how to collect data and how to represent it.[1] Walter Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*, or Arcades Project, provides the model that I will use of 'collecting data' and Burroughs' 'cut-up' method will serve as inspiration for the re-presentation of 'the data.' This chapter is concerned with how to 'place' the Beat Sociologist in the social context, and upon the page.

The theoretical framework that I outlined in the previous chapter placed the individual as fundamental to understanding the social world, be it an understanding of spatialities, objects, identities, movement, or postmodernity itself. As I stated towards the conclusion of Chapter Two, I utilize Mills to help the Beat Sociologist make connections between the postmodern individual and his or her surroundings. To maintain continuity from the previous chapter, I will begin this chapter with the individual as well, however, we now enjoy a better understanding of this postmodern individual. This postmodern individual is pivotal for Beat Sociology because it is through this individual that Beat Sociology understands the social world. The lived experiences of Beat Sociologists are the "I"'s/eyes of the project. Consequently, it is important to discuss auto-ethnography as a means of understanding the social world, before addressing the work of Benjamin and Burroughs.

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[1] Representation has not always been 'self-reflexive.' Denzin notes that the 'crisis of representation' occurred in the mid-1980's due to a series of texts that questioned traditional understandings of race, gender and class, validity, reliability and objectivity (1994:10). These texts include Anthropology as Cultural Critique by Marcus and Fisher (1986), The Anthropology of Experience by Turner and Bruner (1986), Writing Culture by Clifford and Marcus (1986), Works and Lives by Geertz (1988), and The Predicament of Culture by Clifford(1988).

Evocation—that is to say, "ethnography" —is the discourse of the postmodern world, for the world that made science, and that science has made, has disappeared, and scientific thought is now an archaic mode of consciousness surviving for awhile yet in degraded form without the ethnographic context that created and sustained it. (Tyler 1987:200)

Van Maanen (1988) describes the ethnographic process of collecting data about a particular culture through fieldwork, and then conveying a representation of that culture in the written form. Peacock (1986) defines ethnography as a social scientific description of a set group of people and the cultural basis for their 'peoplehood.' Early ethnography, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, sought to find "primitive" cultures to establish a link between less civilized groups and "civilized" Western society (Vidich and Lyman 1994:25). At the beginning of the twentieth century, anthropologists were barely venturing from their protective verandahs[2] when the Chicago School turned the ethnographic eye onto the urban environment as an exotic site to be explored. Since the work of W.I. Thomas, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, sociological ethnography has maintained an interest in the urban community. The most widely known ethnographies to emerge from this era are Creesy's study on taxi hall dancers (1923), Thrasher's gang study (1927) and Anderson's hobos (1923).[3] Ethnography has since become a methodology central to qualitative social research, but despite the strong heritage behind it, Van Maanen poses the question—is

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[2] Malinowski has been credited with encouraging anthropologists to no longer rely upon second hand information and into the "open-air" of new cultures (Van Maanen 1988:16).

[3] For an infinitely more detailed description of the history of ethnography, see Vidich and Lyman (1994:23-59).

ethnography a science? Upon reading Van Maanen there is little doubt that he believes the answer to be yes—the very proposition of the question reveals the answer he searches for.

In the preceding chapters I have set Beat Sociology against empirical, positivist, Mid-western sociology, but it is also set against a modern conception of ethnography. Modern or classic ethnography still maintains many of the same claims of positivist empiricism, particularly an objectivity in its account of field experiences, validity, reliability, and generalizability. The language that modern science utilizes, and this includes modern ethnography, is believed to be *transparent* : the words used to describe the social world are no different than the things they describe (Tyler 1987:7). The modern ethnographer "attempted rigorous, qualitative studies of important social processes..." to emulate scientific discourse and therefore validate its own existence (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:7-8). Denzin and Lincoln claim that this 'golden age' of modernist ethnography has been shattered by a 'double crisis' in representation and legitimization (1994:10-11). The crisis of representation questions the ability of the ethnographer to directly capture lived experience. The second interconnecting crisis is that if our ability to represent a situation is problematized, then so too is our validity, generalizability and reliability.[4] These crises have brought about new forms of ethnography known as postmodern ethnography.

Stephen Tyler, one of the best known self-defined postmodern ethnographers, believes that ethnography is the "discourse of the postmodern world" (1987:200). He understands scientism as being problematic—the failing of scientific discourse is its own separation from the social world, particularly in the eschewing of a language of representation for a language of communication. Within this language of communication, the object of scientific thought is the scientific language itself. The more that scientism excelled at communicating with itself, the less it was able to say something meaningful about the social world (1987:200-201). It is Agger's contention that positivist science not

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[4] Clifford notes that the 1960's marked a disruption in modernist conventions of objectivity/subjectivity in ethnography (1986:13).

only exceeds at this communication, but that it also perpetuates this distinction reinforcing the science/not-science distinction (1989a:26).

Postmodern ethnography then is a return to the social world as the subject of study and discourse. The postmodern text concerns itself with "fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality" (1987:202). The pivotal shift in ethnography is from the belief in providing an 'objective' study of a social world to a belief that no one comes "from a neutral or final position" (Clifford 1986:18). If it is true that we are unable to be objective, that we can only subjectively interpret the social world, only a method that is inherently self-reflexive can provide a sufficient description of the social world. This is why Beat Sociology utilizes auto-ethnography.[5]

Auto-ethnography is the exploration of the meaningful characteristics and interpretations of the author's social context. These texts are admittedly subjective and self-reflexive. Michael Fischer believes that these texts that have investigated issues of ethnicity and identity, are "key forms for explorations of pluralist, post-industrial, late-twentieth-century society" (1986:195). The subject and object of analysis of auto-ethnography becomes the auto-ethnographer as much as the culture or context s/he desires to explore.

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[5] Atkinson and Hammersley state that postmodern ethnography may have led some practitioners to "undue extremes" with their textual experimentation (1994:257). I believe such cautionary words are intended to stifle new ethnographic methods. I believe that ethnography, along with all forms of social science writing, is in no position to maintain the status quo. Richardson writes that students don't read the texts assigned because they are boring, that we have fallen into a "static writing" that "coheres to mechanistic scientism and quantitative research" (1994:517). Richardson states that because our "sense of self is diminished" and our "professional socialization" our sociological work has become homogenized, and therefore dull. Richardson, in turn, has become a central proponent of postmodern ethnography.

The ethnographer is self-reflexive of the "meaningful events of her generation and the consensus of theory and practice" that formulate the landmarks, framings and boundaries of her sociological imagination (Tyler 1987:101). This returns the Beat Sociologist to Mills' understanding that personal experiences and characteristics define how we understand the social world.

As opposed to the modernist notion of presenting a series of ethnographic 'Truths,' James Clifford understands ethnographic truths to be "inherently partial—committed and incomplete" (1986:7). The fragments of ethnographic text are understood as no more or less 'real' or 'true' than painting, cinema or literature. What it means then to utilize multiple texts, photography, poetry, auto-ethnography will be addressed later in this chapter. The conception of the social world as fragmented and multi-textual requires a further understanding of the ethnographer herself. Denzin and Lincoln believe that the qualitative researcher ought to be a bricoleur, a 'jack-of-all-trades' who produces *bricolage*—a "pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation" (1994:2). The bricoleur is knowledgeable of multiple paradigms, methods and techniques. The bricoleur provides a sufficient model, but I believe that there is an alternative: the flâneur. The flâneur can be considered to be similar to the bricoleur 'type' but provides a philosophic model as well as a methodological one. I believe that Beat Sociology can utilize flânerie as a state of being and a way of thinking as well as a methodology.

The Flâneur

Both bricoleur and flâneur are very similar in spirit but there is a critical difference between the two. While the bricoleur seems to be primarily concerned with the representation of social experience, the flâneur provides a model for a particular way of life both in thinking and in doing. For this reason, the bricoleur will return later in this chapter,

in the section concerning representation. For now, however, I will explore the flâneur as depicted by Walter Benjamin.

In Chapter Two I briefly defined the flâneur as a social actor who floats through a sea of images, objects and spaces and proposed that the Beat Sociologist is a part of a heritage that runs from Benjamin through the Beats (particularly Burroughs). The flâneur is "the urban stroller, observer, even idler... the figure of the flâneur is close to the dandy... and the bohemian" (Frisby 1994:86). However, prior to Benjamin there was the poet Charles Baudelaire. In mid-nineteenth century, Baudelaire called for a "poetic—and a poet's —vision of the public spaces of Paris" (Tester 1994:1). This poet should be driven from the private world, into the public one. Wandering through the streets, the "aimless stroll is the aim [his emphasis]" (Bauman 1994:139). Thrust into the "center of the order of things" the flâneur mingles with the crowds, the bodies, the public spaces, at one with them all. According to Baudelaire, the flâneur is the "hero of modernity" (1994:6). Why then, do I bring up the flâneur as a means for understanding the postmodern moment and more specifically Beat Sociology?

Flânerie, the action of floating through the 'sea of images,' for Musil (1954) has been challenged by three problems, most notably the increasing rationalization of order imposed upon the city. 'The city' for both Baudelaire and Benjamin was Paris, and Benjamin noted that with the rationalization of Paris, "all mystery is removed from the city" (Tester 1994:14). While Baudelaire contends that the flâneur is the 'hero' of modernity, Benjamin believes that s/he is instead its martyr, murdered on the streets of the modern, rationalized city.[6] This rationalization of Paris had destroyed the poetry of the city, and with

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[6] It should be noted that this point in Parisian history is the Second Empire, a period I have noted as exemplified by Haussmann's rationalization and control of the city in Chapter Three, but also includes the modernist architecture of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe (Frisbey 1994:87; Harvey 1990:16; Jencks 1992:12).

it the ability of the flâneur to impute meaning to it. The flâneur is then left to simply "document the progressive standardization" of the city (Benjamin 1983:47).

There is, however, a newfound exploration of the flâneur due to a resurgence of interest in the work of Benjamin.[7] I believe this new interest is indicative that contemporary social theorists are searching for ways to understand an increased irrationality in their social world. Modernity may very well have murdered the flâneur. Can the postmodern moment have resurrected him or her from the dead?

Beat methodology is a return to flânerie, an answer to the question of resurrection. The death of the flâneur was a surrender to the modern city, but also modern scientism. The positivist belief that all social action can be based upon a core set of identifiable axioms, is similar to the rationality that destroyed the Parisian "romance of what might lurk behind the doors of houses by giving each house a matter-of-fact and defining number," that Benjamin detested (Tester 1994:14). Benjamin believed that this numbering was the point wherein the city no longer was a space free to move through and explore. Likewise, through a reading of Tyler (1987) and Agger (1989a), I believe that scientific writing halts the free exploration and movement of research. Beat methodology is a departure from this modernist rationalization, and a return to Benjamin's lost mysteries, a return to exploring the unknown that is now called the 'postmodern.'

Through the preceding chapters I have outlined some of the key components of the postmodern moment, and how they problematize positivist social theory. I believe that the recent questioning of science's ability to portray the social world, the 'double crisis' of representation and legitimacy has now opened the door for the return of the flâneur. Within

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[7] In addition to translations of his work, Susan Buck-Morss' The Dialectics of Seeing (1991) completes Walter Benjamin's 'Arcades Project.' Discussion of the flâneur and Benjamin's work can also be found in Chambers (1985 and 1994), de Certeau (1984), Eagleton (1981), Hebdige (1979), Jameson (1991), Sennett (1994), Soja (1989), Tyler (1987), and Virilio (1994).

the postmodern moment, as I have previously described, irrationality appears to run rampant in the fragmented, multi-textual contradictions of the social world. The Benjamin and Baudelaire flâneur is at a different end of scientific positivism from the Beat sociologist. The postmodern flâneur is confronted with old concerns of fragmented images and spaces, as well as the new problems of postmodernity: particularly the repercussions of positivism. In addition to proposing a better method of exploration and representation of lived experiences, the Beat Sociologist must also deconstruct the established grand narratives of positivism. The flâneur in the postmodern moment is offered a new set of contradictions: in addition to the signs, images and objects that the modernist flâneur addressed, her postmodern successor explores the contradictions and meanings of these issues but also the very composition of herself.

The flâneur, a role that thrived upon image and sign, seems to fit well with the postmodern condition. S/he is interested in 'exploring the local,' multiple texts, images, and fragments. Baudelaire's conception of the flâneur identity is one that is in itself fragmented. In the preceding chapter I constructed the postmodern identity as fragmented, and Baudelaire himself preferred to configure himself in different identities: "...now flâneur, now whore; now ragpicker, now dandy" (Buck-Morss 1991:187). While an understanding of a general 'flâneur' is productive, before addressing the Beat Sociologist as flâneur and returning to the issue of fragmented identity, I believe that I should delve a little deeper into the work of Walter Benjamin.

Walter Benjamin

It is not the objective of this section to outline Benjamin's life and work. As I have mentioned, he has been largely under-appreciated as a powerful voice from the Frankfurt School and wartime Europe, but currently there has been a resurgence of interest in his work. Susan Buck-Morss (1991) provides a more than adequate discussion of Benjamin's

life in addition to attempting to complete his 'Arcades Project' or *Passagen-Werk.* I will however, only touch upon the specifics of his conception of flânerie in its relevance to Beat Sociology.

Benjamin's Arcades Project began in 1927 and occupied the last thirteen years of his life.[8] The collection of notes (some full essays others mere fragments of thought) that constituted the body of the piece were loosely organized around a set of themes, comprising more than 900 pages (Buck-Morss 1991:5). Buck-Morss attempts to configure this pile of "outlines, research notes and fragmentary commentary" in The Dialectics of Seeing (1991:5). What she found within this text was a 'strategy' to understand the social world through "the interpretive power of images that make conceptual points concretely, with reference to the world outside the text" (1991:6).

The subject of the Arcades Project was an exploration of history through a complex set of multiple objects, themes and (con)texts. He believed that 'meaning' itself should not be "blindly affirmed" but critically analyzed through historical material *as* the subject of philosophy (1991:55). Benjamin set out to demonstrate this materialist history through the objects and images produced by European industrialism. Through an analysis of these objects Benjamin attempted to "construct a counter-discourse... unearthing buried markers that expose "progress" as the fetishization of modern temporality" (1991:56). The sites of this investigation were the twentieth century arcades, or shopping centers in the cities of Berlin, Paris, Naples and Moscow. The shopping arcade was central to Benjamin's work in that he saw them as the "precise material replica of the internal consciousness..."

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[8] On September 26th 1940, Benjamin, upon the urging of his colleagues Horkheimer and Adorno, decided to flee the Nazi hold on France and join them in New York. Despite holding a transit visa Benjamin was denied emigration at the Franco-Spanish border. Frustrated by the turn of events and weak from an apparent cardiac condition, Benjamin committed suicide (Introduction to Benjamin's Illuminations by Hannah Arendt 1968:17-8).

(1991:39). The arcade was overflowing with objects that, to Benjamin, contained the hidden 'dream fetishes' of our culture.

Benjamin understood the flâneur to be a detective covering a beat, "the photojournalist [that] hangs about like a hunter ready to shoot" (Buck-Morss 1991:306). In the arcades the flâneur goes window shopping, an activity seemingly designed for the flâneur (1991:85).[9] Strolling past shops and stores in a Parisian arcade, the flâneur explores the disjunct set of objects s/he sees, and makes connections between the objects searching for meaning within. Flânerie, for Benjamin, is a means of understanding the social world—through strolling aimlessly "things reveal themselves in their secret meaning" (Arendt 1968:12). As one walks, the "true picture of the past flits by" (Benjamin 1968:255).

Benjamin and Surrealism. The fragmentary form of Benjamin's text was not happenstance, nor a mere consequence of his death, but indicative of his Surrealist influences. Benjamin became interested in the Surrealist movement in 1927, and noted the correlation between the work of Breton and Aragon and his own interests. To reiterate (from Chapter Two) the Surrealist movement is similar to Benjamin and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, in that both dealt with modernist tensions, particularly the increasing threat of German nationalism. Surrealists were responding to the rising contradiction they found in their social world and were also interested in urban phenomena—desiring to 'illuminate' the material world (1991:33). Benjamin's work, while profiting from the dialogue, also criticized the discipline and constructive nature of Surrealism believing it to be obscured by the anarchism of form. Buck-Morss observes that while the Surrealists believed in "reality as a dream; the Passagen-Werk was to evoke history to awaken its readers from it" (1991:34). The Surrealist movement sought to

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[9] Benjamin himself states that "the department store is the [the flâneur's] last haunt" (quoted in Buck-Morss 1991:345).

juxtapose the contradictory images and texts they found in their surroundings to illustrate the tensions of the modern era, an idea that Benjamin continued in his work. There is, however, a pivotal difference between the work of the Surrealists and the work of Benjamin, and it is that Benjamin sought to provide a critical analysis of these images and objects.

The Surrealist-inspired fragmentary epistemology that Benjamin utilized as a method of criticism of the social world worried his friend Theodor Adorno. Adorno believed that the influence of the Surrealist Bertolt Brecht had turned Benjamin's work into a "wide-eyed presentation of mere facts..." (Buck-Morss 1991:228). Benjamin, though, understood the Surrealist study of objects as a "philosophical position rather than an aesthetic one" (1991:238), not a mystical play of image but a dialectical critique of the social world.[10] Therefore juxtaposition played a critical part in the methodology of Benjamin, as well as a concentration on significant as well as trivial objects:

> I began to realize that the reign [of these new objects] was predicated on their novelty, and that upon their future shone a mortal star. They revealed themselves to me, then, as transitory tyrants, as the agents of fate in some way attached to my sensibility. It dawned on me finally that I possessed the intoxication of the modern. (Aragon 1953:141)

Again, it was not Benjamin's intent to continue the dream like state of Surrealism, but to "penetrate all this by the dialectic of awakening" (Buck-Morss 1991:261). In this dialectic Benjamin believed there to be a political potential within (1991:262). In Chapter Two I touched upon Burroughs' cut-up method—inspired by the Surrealist movement. Here I

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[10] It should be noted that in contradiction, Adorno's critique of Benjamin was that his work was indeed 'undialectic,' and was founded in "materialistic categories, which by no means coincide with Marxist ones" (Arendt 1968:10).

would like to comment upon the cut-up method as lacking in content. Similar to Benjamin's critique of the Surrealists, I believe that Burroughs induced an effective 'dream-like' trance of fragmented text, but offered no commentary.

As Benjamin is to Surrealism, Beat Sociology is to the work of Burroughs. To clarify: Benjamin believed that Surrealism, well and good as a method through which to explore, needed a *critical* component of analysis. Similarly, I believe that the Beats uncovered new meanings in everyday experiences and texts, in particular the cut-ups of Burroughs. However, the Beats lacked a critical component. As I have already stated, a political, critical agenda is what separates the work of the Surrealists and Benjamin, and the work of the Beats and Beat Sociology.

The Beat Flâneur?

The whole center of the arcade is empty. I rush quickly to the exit; I feel ghostly, hidden crowds of people from days gone by, who hug the walls with lustful glances at the tawdry jewelry, the clothing, the pictures... At the exit, at the windows of the great travel agency, I breathe more easily; the street, freedom, the present![11]

There has been little made of the connections between flânerie and Beatitude. It seems unlikely that the two have anything in common, but closer inspection suggests otherwise. The quote above may appear to have been inspired by Kerouac, but indeed that is not the case. This quote was used by Johann Geist (1983), in a text inspired by Walter Benjamin. For Benjamin, the image of the flâneur summons the image of the bohemian, Paris being a "paradise.. of bohemians" (Arendt 1968:21). The American equivalent for the

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[11] Franz Hessel, cited in Arcades: The History of a Building Type by Johann Friedrich Geist (1983:157-58).

Beats was the streets of San Francisco with its "long, bleak streets with trolley wires all shrouded in fog and whiteness" (Kerouac 1957:61). It is obvious that Kerouac believed that his own group embodied a "bohemian mystery" that rings of Parisian flânerie (1958:23). It is not mere coincidence that Kerouac's character Percepied (based upon himself) in the beginning of The Subterreanians states that he sees himself as another Baudelaire (1958:10), extending the heritage of the flâneur an additional twenty years into the present.

What is of interest for Beat Sociology is the keen interest kept in objects by both Benjamin and Kerouac. Kerouac notes that his life has been swept up in "whirlpools of litter and glitter" of Beatitude in Maggie Cassady (1959b) and Benjamin's flâneur loses himself in the streets of Paris. In his "Essentials of American Prose" Kerouac explains how from an 'image-object' an "undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, blowing (as per jazz musicians) on subject of image" (in Donaldson 1953:531). This sounds very similar to Benjamin's investigation of objects, quoted in the previous section—he notes that he "began to realize that the reign [of these new objects] was predicated on their novelty... They revealed themselves to me..." Because of this emphasis on objects, it is therefore easy to uncover the flânerie within each:

> ...describe the wrinkly tar of this sidewalk, also the iron pickets of Textile Institute, or the door where Lousy and you and G.J.'s always sittin and dont stop to think of words when you do stop, just stop to think of the picture better—and let your mind off yourself in this work. (Kerouac 1959a:3)

> I have more memories than if I had lived a thousand years.
> A chest of drawers littered with balance sheets,
> With verses, love letters, romantic songs, law suits,

With a thick plait of hair wrapped up in some receipts,

Hides fewer secrets than my own sad brain.

It is a pyramid, an immense cave

Full of more corpses than a common grave.

—I am a cemetery abhorred by the moon,

Where, like remorse, long earthworms crawl and gnaw

Incessantly at the dead most dear to me.

I am an old boudoir with faded roses

And tangled heaps of clothes now out of date...

(Benjamin quoted in Buck-Morss 1991:189)

This discussion has lead to the similarities between the Surrealists, Benjamin and the Beats and how their work manifested itself upon the page, canvas, or otherwise. Before moving to Beat methodology 'proper,' it is important to touch upon this connection. In Chapter Two I proposed that the Beats were American Surrealists, particularly the work of Burroughs, and earlier in this chapter I briefly outlined the influence the Surrealists had on Benjamin. However, my primary emphasis has been on their practice of flânerie, or 'dialectics of seeing' to borrow from Buck-Morss. I would now like to make a few connections between the three groups concerning their 'product,' how they believed their separate work should manifest itself. A striking similarity between the Surrealists, Benjamin, Burroughs and interestingly, Kerouac in Tristessa (1960), is the importance of juxtaposition in representation.

In Chapter Two I noted that Burroughs' Surrealist-inspired cut-up method was used to uncover the hidden meanings of texts. Benjamin was also inspired by Surrealists, but had a particular appreciation for the political, critical, dialectic potential it possessed. Buck-Morss describes a piece of John Heartfield's work, a new use of photography in montage, wherein he "suggests a causal link between the Weimer Republic and fascism" by

placing the heads of Weimer heads of state on a caterpillar and a cocoon, and Hitler's head on a Death's Head Moth (1991:60-61). Shortly thereafter Benjamin fashioned his work One Way Street (1979) in montage form, written text in the place of photography. He believed that the montage "makes visible the gap between sign and referent" that otherwise would continue its own existence without question (1991:68). He had a hope of uncovering unseen connections, similar to the objective of Burroughs:

> Everything new that [humanity] might hope for will unveil itself as nothing but a reality which has always been there. (The ending of Benjamin's Passagen-Werk introduction quoted in Buck-Morss 1991:107).

Peter Bürger, a student of Surrealism, notes a critical difference between the work of the Surrealists and that of Benjamin. He notes that the "...insertion of reality fragments into the work of art fundamentally transform that work" (1984:68). Buck-Morss believes that this insertion of reality is of importance to Bürger because it is what makes the montage form *political* (1991:226). While this political commentary is absent from the work of the Beats, the notion of inserting reality is.

Kerouac, in the opening paragraph of Tristessa (1960), begins and ends the paragraph with references to Tristessa, and in-between places thoughts and feelings about Mexico City, his father, and other ideas. Foster explains the technique of parataxis used as "juxtaposing a series of observations that simply by virtue of their convergence become a single dense emotional experience..." (1992:59). This reality, fictionalized by Kerouac lacks a politic, but does provide a model for a montage that incorporates multiple feelings, interpretations, and blurs the line between a 'real' lived experience of Jack Kerouac and the 'fictional' montage of flânerie as told by alter-ego Jack Duluoz:

...here I am in Mexico City, rainy Saturday night, mysteries, old dream sidestreets with no names reeling in, the little street where I'd walked through crowds of gloomy Hobo Indians wrapped in tragic shawls enough to make you cry and you thought you saw knifes flashing beneath the folds... (Kerouac 1960:1)

Elements of Beat Methodology

Throughout this text I have alluded to the nature of the text in Beat Sociology, and now is the point at which I must be explicit. I regard Benjamin's critique of the Surrealist movement as true: while it did explore the disconnections and contradictions of the social world, it did not critically analyze its own findings. Through the Passagen-Werk Benjamin attempts to maintain Surrealist spirit of juxtaposition and experimentation while also providing this analysis. Sadly, he never completed the project. Similar to Benjamin's critique, I believe that the Burroughs' cut-up method lacks the essential analysis, and the ability to connect his literary breakdowns with larger social structures. The Beat methodology that I propose walks carefully between the 'nihilistic anarchism' of Surrealist-Burroughsesque representation and critical sociological analysis.

Susan Buck-Morss observes that in the recent resurgence of interest in the work of Benjamin, he has been placed as in a German Romanticist tradition or as a precursor of "such recent, postsubjective currents of thought as deconstruction and postmodernism" (1991:222). While his montage method and the 'dilemma in interpretation' that it caused can be understood as akin to Denzin and Lincoln's postmodern 'crisis of representation,' connections between postmodern thought and Benjamin should be made cautiously. Buck-Morss does not believe, nor do I, that Benjamin should be considered as a precursor to postmodernity if the impetus of that decision is based upon a nihilistic reading of his work. As I mentioned earlier, Benjamin criticized the Surrealist movement for its nihilistic traits

and sought to rectify those deficiencies in his own critical analysis. His insistence upon critical thought is a crucial addition to the tradition I have attempted to draw from Surrealists to Benjamin, to the Beats to Beat Sociology. While he has not provided a nihilist tradition he has however, left the door open for Frankfurt School theorists, the Beats, postmodern critical theorists and Beat Sociologists to step through. He has provided a foundation for understanding urban spaces, objects, commodities, and relationships that Beat Sociology builds upon.

At the beginning of the chapter I selected the model of the flâneur as opposed to the bricoleur. The bricoleur, or the 'jack-of-all-trades,' is an overarching term for someone who utilizes multiple methods, strategies or empirical materials, whatever necessary to explore the task at hand. The flâneur can be understood as a subgroup, or precursor of the bricoleur typology. The flâneur, on the other hand, provides a specific way of thinking in the practice of bricolage. S/he is a wandering subject who, unlike the bricoleur, is interested in a certain set of themes: social spaces, crowds, movements, objects, commodities, systems of exchange and the interactions between them. Earlier I mentioned Baudelaire's conception of the flâneur identity as having multiple identities. Returning to my conception of the Beat identity from Chapter Three, Benjamin understood the powerful impact of the social context and the identity of the social individual. He had a concept of identity similar to Baudelaire's, based on the interconnection between identity and surroundings:

> The covered shopping arcades of the nineteenth century were Benjamin's
> central image because they were the precise material replica of the internal
> consciousness, or rather, the unconscious of the dreaming collective.
> (Buck-Morss 1991:39)

Through the brief connections made earlier between Benjamin and Kerouac, it should be apparent that I believe that the Benjamin-esque flâneur embodies the spirit of the Beat identity—fragmented, multi-textual, searching, investigating, what de Certeau refers to as wandersmänner (1984:93). Kerouac was the flâneur as much as Benjamin, Ginsberg as much a flâneur poet as Baudelaire.

The home of the modern flâneur was anywhere, at the 'center of the order of things': the urban spaces, the city streets, the shopping malls. The home of the postmodern flâneur is nowhere and everywhere at the same time, s/he is marginalized, fragmented and decentered more akin to Simmel's stranger than Baudelaire's 'hero of modernity.'

It is, of course, important to understand how Benjamin and the Beats addressed representation. The question at hand is exactly how the Beat flâneur re-presents this constant state of wandersmänner upon the printed page. Benjamin's work consists of "thought fragments" that have two responsibilities—to deliberately interrupt a linear flow of presentation with what Benjamin called "transcendent force" and to contain the material itself (Arendt 1968:39). Benjamin himself continually collected quotations, fragments of text not dissimilar to the fragments he collected on the urban street: a quote from Kafka is just as relevant as a parasol in a window. His intellectual explorations in the written form were strongly correlated with his street flânerie. Arendt notes that his project on German tragedy "consisted in tearing fragments out of their context and arranging them afresh in such a way that they illustrated one another... in a free floating state" (1968:47). This description of Benjamin's work sounds strikingly similar to the projects of Surrealism and Burroughs' cut-ups.

Similar to Benjamin's Arcades Project, the not-so-disparate collection of fragments that construct Beat Sociology is intended to "erect... large constructions out of the smallest architectural segments that have been sharply and cuttingly manufactured. Indeed to discover the crystal of the total event in the analysis of the small, particular moments" (Benjamin quoted in Buck-Morss 1991:74). These segments are not required to be drawn

from the same source; Beat Sociology utilizes multiple texts in multiple forms in poetry, literature, photography, auto-ethnography, social theory, pictures, cultural theory, and critical analysis. The splicing of different materials attempts to cast a wide net of interpretations on the subject of analysis, while at the same time providing large (w)holes for the reader to move in and out of.

Auto- Ethnography.

Post-modern ethnography... does not move toward abstraction, away from life, but back to experience. It aims not to foster the growth of knowledge but to restructure experience; not to understand objective reality, for that is already established by common sense, nor to explain how we understand, for that is impossible, but to reassimilate, to reintegrate the self in society and to restructure the conduct of everyday life (Tyler 1986:135)

Sociological writing has long since privileged 'static writing' and 'mechanical scientism,' and ignored dynamic writing. Much sociological work, ethnography included, fails because as Richardson points out, our work as sociologists has gotten quite boring. What is worse, our work is largely 'unread' by the general public (Richardson 1994:517). Not everyone can relate to our work, we use big words and simple solutions that do not adequately describe our own experiences. I would rather fail in my epistemological assumptions (in an attempt to bring ethnography closer to representing our fragmented surroundings) than to fail in sparking interest and critical thought, and lose more ground with sociology being considered a meaningless endeavor altogether. Richardson suggests two ways in which we can alter the course of our discipline: one is to write in an attempt to evoke the reader, and secondly we can place ourselves in the text. The works of Ellis (1992, 1993), Geertz (1988), Kondo (1990), Krieger (1991), Ronai (1992), Shelton

(1995), Steedman (1986), I.K. Zola (1983), all explore a submersion of the author into the text in 'narratives of the self.'

Tyler explains that the postmodern ethnographic text is "not only not an object, it is not *an* object, it is not *the* object; it is instead a means, the narrative vehicle for a transcendence of time and place" (1987:206). Tyler comments that the postmodern ethnography is a 'conflicted form,' not in the sense of a violent politic but in it's unresolved dissonance, a cacophony of texts. The 'blurred form' and the 'conflicted form' of ethnography leaves this piece with one major question, which perhaps is Deleuze and Guattari's primary (although they would never offer a hierarchical assessment of their own work) methodological concern (1983 and 1987), and an old question in architecture: why should the form not follow content? Why shouldn't ethnographic form follow social content? If I have conceptualized postmodernity as fragmented, contradictory and multi-textual, why shouldn't the text reflect those characteristics? Beat methodology certainly allows the author the opportunity to present his or her work in a connected or disconnected form. It is, however, important to understand a very brief history to understand why this is such a radical departure for all forms of text: sociology, ethnography and literature.

Auto-ethnography is a subset of postmodern ethnography, containing some of the components of Tyler's above description. I believe auto-ethnography to be the epitome of the 'conflicted form'—the resulting text is self-reflexive, struggling with individual issues and larger social problems. The modern conception of ethnography would greatly constrict the richness of the field of study I have selected. The primary movement through the Beat text is the same thing that moves through these spaces, experiences and interactions—the author's own subjectivity. The auto-ethnographic text allows the Beat Sociologist to represent in lived experience without the hindrance of having to rationalize second or third order interpretations: interpretations of interpretations (of interpretations), presented in objective, positivist language whose apparent legitimacy disguises its own fiction.

Discontinuity and Subjectivity. Maurice Blanchot believes that with Aristotle a "language of continuity" is established as the official language of philosophy (1993:7). Modernist literature was overly preoccupied with continuity, that the works of the Surrealists and Joyce were labeled as "manifestly scandalous" (1993:9). Scientific writing is no different, preferring a smooth continuous flow of numbers and axioms, each connected with another—providing little aporias between them. Agger further collapses notions of science and fiction into a single term: essay. This term is intended to weaken the stronghold of authority and methodology. This process of relativizing discourses places poetry as science, science as poetry, and this relativism places superiority upon no one singular discourse—the "true arbiter of validity claims becomes reason, not methodology or authority" (1989b:226-27).

The first half of Bruno Latour's The Pasteurization of France (1986), consists of a theoretical exploration of the formulation of science in society. The second half, composed of loosely connected fragments of thought explores what happens "when nothing is reduced to anything else... when we give up this burden, this passion, this indignation, this obsession, this flame, this fury, this dazzling aim, this excess, the insane desire to reduce everything..." (1986:157). Much like Agger, Latour believes in a more egalitarian form of textualities:

> So we do not value the same materials, but we do like to do the same things with them—that is, to learn the meaning of strong and weak, real and unreal, associated or dissociated. We argue constantly with one another about the relative importance of these materials, their significance and their order of precedence, but we forget that they are the *same* size [author's emphasis]... (1986:156)

The work of Blanchot questions how to at one moment disrupt this continuity, and then to offer a polyvocality in its place and Agger claims that no one voice holds authority over any other. How then does an author's work manifest these two ideas of discontinuity and polyvocality appear upon the written page? The answer for Latour in The Pasteurization of France is a segregation into two separate halves of a book. The answer for Blanchot is in the fragmentary text that comprises The Step Not Beyond (1992), a text of theory that reads like poetry or a poem that reads like theory. Blanchot's work clearly crosses the borders of what is novel, what is 'science' or theory, and what is poetry. This is not the only manifestation of border crossing, there are others who experiment as well.[12] Of course, the group I am most interested in is the Beats, and particularly Burroughs.

William S. Burroughs, as discussed in previous chapters, has perhaps best exemplified the blur of boundaries to date. His Nova Trilogy seemlessly combines texts without prejudice, the rough edges of the components fused together. Hassan notes that this writing, along with the work of Blanchot "may lead to a form of writing that is incessant noise... [ending] in the dissolution of significant form" (1975:13). I question if this is not traveling *too* far, however. I believe that this white-noise bombardment of fragments leads into the 'skeptical postmodernist' camp. Beat Sociology utilizes multiple texts, but not to the point where they become indistinguishable from one another. Within a text that is constructed similar to Burroughs' The Ticket That Exploded, the reader loses the ability to critique the source from which the fragments originated. A discussion of Burroughs is a pivotal starting point, but as Taylor and Saarinen note the "fragmentary is no longer simply a literary style... For postmodernists the fragmentary has become a psycho-socio-cultural condition" (1994:Styles 4). Beat Sociology should be understood as

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[12] Novelist John Folwes attempts a technique similar to Blanchot in The Aristos (1964), collecting thoughts like seashells on a beach arranged around a few interconnected themes. He blurs the line further, boldly stating that he is a "poet first; and then a scientist. That is a biographical fact, not a recommendation" (1964:13).

an attempt to uncover the fragmentary nature of the social text, as well as the sociological text.

The Beat Sociology text is not the smooth seemlessness of Burroughs, but the rough text similar to that of Blanchot's The Step Not Beyond filled with gaping wounds wherein the reader can make the connections from one fragment to another. As opposed to the veiled connections of glue and revision made by Burroughs and Gysin, in the Beat Sociology text the reader makes the connection between the fragments through her own thoughts and lived experiences. The Beat Sociology text is a 'scriptible' one—it is written and then rewritten by every reader through their interpretations of it. By opening this text to multiple interpretations, Beat Sociology comes close to what Umberto Eco refers to as a "machine for generating interpretations" (1983:2).

Into the Great In-Between

We are more than ever before to look around in all directions; nowhere do
we perceive any limits. We have the advantage of feeling an immense space
around us—but also an immense void. (Nietzsche)

After roughly describing Blanchot's fragments and what they are comprised of, I believe it to be imperative to explore what occurs within these 'gaping wounds' (as I refer to them) in his work. These spaces in-between fragments are by no means empty space, and by no means a flippant move to avoid transition paragraphs. They are a deliberate addition to this project, perhaps the very essence or spirit of Beat Sociology. The thin, blank space between fragments are placed for a specific, insidious purpose: to force the reader to think. Within these spaces the reader is given the opportunity to insert his or her own experiences, thoughts, emotions, theories, interpretations. These spaces are where the text opens up, provides chasms in which the reader may, if he or she chooses, insert

themselves. If we are to use Eco's quote, and given that Beat Sociology is a "machine for generating interpretations," the product is not the text, the machine itself, but the operator of it: the reader. The product of Beat Sociology is the interpretations of the person who reads it. This set of interpretations could, depending on the characteristics of the reader, be the largest portion of the Beat Sociology piece. Bernard Tschumi, in his discussions of architectural fragments, realizes the rifts between them as 'passages' from one to the other, "relays rather than signs" but also beginnings without ends (1996:95). The insertion of the reader into the text is the relay from one fragment to another.

Scott McCloud (1992) explores the space between comic panels, what the graphic arts industry refers to (perhaps appropriately) as 'the gutter.' He realizes that the unsaid spaces in text are a potential medium for "closure, change, time and motion" (1992:65). He points out that it is between the panels, in the gutter, that the reader is an unwitting, *equal* contributor, a 'silent accomplice.' If one was to think about the horror of the first *Friday the 13th* or *Jaws* the scariest scenes were the ones where the action was *left to the imagination of the viewer*. I wish to make these contributions and collaborations much more explicit, to make the reader work at the transitions. Connections can only be made through the readers' own experience, not between the fragments offered in this text. There is a deliberate crafting of these pieces, more like the critical placement of Benjamin than the randomness of Burroughs. Some of the fragments fit together and flow from one to the next, some are conflicting and deliberately ambiguous, some gaps are small fissures that can be traversed with a skip, some need a good running start. Beat Sociology is not for the faint of heart, but for those who wish to engage the text and journey through the gutters.

By definition then, this text can never be complete, but is continually craving new interaction and new interpretation. The Beat text, and its representation of lived experiences cannot be a full one, nor does it wish to be. The Beat Sociologist produces a text that will invite the reader to explore it much like Burroughs' Interzone, to wander through it aimlessly, not quite sure of entrance nor exit, just material that can be interpreted. There is

the opportunity to not only interpret my interpretations, but to add to the text itself. It is only then, where the Beat text circles the readers own ideas and experiences, that the ethnography begins to come closer to a complete text. Only when it begins to cohere to the readers' experience does it gain validity, reality and representitiveness. The reader does not have to have been to the spaces written about, nor the interactions described. As long as the reader retains the ability to connect a written text to their own situations does Beat Sociology 'work.' The success or inability of a Beat text to allow the reader an opportunity to interact with it, is the only way in which to judge the piece. This is not an admission of guilt, but a self-reflexive criticism. The Millsian dyad of the individual sociologist and the public, is now an Oedipal triangle: the Beat Sociologist or individual, postmodernity and the reader. In between these points, between the author, the social, and the reader, stands the text as the discourse. Once again, we are in the 'in-between.'

A Note on Theory. For Benjamin, the use of montage did not require theoretical connections. In reading Benjamin's Arcades Project, Theodor Adorno believed that his montage was constructed so that "from a juxtaposition of quotations so that the theory springs out of it without having to be inserted as interpretation" (Buck-Morss 1991:73). While Buck-Morss disagrees, believing that Benjamin was proving a commentary "cohered around a central idea" (1991:74), I will not leave the Beat Sociology text open for this critique. Throughout the Beat text, theory will provide the critical analysis of the fragments around it, as discussed and promised in Chapter Three. These fragments of theory frame the other components of photography, auto-ethnography and literature—they do not offer axioms, nor testable hypotheses. While the theory may provide commentary or frame segments of ethnographic or photographic text, it does not hold a privileged position, but instead falls upon the Beat page as an equal.

Some Notes on Themes. How to sift through the fragments/objects/texts of a Beat Sociology text is obviously a concern for the prospective reader. Through readings and interpretations of the work of Benjamin and Burroughs, it becomes apparent that there are methods that can facilitate a better understanding of their work—a thematic reading of the text. This thematic read allows the author and the reader an opportunity to move through a text, be it a building or a master's thesis, with a specific set of issues s/he desires to explore. Just as a Derridian reads a literary text possibly in search of deconstructivist tendencies, a Beat Sociologist may walk through a church in search of epiphany. A discussion of how theorists have re-read the work of Burroughs and Benjamin may illuminate this idea.

Jennie Skerl (1985) believes that the most productive method to understand the cut-up method of Burroughs in The Soft Machine, The Ticket that Exploded, and Nova Express is through organizing a set of themes to facilitate reading. She notes that the these three novels that comprise the Nova Trilogy are connected through the cut-up technique and the content, but that each book comprises a different set of themes. Throughout the trilogy, Skerl reads three primary themes: power, sexuality, and obviously drug addiction (1985:49). Individually, the novels have their own themes: The Soft Machine deals with "the bodily control of mankind through human needs," The Ticket That Exploded deals with "the present and... the control of the mind through word and image," and Nova Express "predicts a future apocalypse" (Skerl 1985:50-70).

A way in which Benjamin understood his Arcades Project was through an elaborate filing system, organized by a set of 'themes.' Benjamin's themes included 'fashion,' 'the collector,' 'mirror,' 'Marx,' 'Baudelaire,' and 'the flâneur' (Buck-Morss 1991:50-51). These themes were used as keywords for an extensive filing system designed by Benjamin for the Arcades project—the oeuvre itself was comprised of thousands of entries. Buck-Morss utilizes these themes to frame the work of the Passagen-Werk, a text that is in fact not a totality at all but quite literally a fragmented collection of research and commentary

(1991:47). She explains that any attempt to understand the Passagen-Werk in a singular frame would only lead to frustration, that the "fragments plunge the interpreter into an abyss of meanings, threatening him or her with epistemological despair..." (1991:54). This no doubt harkens back to Skerl's trouble with reading Burroughs, and both theorists utilize a thematic method to better understand these writers. It should be noted that Buck-Morss believes that what lead her out of Benjamin's abyss were his *political* concerns that provided "the overriding orientation for every constellation" of fragments (1991:54). This is a critical difference between Skerl and Buck-Morss, but it also returns us to the differences between Benjamin and the Surrealists, and the Beats and Beat Sociology: a political activism that can be utilized as a way to better understand fragmented texts (be it a book or a building).

The themes that Beat Sociology uses provide a guide for the writer—they are explicitly defined to help auto-ethnographer sift through the fragmentary, contradictory and multi-textuality of postmodernity, and then to help the reader as well. In the previous chapter I defined three themes central to the project of Beat Sociology explicitly: to incorporate postmodern concepts of identity, spatiality and travel into sociological discourse. This however, is not the end-all of thematic thinking, as I said they are concepts that I understand as central to Beat Sociology, there are the themes of the author to include as well.

As I previously stated, Beat Sociology returns to Mills' sociological imagination: the Beat Sociologist selects his or her own themes to guide investigations in postmodernity.[13] This is how the Beat Sociologist connects his or her own personal 'problems' or 'concerns' with the larger sociological context. Burroughs used sexuality, power and addiction to explore his lived experiences. Benjamin used dozens of themes.

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[13] Mills, unlike Skerl and Buck-Morss, notes that identifying and exploring the interconnections of theme is important in re-reading one's *own* work (1959:216). I believe that this level of self-reflexivity is vital to doing Beat Sociology.

The Beat Sociologist uses any themes, and any number of themes s/he desires. For this project I have selected the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the self, and transition between interior and exterior for my themes. There are obviously interconnections between these themes and the three central components of Beat Sociology: identity, space, and travel. The reason that I selected these two themes was to facilitate the connections between Beat Sociology, postmodernity and the Beat Sociologist. I could have as easily selected gender, race, class, feet, or postcards, but instead I chose these. In the following chapter I will explore these themes and the use of them in greater detail, and in Chapter Six I will apply these themes.

To Represent or To Evoke? In line with other postmodernists, I define everything as a viable text to be used and "seek to 'locate' meaning rather than 'discover' it" (Rosenau 1992:8). I only uncover and explore, and represent in this text, the product of these endeavors never being 'Truth.' Although postmodernists shy away from claiming a 'representation,' I will not concern myself with "the ability to reproduce and duplicate external reality" (1992:96-7). To me, representations imply that there has been a construction of an image/idea/context, and that they, by definition, are incapable of claiming any sort of objectivity (admittedly, I am, perhaps allowing my postmodern slip to show). The modern (American Heritage Dictionary, 1996) definition of 'represent' is 'to stand for, to symbolize.' A postmodern text offers an alternative—in the terms of Stephen Tyler, through *evocation* we use fragments of discourse that are intended to engage both the reader and the writer for a therapeutic effect (1987:200). Evocation frees the reader and the writer from objects, facts, descriptions, generalizations, and the troublesome notion of a Truth.

Beat Sociology does not offer the ruse of an exact reproduction of lived experiences. I, admittedly, am unconvinced that 'evocation' is a particularly better term than 'representation.' I believe that a 'representation' of some object/experience/space is not

equivalent with a 'reproduction' of it. I will inevitably use both represent and evoke interchangeably throughout this project, but with this disclaimer: that by no means do I imply that representation is an exact reproduction of a object/subject at hand.

So, You Want to Get Married in Las Vegas?

...and the womb of God or the womb of Tathagata, it's two languages not two gods—And anyway the truth is relative, the world is relative, everything is relative—Fire is fire and isnt fire—"Don't disturb the sleeping Einstein in his bliss"—"So it's only a dream so shut up and enjoy—lake of the mind... (Kerouac 1980:79)

A use of Beat literature and poetry provides a window, a view into postmodernism that was perhaps available, but not deliberate or systematic. Beat methodology provides this connection between the individual and the social, a connection Mills conceptualized but never completed. As I have stated and re-stated, Mills believed that sociology is most effective when it connects the personal problems of the individual with the public problems of the social. Beat Sociology bridges this gap in the postmodern moment by connecting the postmodern individual and postmodernity. Beat Sociology stands in-between these two spaces, and it is a theory and method of the in-between. The 'in-between' is, in fact, a privileged position. Kincheloe and McLaren note the apparent dialogue between the two paradigms; "an interplay between the praxis of the critical and the radical uncertainty of the postmodern" (1994:144). Postmodernism, and its proliferation of hybrids (Latour 1993) has provided for this ability to compose a 'hybrid theory' as I stated in Chapter One.

I have continually presented Beat theory and methodology as being in dialogue with different camps at the same time: Benjamin and Burroughs, Surrealism and sociology, Beat writing and ethnography, C. Wright Mills and Jack Kerouac. The methodology I have

proposed focuses on the 'in-between' of the fragments—between epiphanic moments and event cities, between objects and technologies, auto-ethnographies and arcades. I believe that this 'in-between' is the most comfortable position to situate this text—somewhere in between—in the *intermezzo* (Deleuze and Guattari 1983 and 1987) or *la frontera* (Anzaldúa 1987).

Between these forced dyads of sociology and Beat, between the lived social world and the re-presented one, stands the author—the Beat Sociologist. The author is the pivot, through which a balance needs to be achieved. It is therefore imperative that the author must also become the actor, the subject and object of Beat Sociology.

Being 'the author,' the Beat Sociologist is an integral part of the research. This is not a new proposal for ethnography, but quite an old one. The ethnographer has *always* been a relevant aspect of the text. Beat Sociology offers a text that is saturated with subjective presence to simply demonstrate how the writer 'brackets' or 'frames' every aspect of the text. This unabashed 'textual self-reflexivity' is in direct contradistinction to modern ethnography. In line with Guba and Lincoln's version of critical theory (1994:110), for the purposes of this project I assume that there is an 'apprehensible reality' that has been shaped and crafted. To understand a relationship between this apprehensible reality and the social individual/author/me is to experience these spaces, to get lost in them, not to simply observe them. Like Kerouac at Desolation Peak, Burroughs in his Interzone, Ginsberg in a supermarket and Benjamin in the streets of Paris. I agree with Harvey that:

> Fiction, fragmentation, collage, and eclecticism, all suffused with a sense of ephemerality and chaos, are perhaps the themes that dominated in today's practices of architecture and urban design. (1990:98)

and that the most advantageous place for the Beat Sociologist to begin his or her study would be Las Vegas, Nevada. Las Vegas should not be dismissed as a 'fool's playground'

or simply a tourist trap. It is a templ(at)e of consumer space for the twenty-first century in its most unabashed form. To uncover the connections and meanings here, in Las Vegas, is to do so in the less-visible, more insidious realm of 'everyday life' in other places. I believe that all of these forms—objects, epiphanies, event spaces, arcades, fragmentation, and contradiction—come together in a bizarre marriage in Las Vegas. In the following chapter I will explore the idea of investigating Las Vegas, and the themes I have selected for this project in greater detail.

CHAPTER 5

MAPPING OUT A BEAT ETHNOGRAPHY

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly set up the application of Beat Sociology through a description of the themes I will utilize and the site(s) I will be exploring. As I stated in previous chapters, the use of themes is intended to guide the Beat writer and reader through a piece of the otherwise complex system of relationships and interactions that exist within the postmodern moment.

In this chapter I would like to do three things. One, to describe the social spaces I will explore and establish Las Vegas as a center of postmodern and Beat Sociology. Two, to clearly define the themes I will address in my Beat ethnography. Three, to establish a map through which the reader will be able to 'locate' the themes and ideas I discuss in this chapter.

Fabulous Las Vegas

...the message of television as metaphor is not only that all the world is a stage but that the stage is located in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Postman 1985:93)

Las Vegas has been referred to as a postmodern capital, a city built on pleasure. Denzin believes Las Vegas "stands at the cross-roads of the contemporary moment"

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(1993:66). It is a city constructed on what Baudrillard has referred to as simulacrum (1983), the production of a copy for which no real ever existed. Las Vegas gives the impression that you are getting the real thing; or better yet, it makes you forget there is a real thing, a real Egypt (Luxor), a real Michelangelo's David (Caesars Palace), a real statue of Liberty (New York, New York). Kincheloe and McLaren define the "postmodern condition of hyperreality" as being socially saturated with multiple forms of representation whether they be filmic, photographic, or electronic (1994:142). The site of interest here is rich with a deliberately constructed world; built with stucco and billboards, Hawaii Five-O theme song 'muzak' and neon signage, piped in bird songs and invisible crickets, gimmicks and gladiators, pirates and pyrotechnics. Las Vegas is all bread and circuses. To represent these social spaces through a cohesive line of inquiry (i.e. 'modern') would be to ignore the fragmented, inter-textual experience that *is* Las Vegas.

Baudrillard notes that Americans "have not destroyed space; they have simply rendered it infinite by the destruction of its centre (hence these infinitely extendible cities). In so doing, they have opened up a true fictional space" (1988:99). Stretching out into the desert, Las Vegas leaves the impression that the city itself is 'infinitely extendible': it produces endless rows of strip housing, endless rows of lights into the dirt. With its waterfalls and neon lights with miles of nothing surrounding it, Las Vegas is a fiction. However expansive this city may seem, it is in fact not the case. Much like the spaces within the casinos, the space of Las Vegas mirrors itself infinitely to provide a seemingly limitless expansion in both image and reality. Just like the mirrored walls of a casino, Las Vegas is slowly becoming over populated, bound by water use and the mountains that surround it on the east and west.

In Chapter One I used Vincent Crapanzano's essay "Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description" (1986:82), as an example of how the ethnographer can jump 'into the fray' of postmodernity. Within the essay, Crapanzano criticizes Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's for not choosing to join in, not to jump into the

carnival but to stand upon a balcony and observe from afar in his piece "Italienische Reise." Similar to Gottschalk's essay "Ethnographic Fragments in Postmodern Spaces" (1995), Crapanzano insists that we must jump into the carnival in the spirit of Kerouac. There is no balcony in postmodernity, nor in Las Vegas. The Beat Sociologist, as Michel de Certeau's 'wandersmänner' in Las Vegas, is neck deep in subjective experience.

Gottschalk's text, an excellent example of flânerie, exposes Las Vegas as a seemingly never-ending fragmented experience, and is reflected in the ethnographic pieces that construct his text. My only concern is that we realize that one of his 'respondents,' Sally, is wrong. She states that "It's so hard to create meaningful relationships in this town" (1995:205), and she may be correct if she is simply referring to the people of Las Vegas. However, the Beat Sociologist knows differently. To the Beat Sociologist, Las Vegas in fact survives and thrives on the meaningful relationships those who explore it make with the signs, objects and spaces that construct it. The signs and images of Las Vegas shepherd and lure travelers into a world of fun, leaving their dull "humdrum life" behind (Fontana and Preston 1990:11). Denzin's "*Rain Man* in Las Vegas" uses the film *Rain Man* to explore how the postmodern, "Las Vegas experience skates across the outer surfaces of the postmodern self" (1993:66). He believes that the Rain Man stands in-between Baudrillard's simulacra and an interactionist understanding of the self. With an investigation of the postmodern self in Las Vegas, Denzin (through his read of the film) then turns east away from Sin City to the country stating that:

> ...the film suggests that the anchor of the postmodern self lies in the country
> side, in the roads less well traveled, on those paths where the deep roots of
> America's last gasping modernist moments linger. (1993:71)

Here I disagree with Denzin. I believe that the anchor has been unfastened, the postmodern self set adrift. As I stated in Chapter Four, I believe the postmodern individual is set afloat

amongst a sea of images, signs and spaces that are at times confusing and contradictory. I see the individual as gleaning cues from these images, signs and spaces, and believe that the individual formulates him or herself to reflect the logic of these constructs (an idea similar to Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization and reterritorialization that I will discuss in the next section of this chapter). Las Vegas is an important backdrop as to better understand how this interaction works. Not only because Las Vegas is a center of culture for America, but also in that here these processes are so outwardly manifested. As I have mentioned, I did not randomly select Las Vegas as the first exploration of Beat Sociology. The signs, images and spaces of Las Vegas are so carefully constructed, and for such specific purposes, that the affect upon the individual is not as random as we would like to believe. The city provides these cultural components for a specific economic gain, to bring us into the casino, to have us gamble away money. These characteristics, when internalized into the individual, construct us in different, sociologically significant ways—we become increasingly consumer oriented and less critical of our social environment. In the end, Denzin agrees that the postmodern self "cannot unravel and find its own meanings until it breaks out of the glossy, neon linguistic codes that commodify experience and connect the real to its surface representations" (1993:74).

It is obvious that Las Vegas has been a center of interest for American culture, as Postman predicted more than a dozen years ago in Amusing Ourselves to Death (1985). Recent films either about Las Vegas or set partially in Las Vegas, include *Rain Man*, *Honeymoon in Vegas*, *Casino*, *Leaving Las Vegas*, *Swingers*, *Con Air*, and the upcoming film based on Hunter S. Thompson's Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1996). Reflecting this growing interest, Gottschalk's aforementioned essay hardly stands alone as a single 'academic' exploration of Las Vegas. The city has similarly been the 'hot' subject for architects, historians, philosophers and sociologists in recent years.[1] I have selected Las

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Vegas to be the site of the first 'outing' for Beat Sociology not because of these recent trends in film and academia, but because I believe that Las Vegas provides a rich field of study for Beat Sociology. The city possesses characteristics that resonate with characteristics of not only my project, but also of postmodernity: multi-textuality, contradiction, collage-culture and fragmentation.

It should be apparent that Beat Sociology is intertwined with the social context the auto-ethnographer finds himself or herself in. For this project, I have selected three 'sites' within Las Vegas, Nevada. I have considered these spaces based on their similar purposes and differing configurations: 1.) the interior spaces of casinos on Las Vegas Boulevard and Fremont Street; 2.) the outside spaces between that separate Las Vegas Boulevard from the casino—the 'event' space that is designed specifically to draw you into the gambling spaces. The Mirage's Island Volcano, Caesars Forum Shops[2], and Treasure Island's Pirate Show, specifically; 3.) the 'Fremont Street Experience'—as an inside/outside intermediate space, connecting the casinos on one side of Fremont Street with the other side by a canopy of lights. I will describe each of these spaces in greater detail in the following chapter.

Each of these sets of spaces are not mutually exclusive: the 'event' space provided by Treasure Island's Pirate show directly flows into the casino, and the space/event of the Fremont Experience makes the series of different buildings into one larger casino. In the interest of attracting customers and luring them into the gaming areas many casinos blur the lines between street and sidewalk, event space and gaming space. Formerly in downtown Las Vegas one could practically drive right up to a slot machine on Fremont Street, but now the lines are blurred. At the Treasure Island, the pedestrian barely notices that she has

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(1993), Fontana and Preston (1990), and Gottschalk (1995), historians Davis and Rothman (1998), and philosopher Baudrillard (1988).

[2] Caesars Forum Shops is a mall connected to Caesars Palace Casino. The mall gives the illusion of being similar to the open-air European arcades of the early 1900's that Walter Benjamin explored in his 'Passagen-Werk.'

moved from a street to a side walk, to a wooden walkway with a slight incline, to the event space where there is a pirate show, to the casino space. These spaces are blurred together to give the appearance of fluidity between exterior and interior spaces, public space and private space. This theme of interiority and exteriority is just one of the issues that I will be addressing in my Beat ethnography.

The Grid

For his La Villette project, Bernard Tschumi needed to find an ordering system for the 'dissociated spaces' that he found to be similar to a schizophrenic experirnce. The approach behind this project was to compose a grid of *folies*—"meeting points, anchoring points where fragments of dislocated reality can be apprehended" (1996:177-78). The grid of *folies* provides a reference to help secure incongruity. Similarly, in an exploration of Las Vegas (a difficult and daunting task), I believe that a loose grid of 'thematic moments' can provide fleeting glimpses of order in an otherwise chaotic collage of ethnographic experiences. For this project, I have focused upon several issues or themes that have acted as 'filters' for viewing and interpreting my surroundings. These themes act as *folie* to secure ethnographic experiences with social issues and themes. For example, in Chapter Three I had a section titled 'Technologies of Control,' and through exploring Las Vegas casinos I used the ideas discussed in that chapter as a filter through which I investigated these spaces. In my Beat ethnography, there are several sections in which I pay careful attention to the security cameras and guards as a point of ethnographic analysis.

As one reads the work of William S. Burroughs (particularly Soft Machine, The Ticket That Exploded, and Nova Express) the reader is confronted with a difficult set of sentences that are at times frustrating and confusing. Because of the cut-up method, the ideas, reflections and experiences in the work of Burroughs are fragmented and incongruous. As I mentioned in Chapter Four, Jennie Skerl (1985) proposes that the reader

select themes through which s/he can then pick up the fragments with a particular issue or concept in mind. I believe that the reader of a Beat ethnography should have a similar sensibility. However, one of the ways in which I depart from the work of Burroughs is that I believe that the themes through which I analyze social spaces should be made explicit. To help the reader with my Beat ethnography, here I will be explicit about the issues and themes. As a means of prefacing my Beat ethnography here I will briefly describe the spaces I will explore, mention the themes central to Beat Sociology (outlined in Chapters Two and Three), and add two additional themes. In this section I will propose that the reader can use these spaces (what I will refer to as 'ethnographic venues'), the themes of Beat Sociology, and my own personal themes (what I will refer to as 'personal axes,' similar to Mills' personal problems) as coordinates to locate the ideas and issues I discuss in my Beat ethnography. The three spaces I explore are casino spaces, event spaces and Fremont Street. The three central themes to Beat Sociology are identity, space and migrancy. The two personal issues I explore here are deterritorialization/reterritorialization of the self, and interiority/exteriority. All of these issues will be described in detail in the following pages. However, first I will map out a grid of these spaces, themes and issues so that the reader can visualize the interaction between each of these ideas.

By using the three Las Vegas spaces, the three elements of Beat Sociology, and my two 'personal' themes, I can now form a grid. This construct can be utilized to track the movement of the author through these spaces, themes, and theories. For this project, the Las Vegas spaces form the columns, the elements of Beat Sociology form the rows, and within each compartment are the personal themes. This grid is merely a guide through which the reader can better understand the fragments and ideas that are presented in the following chapter.

	CASINO	EVENT SPACE	FREMONT STREET
IDENTITY	de/reterr. self in/out spaces	de/reterr. self in/out spaces	de/reterr. self in/out spaces
SPACE	de/reterr. self in/out spaces	de/reterr. self in/out spaces	de/reterr. self in/out spaces
MIGRANCY	de/reterr. self in/out spaces	de/reterr. self in/out spaces	de/reterr. self in/out spaces

To provide an example, the first auto-ethnographic fragment in the following chapter is concerned with my own issues of identity as a drug dealer assumes me to be a 'hippie.' I believe this to contain issues of identity, in particular a deterritorialization of self (a concept that will be discussed shortly). This moment occurred on Fremont Street and would thus be placed in the top right-hand box of this grid. Throughout the entire Beat ethnography, the reader can use this grid to locate the issues and themes I touch upon. I will return to this grid in my conclusions, mapping out several aspects of my Beat ethnography. For the remainder of this chapter I will go into my themes and spaces in greater detail, beginning with the ethnographic venues in which my ethnography takes place.

Three Ethnographic Venues.

Casinos. As I mentioned above, there are three primary 'types' of spaces that I will investigate in Las Vegas. The first is the interior spaces of the casino. Las Vegas casinos are designed like few other buildings. While most buildings are designed to provide easy egress from one space to another and provide clues to locate your spatial positioning,

casino spaces are designed to do quite the opposite. Within the casino, there are no windows, no clocks, and the means of exit are often obscured. They are dark, low spaces, specifically designed to be disorienting with seemingly limitless boundaries and winding corridors. Alan Hess notes that these spaces do have "well-defined cues that guide the visitor to specific places" (Hess 1993:120). However, these cues do not inform of a way out, but instead direct patrons to restaurants, gift shops, showrooms, bars, and bathrooms. To make casino spaces seem larger than they actually are, walls are often covered with mirrors from floor to ceiling (most evident in Steve Wynn's Golden Nugget). Two casinos that I explore in my Beat ethnography are Treasure Island (a casino on The Strip), and Binion's Horseshoe (on Fremont Street). I have explored, dare I say, most of the major casinos in Las Vegas all of which have aspects that are worthy of discussion here (most notably, the Luxor). Nonetheless, I have only selected a few of my ethnographic fragments from these places based upon the richness of information provided for my themes.

Event spaces. The second 'type' of space I explore in my Beat ethnography is the event space. Throughout the casino space there are what Alan Hess refers to as "mousetraps": showrooms, escalators, and restrooms that are placed in specific locations to move people from one place to another (1993:106). A similar logic is now being used to bring in customers. These spaces are designed by casino owners to entice pedestrians off the street and into the casino space, they are what I call 'event spaces.' Most exceptional of these spaces are the volcano in front of the Mirage, and the pirate show in front of Treasure Island. In my ethnography I also include Caesars Forum Shops. The Forum is a shopping mall that connects The Strip with the Caesars Palace casino; if one walks all the way through the mall s/he will end up in the casino space. While the volcano and pirates are designed solely for the purpose of attracting potential gamblers, the Forum Shops is not as explicit. The Forum Shops is like any suburban shopping mall, however, it maintains the same motif of Caesars Palace, and contains 'event' shows that attract crowds of

consumers, and literally invites them to journey deeper into the mall and casino spaces. The two 'events' that occur are performed by mechanical, android-like dummies. The particular one I discuss in my ethnography is an intricate display where statues of Bacchus, Apollo, Brutus and Venus apparently come to life—speaking to one another and the crowd gathered for the show. The mall is built to resemble European shopping arcades, similar to those Baudelaire and Benjamin explored. A clear blue sky is painted on the roof of the mall. However, through lighting, the colors of the sky change from sunrise, to midday, to sunset, to night, every hour. An entire day in one hour in order to amuse, distract, and disorient patrons and draw them, in awe, into the casino space.

Fremont Street. The third and final 'type' of space I explore is Fremont Street. In recent years many of the casinos on Fremont Street have had slumping business due to the boom of newer casinos and hotels on The Strip, less than two miles to the south. To bring visitors back to the Downtown area, the casinos came together to design a space that would be an attraction in and of itself. Designers closed down four blocks of Fremont Street (from Main to Fourth Street) to automobile traffic and constructed an arched latticework of lights from one side of the street to the other. This canopy acts as a large screen on which there are a series of shows that occur every hour on the hour. This structure provides a plaza on which a visitor can move from one casino to an entirely separate casino without feeling that s/he has gone outside. Due to desert weather conditions, many Fremont Street casinos have open sides with no doors, and a person can literally move from one casino to another *as if* in a shopping mall. Fremont Street intentionally blurs the boundaries between public and private spaces, in a way similar to the 'event spaces' mentioned earlier. It is, however, an interesting mix of interior space and exterior space, and it is for these reasons Fremont Street is difficult to define as either one, thus deserving of its own category.

Three Components of Beat Sociology

Central to Beat theory and methodology are the issues of identity, space and migrancy. Here I would like to quickly reiterate the three main components of Beat Sociology that I outlined in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three.

Identity. As I discussed in Chapter Three, identity has been conceptualized in a particular way within the postmodern moment. Beat Sociology conceptualizes the postmodern individual as being fragmented and multi-textual—comprised of many different components that are drawn from multiple social experiences and at times incongruous. The static, solidified individual of modernity is replaced with a more fluid one of postmodernity. The implications for this project are that the people I describe must be understood differently, as must the author. Here the author, or auto-ethnographer, is conceptualized as fragmented and multi-textual as well.

Space. While history has been privileged as the driving force of social change, Beat Sociology reorients social inquiry to social spaces. This focus on space does not deny the power of history, but proposes a more egalitarian approach. Much like the postmodern individual, postmodern spaces are comprised of multi-textual fragments that occur juxtaposed against one another. As one drives down The Strip and sees boundless incongruous images: a Middle-Eastern themed casino and a Middle Ages casino, a pacific island themed casino and a Roman casino, an Egyptian casino and the New York New York. The Beat Sociologist focuses on these spaces because s/he believes that their fragmentary, incongruous nature fosters similar characteristics in the individual. Bernard Tschumi asks whether or not one can effectively "read" a space (1997:31). I believe so, and I "read" these themed spaces through an investigation of dissimilar themes, in an effort to subvert the meaning of these spaces. Tschumi, notes that architecture must be

understood as a language, and "can only be read as a series of fragments that makes up an architectural reality" (1997:95). It should be apparent that I am preparing myself for an investigation of Las Vegas spaces, that that accomplishes both tasks—an exploration of fragments through a set of explicit themes.

Some of these spaces, as discussed earlier in this chapter, are designed to lure the pedestrian, some are designed to have its patrons lose a sense of time, some are designed to keep the gambler from leaving. Through applying these ideas to Las Vegas it becomes easy to understand the importance of investigating spatiality.

Migrancy. Lastly, the Beat Sociologist investigates the movement of the individual within these spaces. This movement, or migrancy, is central to understanding how the individual interacts with the objects, images and signs that construct social spaces. Through discussion of travel in the sections 'Epiphanies in Motion' and 'Bodies in Motion' I insist that the postmodern individual does far more than simply put one foot in front of the other. Movement can denote moments of identity construction, and epiphanic moments of re-construction. The Beat Sociologist insists that there is an interaction between bodily movement and identity in transition. In Las Vegas, for example, there are carefully constructed interactions that are specifically designed to provide epiphanic moments. There are spaces that are designed to encourage bodily movement into casino spaces and transition from one 'frame of mind' to another. These moments are not designed as a public service for the good of out-of-town visitors, but specifically for the economic benefit of Las Vegas casinos. The event spaces described in this chapter and the following one, are designed to promote epiphanic moments in the individual. These moments of transition are for a specific kind of transition in the individual—to change the him or her from a casual observer to a participant/consumer/gambler.

reterritorialization as a corresponding reformulation of the self. Deterritorialization can be understood as a process in which the ideas, concepts and formulations of the identity of the individual are taken apart by outside social forces. Correspondingly, reterritorialization is the process of reconfiguring the ideas, concepts, and formulations in new configurations. In Chapter Three I discussed how Deleuze and Guattari use the work of Kafka to explore this process of the self. Kafka used the 'becoming-animal' as a way to denote the joint process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. A simplistic interpretation of Kafka's The Metamorphosis (1971), would be that through the pressures of his family structure and overly rationalized employment, protagonist Gregor Samsa escapes these problems and social forces by reterritorializing into a new form.

Brian Massumi explains that Deleuze and Guattari's transformation of identity occur through a process: deterritorialization—an "uprooting of the individual" through decoding the pattern of actions that affect it, and then a reterritorialization—'recoding' by imposing "new patterns of connection with itself and its surroundings" (1992:51). Holland makes the distinction that deterritorialization and reterritorialization are processes that act upon the body, through production and consumption. The processes of decoding and recoding affect the symbolic exchange between the individual and the objects, signs and spaces around him or her (1996:242).[3] While Deleuze and Guattari provide far more intricate discussion of both conceptions, for the purposes of this project this simple rendering of these concepts is more than sufficient.

Concerning this project, I believe that the spaces and movements in Las Vegas are designed to alter the identity of the individual in ways that benefit the casinos. As I

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[3] Holland correctly makes the connection between this process of identity-in-transition with Baudelaire's flânerie. He believes that Baudelaire's "...decoding of metaphor, meaning, and identity thus fosters not sheer meaninglessness, undecidiblity, or the abyss, but rather metaonymic reference to context—even if such reference must at the limit forgo any claim to stable meaning" (1996:246).

mentioned earlier in this chapter, these spaces deterritorialize the individual from husband, doctor, or 12th grader, and then reterritorialize him or her into a consumer/gambler. Vital to this project of Beat ethnography then, is not only a better understanding of the individual, but also an understanding how the individual changes. I believe that Beat Sociology, in this sense, contains a spirit similar to Baudelaire's flânerie, in that both search for an understanding of the context to better understand the individual. The differences between the two are that Beat Sociology upholds a specifically political understanding of the context and addresses the postmodern moment rather than Baudelaire's modernism. Because the individual plays such a pivotal role in Beat Sociology through auto-ethnography, I feel that by utilizing deterritorialization and reterritorialization as a theme, can only reinforce the foundations of Beat Sociology.

Interiority and exteriority. The second theme that I have chosen is the tension between 'interior spaces' and 'exterior spaces.' I believe that Las Vegas casino spaces deliberately blur the line between these two constructs to ease the transition from the public spaces of the sidewalk and the private casino spaces. This blur eases the impact of the privatization, and therefore consumer-izing, of public spaces. Two of the spaces that I have selected for this project are designed for this purpose: 'event spaces' and The Fremont Street Experience. These event spaces in Las Vegas often stretch from the casino directly to the street, making the sidewalk itself part of the attraction. The Fremont Street Experience closed off four city blocks to create an arcade not entirely unlike those Benjamin strolled through sixty years ago.

These interior and exterior spaces correlate with two other concepts used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987); sedentary and nomadic spaces. Sedentary spaces are fixed, rigid enclosed spaces, while nomadic spaces are smooth and open-ended (Massumi 1992:6). The nomad for Deleuze and Guattari is one who travels through spaces, attempting to create a smooth 'plane of thought' similar to the space s/he inhabits. As I

stated in Chapter Three, nomadic thought lends itself not to the closed equation (x = not y), but an open one (a + F + 4 + mouth +...). The constant state of 'becoming,' discussed in the same chapter as changing identity through the movement of the nomad, opens her up to a smoother plane of thought. The nomad is Deleuze and Guattari's postmodern rendering of the flâneur, and I believe a second cousin to the Beat Sociologist.

The nomad is similar to the Beat Sociologist in that both desire to move freely between spaces and experiences, thoughts and ideas. Both strive for a means to move from one point, not as a destination, but simply another connection made in a web of multiple possible points. Deleuze and Guattari state that the 'life of he nomad is in the intermezzo,' and so too is life of the Beat Sociologist (1987:380). It should be apparent however, that there are two important differences between the Beat Sociologist and the nomad. One, the explicit political agenda of the Beat Sociologist. Two, while the Beat Sociologist utilizes the 'open equation' for her thoughts and interpretations, it is not for a 'smooth' strain of thought and interpretations. Instead, I believe that Beat Sociology proposes a rough, 'messy' text full of (w)holes and aporias. Nonetheless, I believe that in this project, to investigate the spaces of Las Vegas, the Beat Sociologist must have nomadic sensibilities in her explorations: I will reiterate that the space of the nomad is not necessarily the wide open desert, but also in the *intermezzo*, or the *in-between*. In Las Vegas, where the lines between public and private, state and service, sidewalk and casino are blurred, I believe one ought to be cognizant of his or her own position between the two(s).

On the In-between, Again

Now that I have discussed each of the components of my Beat ethnography, it is important to describe how this will be presented on the page. The following chapter, my Beat ethnography, is a series of fragments. Some of the fragments are three pages long, one of them is three lines long. Some of the fragments are auto-ethnography, some are

poetry, some a photography. However these pieces are not the (w)hole of the project. As I have mentioned in preceding chapters, the reader is the one who brings the text closer to completion. While s/he may never write on the page, it is through his or her interaction with the text that Beat ethnography literally comes to life. In this text, the way that I engage the reader is by providing gaps between each of the fragments. It is in these spaces that the reader is invited to add ideas, thoughts, feelings and interpretations to the text.

In Chapter Three I briefly mentioned Scott McCloud's text Understanding Comics (1993) and the way in which the spaces in-between frames were used a powerful tool for the graphic artist. In 'the gutter' as it is called, the mind of reader must fill in what has occurred. The reader understands that what occurs in the frame of the comic is but a moment of an assumed continuum. In one frame of a comic there may be a hand with a knife, in the next frame there may be a pair of legs and a pool of red liquid. While the reader was not shown a murder, s/he puts the two frames together to come up with a connection between the frames. To understand the story, the reader has then actively engaged in the process.

In the Beat ethnography that follows this chapter, I believe that there is an idea similar to McCloud's placed on this space between fragments; after all it is no accident that this coincides with my emphasis on the 'in-between' throughout this project. Between these fragments I have sought a way to indicate a change from one fragment to the next, to allow the reader a chance to enter into the text, but I have also tried to use these spaces to indicate which themes and issues I am addressing in each segment. As I walked through the streets and casinos of Las Vegas, I naturally observed one sign after another. The signs that most caught my eye, however, were those in which there was a running train of information on an LCD sign that displayed the games and scores of the NCAA tournament in a casino sportsbook:

[e Forest 4:05 et... U.N.L.V. and Princeton 7:40 et... Univ]

I believe this to be an interesting tool through which I can run by a series of themes as the reader moves through the text (and all the more relevant that it reflects the Las Vegas context). Throughout Chapter Six there are these 'brackets' with a running header that not only indicates the theme(s) I explore within that fragment, but also those that preceded it and those that follow. If there is a fragment that explores both event spaces and deterritorialization, with fragments that explore speed before and after it, the header will look as such:

[eed...event space and deterritorialization...sp]

The use of this display is the result of a tension in my 'authorship' of the text. I needed to move through the themes, ideas and issues described in this chapter without segregating sets of issues from one another. It would be difficult to come up with a single event that demonstrates 'identity' in a pure form. If this project proposes anything, it is that we need to explore the interactions of multiple concepts and ideas. Nonetheless, the following Beat ethnography consists of a series of fragments that are loosely bound to the 'bracketed' theme above it.

A Note on the My Beat Ethnography

To return to 'the grid' for a moment, I would like to briefly mention how this geometric form finds itself upon the printed page. This grid is intended to be a guide, that can be referred to at any moment in the ethnographic piece itself. As the reader moves through the text, s/he may get a sense of how I planned this ethnography to develop, and how this grid unfolds into a semi-linear string of fragments. Roughly speaking, the ethnography begins with the identity of the author, moves to spaces, events and objects, movement, control, deterritorialization and reterritorialization and lastly epiphanic moments. This unfolding, or unraveling of the geometric grid, is only an approximation, for these themes are at times very much connected, and at other moments a loose strand of

puzzle pieces. How I maintain a semblance of order is through a running commentary of my themes. issues. and concerns. This is intended to facilitate the flow of the fragments.

Throughout the Beat ethnography that follows this chapter. there are fragments that are in italics. Within these sections. I provide moments of reflection, description, and analysis. This running commentary weave through the text to provide some means of connection between the fragments. These are moments where I feel it necessary to bring forth some of the issues and themes that I understand as relevant or important to the text itself. Many of these spaces and events are difficult to describe, and more often than not, difficult to include in my auto-ethnographic fragments. The italicized text attempts to fill these difficult voids and to contextualize the auto-ethnographic vignettes.

All Aboard

Postmodern ethnography must be another kind of intertextuality whose project is not to reveal the other in univocal descriptions which allegorically identify the other's difference as our interest. It must be instead, a fantasy of identities. a plurivocal evocation of difference making a unity in fantasy that mimics on every page the rationalism that seems to inform it, and reveals between every line the difference it conceals in every word, that it might speak not for the other "for us." but let the other's voice be heard. too, and not just "for us." but "for us both." (Tyler 1987:102)

Every concept shapes and reshapes the event in its own way. The greatness of a philosophy is measured by the nature of the events to which its concepts summon us or that it enables us to release in concepts. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994:34)

Beat Sociology does not end with this grid. Upon its reading, the reader enters into the text adding an additional dimension to the study, and the reader makes the final connections to his or her own experiences. In the end, these are the connections through which the text will gain its importance and relevance. Perhaps the reader has been to Las Vegas, perhaps the reader has seen the movie *Leaving Las Vegas*, perhaps the reader has noticed some of the issues I have raised, perhaps the reader has been made aware of issues s/he did not considered previously. By admission, this text can never be complete. This is where 'the other's voice' can be heard as Tyler suggests above. The gaps and spaces in-between the ethnographic fragments and bits is where the reader can enter the text, but it is also the admitted incompleteness—the absence of the 'other.'

This representation of experience cannot be a full one, nor does it wish to be. This text invites the reader to explore it much like a Las Vegas casino, to wander through it aimlessly, not quite sure of entrance nor exit, just material that can be interpreted. There is the opportunity for the reader to not only interpret my interpretations (of interpretations), but to add to the text itself.

I do not accept the imposition of the thick, rigid construction of modern ethnography. This Beat text, instead accepts a more organic model, wherein the reader and text become a part of an ethnographic process. There are big gaping (w)holes in the text— in-between the fragments of theory and lived experiences—in which the reader can insert their own experiences, monologue, disagreements and images. It is only then, where the ethnography circles, and entangles, the reader's own ideas and experiences, that the ethnography begins to come closer to a complete text. Only when it begins to adhere to the experiences of the reader does it gain validity and 'representitiveness.' The reader does not have to have physically been in Southern Nevada, but as long as the situation is plausible to their own lived experience, through a memory or image of a television show, a grocery store plaza or their screened in patio.

To travel through these spaces, Deleuze and Guattari believe that we are led to a new forms of thought. 'Nomadology' according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the opposite of history: there are multiplicities of flows; semiotic, sexual, social and material, nothing to do with time—or everything with the lack of time (1987:23). The migrancy of the nomad is "intensive, and occurs in relation to thresholds of intensity between which it involves or crosses. One travels by intensity..." (1987:54). The home of the nomad is not the interior spaces I described above, but the wide open spaces—within the crowd. The auto-ethnographic nomad is deterritorialized by the exterior, these spaces, signs and objects discussed in previous chapters. S/he then reterritorializes on his or her internal milieus, a new form of thought. Chambers sees that a rethinking of history and culture is dependent upon the "recalling and re-membering of earlier fragments... as they come to live on in new constellations" (1994:3). These new constellations are formed through this process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Massumi states that the thought that "does not lodge itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority" and instead prefers to move through the exterior leads towards constructing a smooth space of thought, the very project of Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1983 and 1987).

This project is a series of spaces and experiences, emotions and States, that the nomad, and the auto-ethnographer, both struggle with and attempt to form and reform again in a continual process. This will, in the end, leave us without an easy summary, a full jar with no lid, volumes without bookends. What it does leave us with are just flows of traffic, traffic in a multiplicity of directions. No roads, only roadsigns.

CHAPTER 6

LAS VEGAS BLUES

[...epiphany...sp]

Dreaming of utopias

where everyone's a lover

I see San Francisco from my window

thru some old navy beerbottles

The glass is dark

What's it all about...

(Ferlingetti 1967:103)

[any...space...iden]

...from above it must look like a human rib cage: large whitish strips that stretch from one side of the street to the other, forming an archway four blocks long. In-between the ribs you could see the crazy lights pumping, pulsating in sync with a faint soundtrack. Tiny lights beating, like a thousand tiny multicolored hearts. Like blood the lights and colors stream back and forth from one end of the body to the other. Shapes appear, from the roof of a casino one can see stripes, stars, maybe even dancing girls. Surrounding this mad body lay inert buildings, cold and still and dark. The downtown body of Las Vegas seems nearly dead save these four blocks. The only signs of life lie within the chest of this arched curved roof called 'The Fremont Street Experience.' Peaking in-between the ribs you can

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see the technicolor blood-life flow. Peaking in-between the ribs you can see little bodies moving back and forth. When 'The Experience' show happens (every hour), the little bodies clot to a halt and stare upwards to watch the majestic cheesy show on the arched roof. Somewhere in-between these slits, in the bloodflow of bodies is me. However, I have never had this gods-eye view of Fremont Street—I move underneath the multi-colored roof that is all of Las Vegas. This is a story from below, in the crowds of this city...

[ce...identities...id]

March 6th, 1998. The Fremont Street Experience. 6:17 p.m.

"Here we go, here we go. Light my fire."

"Huh?" I asked.

"Light my fire, man." The forty-ish black man walks up to me from amidst a flux of bodies with an unlit cigarette dangling loosely from his mouth. Tagging slightly behind him is very young teenager with his hands buried deep into his red Starter jacket. The younger kids eyes have a wild and jumpy look to them as well.

"Oh... I don't... have..." I pat my pockets as if to double check whether or not I have simply forgotten that I don't smoke.

"Whatever you don't have, I've got what you need."

"I don't think you've got what I need." The older man looks at his friend and reaches into his pocket. The teenager walks off into the crowd.

"Try me. You want it, I got it." He pulls out a pack of matches from the Golden Gate Casino and lights his cigarette himself unassisted.

I thought for a second and answered honestly. "I need a master's thesis."

"Alright kid, you got me." He drags deeply from his cigarette and runs a short survey of the Fremont Street crowd. "Do me a favor?"

"What's that?" I ask.

Patting me on the bicep. the man says "Stay in school," and walks away.

Fifteen minutes later, after a 'Fremont Experience' show. I find a open bench and move towards it. I pull out my notebook with the big black letters: THESIS. and begin to write. I had watched the older man the last week, working the crowd. He would stand on the edges of the crowd, waiting. He would scan the faces, look them up and down, and then approach at apparent random. He would dodge a family, sidestep a suit, and approach a possible customer from an oblique angle. I would hear him say something to a person, shake their hand, coordinate his stride for a moment. It did not take me long to figure out that the man was a drug dealer. The reason I began to watch him was not because I could tell that he was a drug dealer, but because he was one of the very few people who walked through the crowd during the 'Experience.' He moved through the crowd, just as I did: slowly, observing the faces, watching expressions, feeling the crowd. After watching the 'Experience' crowd twice I had noticed him as one of the few people walking around, looking at people instead of looking up. He had approached me that day too, but I answered no thanks and moved on. I bend my head down, away from the crowd to hastily jot down these notes. I sketch out a map, and scribble comments like 'Starter' and 'Golden Gate' in the margins of the wrinkled page.

"So what's your thesis on?" a voice asks. I look up to see the drug dealer/free-lance career counselor standing directly in front of me as if summoned from my notes.

"Oh... Well, part of it's about Fremont Street."

"Like what about it?"

"The people I see. The things I experience. The places I have been." I find myself being unintentionally vague. "Sit down for a minute."

"No interviews man, no interviews," he says backing up.

"No, no. I just want to talk to you..." He gives a big wide smile and flops down next to me. His body falls into the bench like a laundry bag half full of clothes. He has a

dirty gray jacket and large gold ring that he wears on his pinkie finger. I put my notebook in my jacket pocket as a symbolic gesture as if to say 'no interview.' Instinctively feel the other pocket to make sure my camera is still there. I blush at the thought of him noticing such a stupid, middle-class-white-boy move, and hope that he does not notice that either. I ask him a couple of questions, but he rarely addresses them. I am sure that he could not care less what I ask, he seems to believe he has a good idea of what I want to know. I ask him how much he makes in a night, a stupid question that he rightfully ignores.

"Here's the thing—I walk around and I watch people. This is how I make my living, this is how I survive. Some people believe you'd just sit on a corner and people come to you, but not here. Here I need to do three things." He holds out his pinkie finger with the ring on it to indicate number one. "I need to find the person 'round here. It's not the other way around. These are all a bunch of tourists, all of them want to have fun. Some need me for that, and I have to find them."

"How do you know who? What gives someone away?"

Three girls walk by our bench. "Hey ladies, how we all doin' tonight?" He watches them ignore him, and continues. "There are things you just get to know about people. I'll show ya." I get up and think two things: *I am glad I left my wallet in the car* and *I am not going to leave the protective cover of the Fremont street roof.*

The man and I walk slowly down Fremont street, at about the same pace I was moving earlier. I walk on his left keeping pace. He continues talking about different people in the crowd and I watch his head to indicate who his is talking about. "He's a local. He is not looking around at all. You can tell he's hurrying to get home to his girlfriend and walks confident like. Cellphone." I watch the cellphoned man briskly turn around a corner and disappear. He turns to the left and nods his head. "College boys. Not local, though. L.A."

"What do they buy?"

"Ya'd think mary jane, but they need the cocaine." He pauses for a second to reflect upon his unintended rhyme. He quickly moves in front of me and I slow down to a very

casual stroll. "Fellas, how're we doin' tonight?" He shakes a hand or two. I find myself hovering near a souvenir/junk stand. My new friend looks over shoulders for the bicycle police, I start to count how many Las Vegas shotglasses there are at this one stand—it's a nervous habit of mine. 10, 11, 12... I watch them talk under their breath, and look at the 'Golden Nugget' sunvisor. 25, 26, 27... I begin to look for police myself. 32, 33, 34... As I turn back to the group I find my friend already by my side. "No money, no money. That's all I ever hear." We keep walking down the four blocks of Fremont. I forget at what number I stopped counting the ugly shotglasses.

A couple of seconds later he nods towards a man walking quickly out of Fitzgerald's casino. "One word: Methamphetamines." With that I walk away, towards the center of the plaza. I would not have given this man a second glance, but by looking at this guy I began to see—he looked nervous, jittery, even a kind of jerky walk. I begin to fondle another set of ugly Las Vegas trinkets on another tourist stand, always keeping an eye on the two men. The two circled each other one time and a half, shook hands and parted company. I didn't see anything. I was watching carefully this time and was looking for anything. I find myself wondering what exactly do methamphetamines look like. What concerns me is that I completely missed any transaction. I think that perhaps there was no deal to miss, but the look on my friends face indicates I could be wrong. He scanned the crowd, and found me quickly. He was smiling. "I like you m' man. Let's get some steak. I'm buying."

I stumble for words. "I'm not really all that hungry."

"A college boy not hungry? God damn, tell me that things haven't changed that much."

"How 'bout I let you buy me a beer."

"Right, right." We walk towards Binion's Horseshoe for some steak and beer.

[ities...identities and space...ev]

...in the crowds of this city I stand in an array of sights and sounds. I have little doubt that I am in the belly of the beast. The arched roof spans from The Golden Nugget casino to Binion's Horseshoe. Between the white strips I can see the dark, clear desert sky. These white strips harbor 2,100,000 lights and hang dozens of speakers. The structure is held up by a series of columns that reach up to the roof with tree-like branches. When 'The Experience' is not running, the arched roof is bleach-white, nondescript and dormant. The structure imposes a strict order upon the otherwise ramshackle casino fronts. It hacks off sight lines to the hotel towers and the huge parking garages that stand behind each casino— all that is left are the signs of the casinos, each two to three stories tall. There is no longer a sense of 'building' to these casinos. 'The Fremont Street Experience' has edited the Las Vegas experience to its purest form: the sign. When there is no 'Experience' show, it looks as if the rest of Las Vegas has been erased. When there is a show, it seems as if you are actually in the sign itself. Surrounded by light and sound, 'The Experience' is the ultimate epiphanic moment. The viewer becomes Fremont Street.

Here I meet Dave, a middle aged drug dealer that focuses his attention on the tourists visiting the Fremont Street area. Through discussions with him I find myself questioning who I am, and how well I am able to 'read' people. Both of us are attempting to profit off of the crowd. I desire to represent them, he desires to make a deal. Both of us are watching...

[ce...event space...ide]
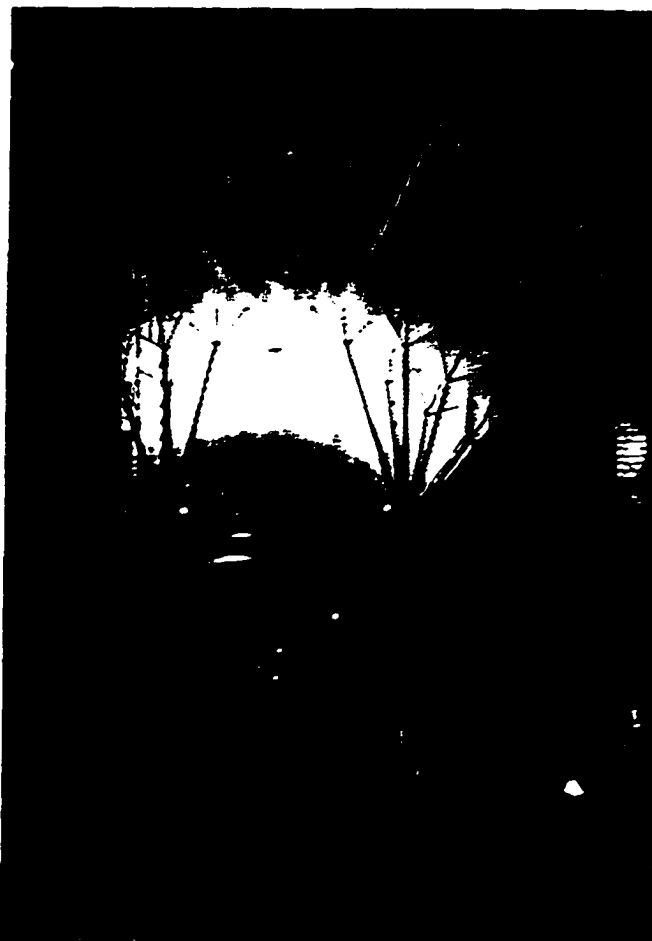
[ace...identities...mig]

March 6th, 1998. Binion's Horseshoe Restaurant. 7:05 p.m.

My new drug dealer friend is talking on about Las Vegas, and I nod at appropriate times. His words blur together in my head because I keep looking down at my beer and thinking two things: *What am I doing in the Binion's Horseshoe restaurant with this guy?* and *Did methamphetamines buy this beer?* Neither question can I find answers for. As his medium rare steak comes to the table I begin to recover from my hazy line of thought, realizing that I must talk while he eats. Otherwise there's that uncomfortable silence that

happens between a graduate student and a drug dealer in a downtown Las Vegas casino restaurant.

"I have been spending my time watching people, looking at what they look at. I see how they walk and follow them. I listen to what they say. I feel the crowd. Walk fast, walk slow. It is interesting that we both profit off of the same things. Like you, I will make a living off of how well I read people." I quickly sip my beer, thinking for a second. I wonder what the hell am I saying, and fleetingly contemplate if I could count the tiny bubbles in my beer. Could there possibly be *anything* similar between us? I wonder who this is more offensive to, him or the A.S.A.

He finishes chewing a slice of steak, wipes his mouth and smiles. "Oh I guarantee you one thing: I can't write all that good and I don't read much, but I think in some ways I'm a better sociologist than you." He grabs some ketchup and jerks some out onto his fries.

"I never said I was studying sociology."

"You ain't studying math or engineering or theater that's for sure."

I begin to wonder if he is right. Maybe he does know more about people than I do. However, he cannot be an exceptional drug dealer—he had incorrectly approached me as a potential customer. Twice. "Today was the second time you have approached me."

"What, tonight?"

"No, I have been down here walking around Fremont for the last two weekends. Today was the second time you came up to me. I watched you working last Friday too."

"Damn. Maybe I'm gettin' sloppy." He laughs and grabs another roll. I watch as his dirty fingernails rip into the white bread and then pry into a butter packet.

"What did you think I wanted?" I remember the methamphetamine guy, the way he walked. His jittery demeanor. That's not me, right? I decide I would not like to be mistaken for a meth addict. Even though I was sitting in a booth with half of my body covered, he still looks me up and down as if he can see through the table. "Long hair, sandals, loose

clothes. You're a hippie-type. So, grass." His head rolled a little, his eyes dull as if to simulate the 'hippie-type.'

I truly dislike the Grateful Dead and have never cared for them. I wonder what about me is 'hippie-type.' I have never found myself to be aligned with any of the tenets of hippie-dom. I do not own one tie-dye. I am told that it is the hair. Until a year ago I had short hair, and bangs. Now my hair is shoulder length, parted towards the center. I believe that my clothes are what give me away as a really bad hippie. I wear my clothes an extra size too large, but generally buy Gap-like clothes. This is a look my friend refers to as 'frump-prep.' After growing my hair long, I have found that I have traded in being mistaken as gay for being mistaken as a hippie. At the table I begin to wonder if I had perhaps mellowed out after moving out west.

Leaving Binion's Casino I take leave of my new friend. I tell him thanks for the beer, and he thanks me for the conversation. I ask him for a name, not to write down but because it just seems awkward to spend a couple of hours with someone and not know their name.

"Dave, man." He shakes my outstretched hand.

"Jon." I start to thank again him but he moves away from me. Five seconds later I lose him in the crowd.

[ies...migrancy and identity...rete]

No longer wishing others to see them, Americans end up not seeing one another. So people pass in the streets without looking at one another, which may seem a mark of discretion and civility, but which is also a sign of difference. At least this is not affected. It is both a quality and the absence of quality. (Baudrillard 1988:95)

...watching the events occurring around 'The Fremont Street Experience' I wonder which way it is: do we not see ourselves because we do not see each other, or is it because we do not see each other that we cannot see ourselves? Is Baudrillard correct in that few Americans pass without looking at each other? Some obviously do look at each other, however exceptional my friend Dave and I may be. We do not all have to look at each other the way that I do, searching for meaning and interpretations of relationships with objects and image. Nor must one take the same view as ol' Dave, searching for possible customers. I wonder what we look for on these streets, what these tourists are looking for. If not each other, and not ourselves than what? Benjamin believed that:

> Baudelaire knew how things really stood for the literary man: As flâneur, he
>
> goes to the marketplace, supposedly to take a look at it, but in reality to find
>
> a buyer. (Buck-Morss 1991:185)

What exactly was Baudelaire selling? I can only believe that he was offering his very identity to the marketplace. The Beat Sociologist finds himself in an inverse predicament— searching for identity not to sell, but to buy. The postmodern condition fragments the individual, emptying identity, and forcing the individual into searching for a sense of self in a contradictory, multi-textual culture. Gergen refers to this as the saturated self (1991). How do I compose myself? What does Jon Wynn buy? I wonder, as I wander the streets of Las Vegas, how well I know myself and does Dave know the Las Vegas social individual better than I do?

Perhaps the best way to find the identity of both the individual and her surroundings is to oscillate between them both by building connections and then breaking them down. Deterritorializing the individual, and then reterritorializing her in conjunction with postmodern spaces, objects and interactions, in an attempt to unfold a new set of relationships and conceptions allows for this. As Kerouac hitchhikes across the country, he

understands the fluid construction of self. He finds himself deterritorialized and reterritorialized at every new intersection...

[tity...reterritorialization...mi]

...Boom. It's the awful raincoat

Making me look like a selfdefeated self-

murdering imaginary gangster, an idiot in

a rueful coat, how can they understand

my damp packs—my mud packs—

"Look John, a hitchhicker"

"He looks like he's got a gun underneath

that I.R.A. coat"... (Kerouac 1992:8)

[ion...migrancy...ob]

November 9th, 1997. The Fremont Street Experience. 8:07 p.m.

Walking along the edges of the crowd, I open myself up to the so-called 'Experience.' I try not to tune anything out, take in all the lights, the noise, the feel of the crowd. Don't walk, follow. The schizophrenic experience: in my left ear I hear big band music emanating from the holes in the sides of the casinos, Four Queens, Golden Nugget, Fitzgerald's. In my right ear I hear disco/Top 40 music falling down from above like semisonic confetti. Drink glasses have those stupid long stems, the Beer cups are shaped like clear footballs. Ching ching ching. Lights come from above, falling down the sides of casinos like drunken water. The signs are almost too big to read, a strobe light flashes, and a five year old kid chases the light on the concrete. He steps on my foot and runs off. Buffet dinner $5.95 at the Four Queens. Alaskan Crab dinner $9.97 at the Fremont.

Something, something at the something. Ching ching ching. The colors all blur into a white light, and I end up at the end of the line—the Plaza hotel and casino, staring upwards.

[ancy...objects and identity...sp]

[tity...space and control...in/]

...intersection of Fremont and Casino Center I stop and look up heavenwards. I am looking up and I am looking like an idiot. When 'The Experience' is not running, the structure of the arched roof seems simply ugly and stupid, yet the way it imposes an order and organization upon the haphazard lights and signs below seems to do a violence to the original intent of Fremont Street. The leg of the Cowgirl on top of the Glitter Gulch, a strip club, no longer kicks up. She seems unable to move under the new canopy. Vic, the

Cowboy outside of the Pioneer casino and across from the Glitter Gulch Girl, stands stoic and silent. His arm used to pivot, making his thumb hitch up to invite you in. He used to say "Howdy Par'ner!" His arm doesn't pivot anymore, he is gripped with the arthritis of good ol' progress. He no longer speaks, but stands mute—silently listening to the canned Top Forty music that is piped into through hanging sets of speakers. 'The Fremont Street Experience' has imposed a new logic onto these old buildings. These spaces have been radically altered in the spirit of progress. IT ties down, IT enforces program, IT creates the space...

[rol...in/out...int]

The Zone is a single, vast building. The rooms are made of a plastic cement that bulges to accommodate people, but when too many crowd into one room there is a soft plop and someone squeezes through the wall right into the next house, the next bed that is, since the rooms are mostly bed where the business of the Zone is transacted. A hum of sex and commerce shakes the Zone like a vast hive... (Burroughs 1959:178)

[ut...intermezzo...sp]

...the space of Burroughs' 'Zone' is exactly what 'The Fremont Street Experience' strives to be. Fremont Street is an attempt to be one gigantic casino, a single space made of multiple different components. The doors are always open on Fremont street (if the casino has doors at all). The visitor can move from one space, across the street to another without having to feel as if they were 'going outside.' The ideal for Fremont Street would be that one could just 'plop' from one space to another, trying to lose money in as many different spaces as possible. Fremont Street is indeed like a vast hive of experiences. As one walks through the buildings and spaces s/he can no doubt feel the 'hum' of the hive. Are these

nomadic spaces attempting to be sedentary, or sedentary spaces under the guise of nomadism? Nonetheless, the bodies are walking in circles, they are running around here...

[zzo...space...mig]

[ace...migrancy and space...i]

October 26th, 1997. Caesars Forum Shops. 9:30 p.m.

SUNSET...

I stop, I start, I move to the left, anticipating an opening, I sidestep a well dressed man and my shoulder hits his. I duck under the vision of camcorders, knowing that they will catch the top of my head anyway, I stop for pictures. I have to do no more than think about moving, only a slight turn of the shoulders to the right, and the flow of pedestrian

traffic directs towards Caesars Forum Shops. Down four steps, five steps forwards, and I am on a walkway that does the moving for me, at a sizable clip. "Could they suck us in any faster?" the man asks behind me. I spread my feet apart to balance myself as we move past three sets of Corinthian columns declaring that I am about to enter 'One of the Seven Shopping Wonders of the World!' I am spit out at four doors and start walking the same speed as the moving walkway. If the doors were not opened for me I may have run directly into them, laying a long obtuse smudge on the glass roughly the size of my nose and right cheek.

Two stories of Greek arches and pillars line this walkway. There is a thickness to the thirty foot width of the walkway—people are seemingly walking in all directions all at the same time, very very quickly. The shops along each side all adhere to a similar facade/theme, all with pseudo-marble columns and cast concrete, or the signage itself is made to be in 'Greek-type' lettering. The front of the men's clothing store called 'Structure' has pillars and faux-marble engravings in every mall I have seen it in, but in this mall, the frontage suddenly becomes nondescript as it blends in with the other storefronts. The logic of the whole mall structure enforces a homogeneity on each store.

The second story holds arches, 'classic' paintings, and busts of unknown Roman shopping heroes are all made with enough precision so that the passer-by ten feet below does not notice who signed the paintings. I notice that in the Museum Store below they are selling 'Greek gods for modern life' mousepads. Above this second story, a bright blue sky is spray-painted on the arching roof with more puffy, happy clouds than I have seen in a year and a half in Las Vegas. Definitely the most clouds I have seen this late at night. I imagine that I am strolling down a open-air shopping arcade in ancient Rome so much that I barely notice that there is a Swatch-watch store and an ice cream shop, there is a virtual reality center and the new Virgin 'Mega-Store.' There are bright yellow signs and there are statues that give speeches. This ain't Rome...

[ace...in/out...mig]

All the streets of the city slope down between deepening canyons... extending out of sight in a network of rooms and corridors. (Burroughs 1959:53)

[out...migrancy and technologies...in]

...here in Caesars Forum Shops there are different movements. Searching for ways to bring the pedestrian in from The Strip, in 1972 Caesars planners came up with a moving walkway, to literally suck customers into the casino space. More recently, Caesars has built a shopping mall between the casino space and The Strip. But this space is nothing more than a more elaborate, more profitable version of the old moving walkway. While it does not bring pedestrians in faster, it brings more pedestrians in. It has all the big name stores and several Los Angeles boutiques. On the ceiling there is a painted blue sky that over the course of an hour changes from sunrise, to sunset, to night. Distracted by the different shops, restaurants, and a series of 'shows,' visitors are slowly coaxed deeper into the mall, and closer and closer into the casino space—where Caesars can make even more money. Connecting to a quote from Burroughs, the 'arcade' images of the Forum Shops takes on an increasingly contrived meaning. Walking through the mall, particularly when the sky is 'night,' I get the feeling of descending into a canyon. Here all roads lead to the casino...

[ies...in/out...mi]

November 9th, 1997. Binion's Horseshoe Hotel and Casino. 7:37 p.m.

Walking through Binion's Horseshoe you can almost feel the organized crime. Inside the casino, it is dark and everything seems to be lined with wood. Floor to ceiling wood. At the tables people are jumping up, yelling. At the machines an older woman and her oxygen tank are planted firmly, watching her winnings fall into the coin tray that's

specially designed to maximize the sound of the coins—to maximize the sound of winning. A muzak version of the 'Hawaii Five-O' theme song is playing from above. I look up, almost as if looking for Jack Lord, and scan the ceiling for the now familiar opaque globes. The black eyes *see* and yet are not *seen*, the Big Brother or Sister sits in an adjacent room, lazily scanning the multiple bird's eye views and the clock, well aware that the end of a shift is coming soon. I have a banana in my bag for later, and as I reach into my bag I wonder if it is okay to eat non-Binion's Horseshoe food in the casino. I have a notebook; I wonder, will I be escorted out if I sit down at a video poker machine and begin to write? Is writing considered loitering? I decide not to sit here and write, so I begin to look for the exits. I follow the white glow, and step into the dazzling light of a Las Vegas night.

I slip through the wide gaps that designate what is casino space and what is Fremont Street, the effortlessness of walking through is paired with new schism in visceral experience. There is a slight temperature change, my body cools to the chilled desert night. Hawaii Five-O turns into a man playing a Led Zeppelin song on the violin. Strange. Someone behind me yells "Vegas, baby... VEGAS!!!" just like in the movie *Swingers*. My pupils contract as white light hits them from all angles, I look down and find a place to sit. I sit and watch, blinking twice as if it will help my eyes adjust.

[ut...migrancy and objects...sp]

From morning to evening and far into the dreaming night that street was a channel for a constant stream of traffic which seen from above, looked like an inextricable confusion, forever newly improvised, of foreshortened human figures and the roofs of all kinds of vehicles, sending into the upper air another confusion, more riotous and complicated, of noises, dust and smells, all of it enveloped and penetrated by a flood of light which the multitudinous objects in the street scattered, carried off and again busily brought back, with the effect as palpable to the dazzled eye as if a glass roof

stretched over the street were being violently smashed into fragments at every moment. (Kafka 1974: 39)

[cts...space and deterritorialization...inte]

...the casino space is not the open space it would have you believe. There are few interior columns, there are few partitions. The machines all look the same. When searching for the bathrooms, I can only find Baccarat tables. I turn a corner only to find a Buffet. Looking above the machines I find a forest of signs: '$1 SLOTS' '5¢ VIDEO POKER' 'PROGRESSIVE SLOTS.' Video Poker: to infinity, AND BEYOND!!! Time appears to be slowed to a standstill. The endless hours I spend wandering without reference to the lines of the sun and the hands of the clock—time is lost. The casino space appears as a set of endless rows, endless chances to win. I am stuck in a semi-subterranean cave of neon.

This is, of course, not the case. There are walls, there are boundaries. Casino space is sedentary space under a false guise of a nomadic model. If there are columns they are disguised as trees or fake stone. Mirrored walls create a seemingly never ending space. The last lines of Baudrillard's America *explore the tensions between the sedentary and the nomadic in Las Vegas:*

The air-conditioned freshness of the gaming rooms, as against the radiant heat outside. The challenge of all the artificial lights to the violence of the sun's rays. Night of gambling sunlit on all sides; the glittering darkness of these rooms in the middle of the desert. Gambling itself is a desert form... a crazy activity on the fringes of exchange. But it too has a strict limit and stops abruptly; its boundaries are exact, its passion knows no confusion. Neither the desert nor gambling are open areas; their spaces are finite and concentric, increasing in intensity toward the interior, toward a central point, be it the spirit of gambling or the heart of the desert—a privileged,

immemorial space, where things lose their shadow, where money loses its value... (1988:128)

Las Vegas casinos keep the doors open 24/7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). There is no back entrance, everything is the front. Much like Disney, there is a front stage and a back stage. In Las Vegas, you rarely get a peak at the breakrooms and auxiliary spaces that comprise the back stage of this city—even the walk from the garage to the casino is front stage. At Treasure Island, on the escalators from the parking garage travelers are confronted by a huge wall of television screens: on it there is a floating computer generated pirate with no legs that pokes fun at the bald headed men who pass by, and tells jokes to the 'kiddies.' "Arrgh, me maties!" There is always a way a casino, one will never overhear: "How the hell do we get in there?" There are speedy moving walkways and bright signs and big entryways that scream: ENTER HERE! It's getting out that is a trick, not entry. Inside, the casino doors are obscured by tall slot machines and exit signs become the least eye catching element of the decorum—they are lost in a vial of neon.

How close is Kafka's version of America (quoted above) to Baudrillard's? A simulacra induced image of Las Vegas, paired with the smells of "air-conditioned freshness" and bustling bodies. Kafka sees " inextricable confusion" in what Baudrillard sees as "a crazy activity on the fringes." I believe that both evocations of America are reflective of Las Vegas. Are we lost in a sea of images, spaces and objects? Las Vegas is so fragmentary because...

[tion...intermezzo...sign]

October 12th, 1997. Lady Luck Parking Lot. 9:09 p.m.

I get out of my car and begin walking down the slope of the parking lot a good ten feet before I realize that I have forgotten my ticket. FREE WITH VALIDATION, the sign

said. I walk back to my Saturn SL1 and find it on the dashboard. I began walking again, and look out the narrow slits along the side of the garage, trying to figure out which way is Fremont Street. I see lights to my left, but that means little in this town. I am careful of cars hastily turning around the winding ramp. I keep walking down the ramp and get to a corner where you'd think there would be a stairway, but there is only a blank white wall and an exit sign pointing further down the ramp. Around a corner, through the levels of the garage, I can see the arched roof of 'The Experience. I just can't seem to get there. The lights blink through the narrow slits of concrete—I can see red neon, partial signs, fragmented words. 'THE FR.' 'ARK HER.' 'UFFE.'

I finally find the way out—walk down two flights of urine smelling stairs and end up on some side street, facing a set of garbage cans. This isn't 'The Fremont Street Experience' I hope. I walk towards the tall buildings and the music, wondering which level I left my car on.

[zo...sign and fragment...fr]

[ent...fragments...sp]

Space is real, for it seems to affect my senses long before my reason. The materiality of my body both coincides with and struggles with the materiality of space. (Tschumi 1997: 39)

...fragmentary because this Beat ethnography must be partial. It is comprised of fragments, partial images and experiences. I am floating through a sea of objects and meanings. Feeling the spaces move and shift around me, I am again reminded of my own identity, and the bodies that are in motion all around me. I am getting claustrophobic, feeling the ugly press of bodies as I wedge into a good location as the crowd...

[nts...space and intermezzo...ob]

March 5th, 1998 Volcano. 10:17 p.m.

Dark wide sidewalk. The undulating hand rail passes back and forth from proximity to background on my right, a hard mad wall of automobile sound on my left. In-between the two I find a gap, a pocket within the crowd. As I move forward the crowd contracts and constricts like an asthmatic lung. One moment I am quickly maneuvering through a happy family pardoning my disruption as they skirting around the scruffy hippie that is me. The next moment I feel slow and alone, no one within six feet of me.

An older woman asks me where the nearest 'head shop' is. I am in a daze, and she had to say "Excuse me, sir!" three times for me to acknowledge the woman pacing me to my left. I stumble for words and slow my stride to let her catch up with me. "There are several on Maryland Parkway... They are okay." I have only been to one of the three I am vaguely recollecting. I think about letting them know that my appearances are deceiving. I am not a dead head. Finally, I remember that there is one down Las Vegas Boulevard and give her directions through a series of gestures and incomplete sentences.

[ent...fragments...sp]

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gap between the The Gap bag and the man wearing ripped jeans and the generic 'Fabulous Las Vegas' T-shirt is not made for the viewer, but I am left to my imagination.

SUNSET...

[ects...spaces...si]

...*as the crowd parts to let these kids use the walkway as a runway. This space in Caesars Forum Shops reinforces a materialist, consumer-oriented society. While I am not proposing here that the architects of the Forum Shops had the intention of using this space as a place where kids will pretend to be fashion models, I am not discarding this belief either. Young girls parading for onlooking boys abound, all of which look and carry themselves as if they are five years older than they actually are. For every flick of the hair there is a corresponding "Yo." Under the guise of classic Roman architecture, the event space here is not simply something to watch. It is to experience as well—it is interactive. The space encourages specific behaviors that just so happen to promote the business of the surrounding stores. Watching the parade of objects, I begin to understand...*

[ces...signs and spaces...id]

[ces...identity and objects...mi]

The golden spiral in the intersection of Fremont and Casino Center,

        just like the onset of the yellow brick road.

   Ninety-nine cent shrimp cocktail

Foot over foot I walk in circles and two blocks away I find a

        thirty foot leprechaun floating above a casino entrance.

   Alaskan King Crab $9.97!

Wetness wrinkles the pages of my notebook as rain annoys

        through the arched roof along with everything else here it

    is impervious, transparent.

   Las Vegas Mugs $1.00!

Waves of light fall down the sides of the Four Queens and the Fremont Casinos

        harder than the sprinkle.

   Thirty foot Leprechaun,

   towering Las Vegas Buddha.

Light warps my pages as well with neon reds and pinks and yellows.

   Wet T-shirt contest... WITH NO T-SHIRTS!!!

   Single Deck!

   Free Spin! Free Spin!

I look up to see a man walking as if blinded by the lights walking

        tentatively arms outstretched forward into the darkness

        hands cradling a videocamera-electronic eye.

[ects...migrancy and objects...mig]

The long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them... nor in conformity with them... It creates shadows and ambiguities within them. (de Certeau 1984:101)

...I begin to understand the fragmented experience of the postmodern flâneur. De Certeau believes that the urban text has become increasingly difficult to represent—the long poem is difficult to produce and perform. Much like DeLillo's Underworld, Michel de Certeau believes that stories ought to be 'makeshift things' that are "composed with the world's debris" (1984:107). For the Beat Sociologist a walk through the city produces a 'forest of gestures' and not a desert of meaning. The Beat sociologist collects. It is of no coincidence that the protagonist in DeLillo's novel is a nuclear waste manager. Nick Shay is a collector, a nuclear-age flâneur. Similarly, the Beat Sociologist harvests the unwanted, undesirable waste of postmodern moment, as well as seemingly inert objects. DeLillo's text collects a seemingly disjunct set of events, objects and spaces to find the webs of interaction that lie just below the layer of observed experiences. This text consists of the debris I have found on the streets of Las Vegas. I offer here a set of connections, a spatial story. A Beat ethnography is a long poem of postmodern events, identities and spaces.

The poem above is about the onslaught of imagery I found as I walked through Fremont Street. The signs I saw, the imagery that has been carefully constructed to present an 'experience' that I would never forget. It is about the objects that construct Las Vegas and attempts to demonstrate how outlandish it all may seem out of context. Exploring other aspects of Las Vegas, one can see how everything is contrived for specific purposes. Las Vegas is a vast field of sign, symbol and image much like...

[ects...migrancy and objects...sp]

November 28th, 1997. Caesars Forum Shops. 11:46am.

NIGHT...

Versace is dead. I have seen where he lived, albeit on CNN. It is a big white house with pillars and a healthy set of stairs in front opening up to the sidewalk. I know that his killer, Andrew, was found in a boathouse in Miami. The boathouse was blue with white trim, and never looked as if it was floating—dark and ominous. I think I only saw pictures of his house during the day, pictures of the boathouse were perhaps only taken at night. As I stand in front of Versace's store, I realize that if he were alive, I would have never seen his house, and passed right by his store. I feel intrusive enough as it is and decide not to go in. I go and sit by the Italian restaurant that pretends to have 'open air' dining, even though it only opens up to the interior of the mall. I watch the beautiful people eat, and take an apple out of my bag. I chew loudly, taking great pleasure in the fact that I cannot hear the muzak pumping around me. Between bites I try to eavesdrop into the conversation between the two men sharing the bench with me. I think that the man next to me is speaking Italian, I stop myself from asking because of my mouthful of apple. Making small talk, I tell him that I'm from Buffalo and he asks how close that is to New York City. I find myself embarrassed that I have not left the North American continent, and change the topic.

SUNRISE...

Four sets of six statues peer down from above, watching our movements, watching the beautiful people eat gnocchi and drink California wine. I count the statues, then scan each set for duplicates, slowly noticing that there are only six statues reproduced four times, although shrewdly placed in different order in each set. I watch the spectacle of the busiest shopping day of the year. Gap bags, Victoria's Secret bags, St. John, Nike. I get the urge to buy something, *anything*, but that fades. I still want to go into the Virgin Mega-Store before I leave and get a new C.D.

DAYLIGHT...

Classic arches cross store entryways, above the shops lie windows and within the windows hang thick green wreaths and lush velvety, red bows. I notice that above a couple of stores, the Greco-Roman decor is broken up by a colonial style, small, quaint second floor built on two-thirds scale. There are three windows that have five by six segments across them, and of course, three lush green wreaths hanging in the windows. I think to myself, 'now *that's* Christmas-y,' and wonder if there was time when you would've been thrown to the lions for it.

[cts...space and objects...sp]

...*much like Disneyland, Las Vegas is built on the full scale on the ground floor, on the eye level, and the second floor is on a two-thirds scale. The Statue of Liberty in front of the New York, New York Hotel and Casino is supposedly two-thirds the size of the 'real' one. A hotel currently under construction, The Parisian, promises an Eiffel Tower at two-thirds scale. In the New York, New York Hotel and Casino, the Greenwich Village section has up to four stories of 'apartments' with books, lamps and candles in the windows, some lights are on and some are not—you can see who's home. Taking into consideration the crowds and the pews of slot machines, you rarely get to see 'the eye level.' A friend of mine who had been a local longer than he'd wish to admit, insisted that the only sure way to find the exit to a casino was to pay attention to the carpet.*

Las Vegas is not built on the eye level—it is built with the carpets and from six feet up. What are on eye-level are the slot machines and mirrored walls. Above the slot machines, depending on which casino you are in, will have pirates, or palm trees, or smiling clowns that look like a clown from a Stephen King novel. This layer of reality, that hangs just slightly above your head, should not be taken 'at face value.' It is at two-thirds scale, it is a constructed reality that gives the appearance of scale, tweaking our senses, skewing and disorienting our lived experiences. These objects give the impression of being

inhabitable, 'life-size' but also "belonging to a fantastic past [and present] that we cannot grasp with our imagination" (Eco 1993:41) let alone our own eyes. Could this second layer of reality coat our existence, and if so, how can we possibly distinguish between 'life-size' and the 'two-thirds' scale? Baudrillard claims that Las Vegas is simulacra, a reproduction of a real that never existed (1983b). As evidenced in the manipulation of scale and image, this reproduction is revealed as deformed and contrived as well.

Different constellations of objects make up the spaces of Las Vegas. For the purposes of attracting customers and gamblers, many of these spaces are built as 'event spaces.' These spaces are designed to affect the identity of the Las Vegas visitor, to make them happy or laugh (in the case of clowns and acrobatic shows at the Harrah's and Circus Circus), to make them feel adventurous (in the case of the Pirate Show at Treasure Island), or to encourage spending (in the case of the talking statues at Caesars). The statues at Caesars encourage observers to enter deeper into the mall, towards the casino, while the pirates invite onlookers to 'join them in celebration' in Treasure Island. Moving through these spaces affect the individual in specific ways. These moments are entwined with imagery (in the case of Caesars classic architecture images) and objects. One...

[cts...space...eve]

[ce...event...sp]

October 3rd, 1997. Caesars Forum Shops. 5:32 p.m.

SUNSET...

As I walk from The Strip the sun sets behind Caesars new hotel tower, wisps of pink cloud float unfettered behind the mass of concrete. It is 5:31 p.m. Stepping into the Forum Shops I notice that it is sunset inside as well. The wisps of cloud, this time painted upon the cast concrete, absorb the soft pink light emanating from bulbs hidden in the latticework. This is the kind of scenery that one can expect from Las Vegas: beautiful sunsets every hour.

I work my way towards one of the four major 'hubs' of the mall—one of the domes where they have the talking statues. When I reach the first 'hub,' traffic is directed around a central fountain, a ring of shops line the outside of the area. In the fountain, frozen as if mid-sentence, mid-bacchanal, three figures surround a large seated man. I sit in a less-than-comfortable bench and watch the hidden sun cast the shades of day across the ceiling. How does one measure a day? By the hour.

NIGHT...

I make small talk with the couple seated next to me, but Fred was far too concerned with the Victoria's Secret bag his wife, Lynn, had brought back with her. "Oh my god, what did you buy?"

"Nothing."

"How much was that?" He asked as he grabbed the contents. "*Fifty* dollars?" They started arguing, and I mentioned that I thought that the black brassier looked very tasteful. Fred looked at me in a way that secured my decision to shut up. I looked at the floor tile, noticing the similarity to the Pantheon, thinking about how easy it would be to recreate it here in Las Vegas. Much like the original building, the checkerboard floorplan is broken up by two concentric circles: one a series of pillars, the other a series of enclaves. Both buildings have twelve Corinthian pillars forming an inner circle. The Pantheon has statues in the outer rim of enclaves, the Forum Shops have glass cases of Ray-Bans in the 'Sunglasses Hut' and Reeboks in 'Just for Feet.' The false gods of today, the icons of Las Vegas take their rightful place.

SUNRISE...

The seemingly never-ending flow of water from the fountains that surround the statues falters, then stops. The crowd of people hush, and I doubt they are concerned about the possibility of the water crisis in the Vegas Valley. The lights dim, music from the shoe store behind me fades out, there is the distant sound of thunder.

The large seated man, asks his accomplices "Is it time?" The three statues come to life, four additional sets of eyes open and I notice that the statue's eyes are black. "Step forward, pleasure awaits you!" Bacchus states. We are offered the wonders of the ᴾods: Brutus dangles fake jewels, Apollo plays a harp (that is three inches away from his fingers) and Venus looks pretty.

Bacchus warns us that the forces of greed and envy threaten to destroy the wondrous Forum Shops, and that we should go forth, and spend. To offer direction, Bacchus laughs as he suggests that we all head towards the 'Great Hall' to witness the rise and fall of Atlantis, in a hub, deeper into the mall. "Go forth and spend!" Laughing, lights, music, the statues fall silent and still, fountains spark and the 'house lights' come up. The 'macarena' starts up in the shoe store behind me and a child yells "C'mon ma, lez go to F.A.O. Schwartz!"

SUNSET...

[ent...space...ev]

...one of the glaring structural differences here, between Caesars and the Pantheon, is the lack of a singular oculus. The oculus of the Pantheon is "literally the eye of the building" (Sennett 1994:102). At different points in the day a golden disk moves across the checkerboard floor of the Pantheon, indicating the passing of the day. Its immense floorplan measures the day, it offers repetition and Truth. Here, in the Forum Shops, the oculus is exploded into a hundred thousand eyes. The dome is made out of a seamless, blind, cast concrete, but all around me I can feel the eyes/I's. The light-headed feeling as one moves through these spaces, events and images gives the illusion of a drug-induced paranoia. I glide underneath the image and the eyes. Security cameras, Sony camcorders, colored lights, the unmoving statues, the tourists, even voyeurism of academia through the notebook in front of me. All of this imagery and objects...

[ace...event and reterritorialization...ima]

The postmodern invitation is thus to carry the clown on ones shoulders—to always be ready to step out of "serious character" and locate its pretensions, to parody or ape oneself. Life itself may become a form of play, in which one transforms ventures into adventures, purpose into performance, and desire in drama. Culture seems a carnival with a never ending array of sideshows. (Gergen 1991:193)

[zation...images and objects...ev]

November 9th, 1997. The Fremont Street Experience. 8:46 p.m.

I watch them pack up the 'The Doveiko Aerialist Stars of the Moscow Circus' in front of the Golden Nugget. A man on stilts is still twisting balloons into general 'animal-esque' shapes. A steel drum band plays from the crowd somewhere to the left. I look at the faces walking by—is that one a tourist or a local? I see a girl who serves me coffee at Café Roma and two students walk by my outstretched feet arm in arm—I didn't know they were dating.

As I watch them walk by, I wonder why they have permanently closed off this street. I've seen pictures before they closed it off and put the awning over it. The steel drum band stops playing. My old roommate Andrew used to say to me "It was something else, Jon. Really something," every time my roommate and I came down here for a $2.99 steak dinner (special from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.). My family never had MTV, but I still seem to remember the U2 video "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." The Edge plays his acoustic guitar with two strips of gray duct tape holding the bridge of his guitar down. Bono stretches over the hood of a black car singing "I have run, I have crawled, I have scaled these city walls... but I still haven't found what I'm looking for..." as the lights reflect off the onyx paint. I remember thinking how cool the black car and the dark black

sky framing Bono and the reflection of red light that glowed around him. Anyway, I moved here after they covered Fremont Street.

It must have been such a wonderful street to drive down. Now people walk using the same rules of the road as if they are still driving down it: walk on the right side... look over your shoulder if you are turning into a casino... when exiting the casino yield to oncoming traffic when merging... try not to come to a complete stop in the middle of traffic. The rules of the road are used, and the many occurrences in which they are broken are indications that something is about to happen. A drunk man stops, and looks down at me. He asks "Homework done?" but moves on before I could say something smart back. I am glad he wasn't driving.

In the median there is a long string of 'kiosks'—a Treasure Island/Mirage/Golden Nugget souvenir stand with $12 fannypacks, a woman making caricatures, a cigar stand, a souvenir stand, a 'write-your-name-on-a-grain-of-rice' stand, a glass glowing stand, and an ugly tie stand (not a tie stand that is ugly, but a stand with ugly ties). The whistle of propane and an open flame still attracts a crowd, a woman wearing goggles quietly makes a long necked swan out of glass. I watch a man walk into a palm tree as he tries to read a sign at the cigar stand.

[cts...event and epiphany...im]

[any...image and event...epi]

...*imagery and objects construct these event spaces. These spaces reinforce the spectacle that is Las Vegas, and leave the individual with a very specific epiphanic experience. The composite image, however, is a bizarre one—a pyramid is next to a castle, New York City is next to Monte Carlo, a Roman empire is next to an Island resort, which is next to a pirates playground. The resulting juxtapositions have their affect on the individual. There are multiple realities each being acted out one after the other in a Surrealist parade of image. Each epiphanic event that constructs a visitors sense of reality is set against another event in a seemingly incongruous string of moments. Perhaps someone took the Surrealist movement to architectural ideals: the distortion techniques, "the unexpected juxtaposition of*

'distant realities'; the incompatibility of scales or shapes; the defiance of the laws of gravity; the linguistic contradictions..." (Tschumi 1990:63). Perhaps there is a certain madness or schizophrenia in architecture that Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari discuss in the sociological, philosophical and psychoanalytic realm (Tschumi 1996:175). In front of the Mirage there is a large waterfall that provides a 'natural' looking volcano of fire, light and water at an 'unnatural' interval of every fifteen minutes, and fifteen minutes later one can stand in the middle of a pirate battle, statues talk, images fly... The event...

[ation...epiphany and event space...ev]

October 17th, 1997. Volcano. 8:11 p.m.

Standing in front of Steve Wynn's mega-resort, 'The Mirage' I wait with disinterested patience. I dig deep into my pocket and find my watch. Four minutes. Like a yawn, the fat man next to me looks at his watch, and I know that when his wife leans into him she is asking what time it is. The vigil of time is infectious. Six minutes. I move to the front of the crowd who grudgingly allow me to, and turn towards The Strip. I want to watch everyone watching what is behind me. In a way I want them to watch me, I am hoping that they will look at me a little. But instead they look down at their watches or past my head, or to Mt. Vesuvious behind me. I have not come here to watch the volcano, however. I came here to watch the crowd.

Three minutes. The 'natural' looking volcano unnaturally explodes every fifteen minutes after sunset. I know when the piped in crickets stop chirping it comes. When the mechanical birds that sing well past midnight suddenly hush, that's when the whistling eruptions begin. They begin pulling their cameras out of their protective cases, lens caps are taken off of videocameras. Batteries are checked and refreshed. I wonder if I left my headlights on.

One minute. People begin posing, ready to capture the contrived moment. Lots of hugging and mugging for the cameras. Frozen discomfort, strained smiles waiting for the red-yellow flash of fire and light behind them and the ensuing phosphorescent flash in their eyes.

The crickets stop. Nonexistent birds find cover. Audio systems switch from 'Jungle Noises' to 'Volcano Noises' on hidden machines. There is the faint whistle of gas traveling through hidden pipes. Eyes look up and heads turn. It is hard to not do the same, but I want to watch the faces in the crowd as the events occur. I have seen this half a dozen times and know it will not be different. There is a blast of light from behind me and I watch them watch me. As if they all were noticing that my hair was on fire, all stare in amazement a few inches from above my ever-growing forehead. I am blinded by flashbulbs and close my eyes. The on-lookers point up at the red plumes of water jetting up above, the point down to my left as the water is even set ablaze. Most have the camcorders that you have to bury your eye deep into it's cushioned lens to see an image. One man had a video camera that has a little screen that folds out so that he can watch the screen a foot or so from his head with both eyes. As the volcano erupts, the red light of the volcano mixes with the blue phosphorescent glow of the camera screen on the mans face. I smile. It's comical, like a man who notices a hangnail as directly above him the straps hoisting a piano into a eighth floor penthouse let go, this man stares at a box as a volcano explodes fifty feet away.

As if covered in soot and ash, the crowd is sluggish after the spectacle. "Wow, I can't believe this city!" They begin to recover, gaining their bearings, everyone decides to move north or south on The Strip. I head towards Treasure Island, I want to see the Pirate Show.

[ace...event   space...sp]

November 18th, 1997. The Fremont Street Experience. 8:52 p.m.

"Sociology? Man, all those theories and old guys!"

"Well, that hasn't really changed. But, it's like anything else, everyone has to memorize something. It's kind of like those computer generated paintings—if you stare at them long enough some image appears."

"Those things make my head hurt." I had met Gerald five minutes ago and have yet to really get passed the fact that I am a sociologist. From his first comment, I knew I was in for a esoteric conversation. I am looked at with curiosity, of all the things that are going on Fremont Street, musicians, glass blowers, policemen, lights and sounds, I begin to feel as much a part of the show. I am in Goethe's "Italienische Reise." Boy with notebook—what's he writing?—let's go ask. I have noticed more than one security guard looking over my shoulder as if I was sketching a map of the best location to place a bomb. All I have to do is make eye contact and half the time my 'subjects' have come to me. Gerald and his mute friend stopped in front of me as I was writing and he said "Why ain't cha drinkin'?"

I had attempted to steer conversation around to our surroundings, but to little avail. A steel drum band wheels up in front of us as Gerald is telling me about his college years at Western Michigan. A crowd begins to form around in a semi-circle watching the three percussionists with exaggerated curiosity. I, on the other hand, am catching all the important points of the conversation: Business management degree, dorms, beer, fraternity, old guy professor. I ask him what brings him to Las Vegas.

"I live here now, I came out here because of all the jobs here."

The band leader yells out: "1,2,1,2,3,4!" Steel drums chime like different sized slot machine trays.

"Why do you come out to Fremont?" I strategically guide conversation back and smile to myself.

"Ah, it's cheap beer down here. Not as cheap as that one bar in Saginaw." His friend nods, and conversation shifts back to Michigan again. Damn. They start to play the theme to 'Sesame Street.' The kids smile, it's a family crowd. Gerald plays along, blowing air over his Bud Light bottle. "Can you tell me how to get..." My two friends decide to move on down the street, in search of more beer. The band stops after three songs, equaling the time it took them to set up. They pack up their drumsticks and maracas and I fold my notebook into my bag.

[ace...spaces...o]

...event at the Treasure Island is a five minute Pirate Show with real-life actors and nice looking explosions. The entrance to Treasure Island has a large moat, one side of the body of water stands Las Vegas Boulevard, the other three sides are surrounded by the exterior of the casino. The sidewalk on The Strip turns into a wooden walkway that rises slowly to accommodate viewers. At the middle of the moat the sidewalk turns into a 'T', bisecting the moat with another walkway. This walkway leads directly into the casino. On one half of the moat 'floats' a pirate ship (if you are looking at the casino it is on the left). On the right half there is nothing but water, but once the show begins a British frigate runs on tracks to parallel the pirate ship. On the edges of the moat is a village scene, in the windows you can see people dining in one of the casino restaurants. This is one of the most well known event spaces in Las Vegas. Of course, the show is free, and at the end of the battle you are invited into the casino. In a crush of...

[aces...objects and control...epiph]

[rol...epiphanies...epip]

March 17th, 1998. Outside Treasure Island. 9:02 p.m.

I find myself very, very early for the Pirate Show. By looking at the crowd of people slowly gathering, however, one wouldn't know that. Looking around I guess there are at least seventy people mulling around, hovering around the points that they believe to be the 'good seats' (even if there are no actual seats). I check the fake-wood sign to my left, and it says:

'Showtimes are at: 4:00, 5:30, 7:00, 9:30,

and 11:00 and 12:30 on Friday and Saturday.'

and decide to get a beer. The bartender was rude, perhaps operating under the impression that I am either a local, or underage, or both. I get passed over several times as he serves the better dressed patrons. I sit down at a video poker machine built into the bar and I wait.

I've got a half hour to kill. I stare down into the slot machine built into the bar, and think if I should save the quarters in my pocket for laundry.

Back outside there is a healthy crowd, standing around, looking up at the hotel, making small talk. A hundred foot pirate ship stands to the right in a good sized moat that looks as if it surrounds the hotel. Two mermaids grace the stern of the ship, each bragging for rights to lead the way. The surrounding area is constructed like a safe harbor, with little houses and shops, in which onlookers can see the tourists eating through a couple of the windows. There are details made: a basket of oysters, a stack of swords leaning in a corner, and jugs of wine. Beyond the pseudo-town are high painted-as-if-rock walls, and painted-as-if-rock security cameras that aim towards the bridge that allows the crowds to cross from The Strip into Treasure Island. If something were to happen, if you were to snatch a purse, or start a fight, there is no doubt that the electronic, cyborg-like ear piece in one of the red jacketed security guards head would start buzzing, and he would begin to move towards you, 'for your own protection.'

Moving towards the side where the pirate ship is, I weave through the press of bodies and videocameras. Passing by a man in a white fishermen's hat, a tripod sticks into my ribs. Lights dim twice to indicate that the show is about to begin, just like when I saw 'The Phantom of the Opera' in Toronto. Bare-chested men appear on the pirate ship, acting out various tasks. Soon piped-in dialogue is played over hidden speakers, and the actor/pirates mouth along with the script. The British ship turns around the corner, and pulls up parallel to the pirates. I have seen this so many times, I want to mouth along as well: "Mon capitan [include bad French accent], we must run from these Brits, and leave this wreck of a ship!" The battle begins and there are cannons firing and explosions, there are half-naked pirates falling in water.

"A shot across the bow [include stereotypical British accent] should bring her colours down nicely..." the captain of the British ship exclaims.

Imaginary cannonballs fly over the walkway into Treasure Island, and there more explosions—some places you can actually feel the heat. Heads on the walkway swing back and forth as if at a chaotic tennis match. The pirate ship takes a serious blow. Fathers whisper to the kids: "Oh no! What's going to happen?" When all appears to be lost for the pirates, the captain swings on a rope across the ship to fire a cannon, sinking the British ship. Sure enough, the British frigate begins to sink, the mast slowly lowering towards the crowd of on lookers. There is much clapping and flashbulbs and 'videocameraing.'

The captain hangs on a rope and addresses the crowd: "Landlubbers, come join us in celebration! Onward, to Treasure Island!!" There is more clapping as the pirates and then the Brits take bows. The 'house lights' go up, and people look around to find no one moving. The crowd stands motionless, except for heads bobbing up and down, searching for a means out. Everyone seems to want to move in different directions. I stand completely still as the traffic begins to move slowly. To my front people are heading toward the casino. To my back people begin moving south down The Strip towards the Mirage. I decide to go towards the Mirage as well, slowly moving inch by inch.

[nies...epiphany and identity...mi]

...crush of polyestered, tripod-wielding bodies I stand and wait to move. These events have a very real affect upon the body. I have mentioned how onlookers are invited to other spaces, their pace slowed in some cases, and in other cases technologies will do the moving for you. Las Vegas begins with how you walk, moving you faster or slower, and then controls where you walk to: if they want to direct you towards the casino space, they will. As I have stated earlier, the exits are obscured to keep you in, and the lights dimmed to keep you disoriented and lost to time. Through these events and attractions, you are then taught where to look. Nevermind the man behind the curtain, pay attention to the show. On Fremont Street you are encouraged to pay no attention to the homeless man who is quickly shuffled onto a side street, and to watch the spectacle of a million pulsating lights instead.

'The Fremont Street Experience' distracts us from the lower class neighborhood that is no more than two blocks to either side of it. What may be worse is that 'The Experience' distracts us from ourselves. Baudrillard may be right that we no longer "see" each other, but what I believe to be worse is that we no longer "see" ourselves...

[ity...migrancy...fra]

[ncy...fragments...co]

Art does not reproduce the visible; rather it makes visible... The formal elements of graphic art are dot, line, plane, and space—the last three charged with energy of various kinds... Formerly we used to represent things visible on earth, things we either liked to look at or would have liked to see. Today we reveal the reality that is behind visible things... By including the concepts of good and evil... Art is a simile of the Creation. (Paul Klee quoted in Tansey and Kleiner 1996:1078)

[nts...control and identity...tec]

..."see" ourselves, or do we 'watch' ourselves? Perhaps it is that we see ourselves in specific ways that concerns me. We no longer see ourselves but 'watch' ourselves. If we return to my poem on Fremont Street, I end the poem by mentioning a man walking through these signs and images, not looking up, but through the lens of his videocamera. Perhaps this is were the technologies of Las Vegas come into play. How this man walks— like a cartoon zombie with his eyes detached cradled in his outstretched hands—is not a bizarre event in Las Vegas. Here, there are multiple layers of technology that pervade our experiences—through security systems, spatial arrangements, special lighting and sound systems. Just how these systems control us continues to go unnoticed because we have internalized them. Not just through the use of the videocamera as a new set of eyes (although this is a powerful example as well), but also through how we see ourselves. Mark Taylor and Esa Saarinen understand how television has affected how we see things, our senses evolving into what they call 'Videovision' (1994: Videovision 2). The man I see, staring into the little black box at the Volcano will never see the volcano, he has only seen the image of the volcano. He sees the technologic version, as the 'real' thing (not that this volcano is the real thing either). Taylor and Saarinen believe that we internalize this type of vision. And if we internalize this videovison, we must also internalize the gaze of control...

[ity...technologies of control...techn]

March 4th, 1998. Outside Treasure Island. 5:10 p.m.

Walking through Treasure Island casino I noticed a small 8 inch by 8 inch monitor built into a couple of slot machines. If there is a problem or question with the 'Double Diamonds' slot machine, a person can now call up someone on this screen for assistance. Not only can I not imagine what can go wrong with a slot machine, but I cannot imagine

what would stop this person from sliding twelve inches to the next machine. This new technology, along with new casino cards (similar to a debit card) are obviously intended to facilitate a separation between the gambler and his money. What I find interesting are the possibilities this opens up. Soon these machines will emit commercials and propaganda urging the player to visit the $7.49 Buffet, the gift shop and Steve Wynn's other casinos. These screens will help the player pass the time, to offer entertainment from the daily grind of the slots machine.

[rol...technology...det]

The American city seems to have stepped right out of the movies. To grasp its secret, you should not, then, begin with the city and move inwards to the screen; you should begin with the screen and move outwards to the city. (Baudrillard 1988:56)

[ogy...deterritorialization...migr]

...*gaze of control have an affect on my body? Do these screens deterritorialize my identity, and then reconstruct me in different ways? If Baudrillard is correct that we should begin with the screen and move outwards to the city, the selection of which screen is of importance. If we select this assistance screen as our point of departure, there is a new twist—a voyeuristic gaze—through which we can view all of Las Vegas. The ever-present screens and security systems of Las Vegas deterritorialize us. They view us from above, through a new form of the panopticon and track our movements and flows. As Dave and I moved from position to position in Binion's Horseshoe we were followed carefully. Security guards kept an eye on us. I was a potential threat to tranquillity by association. I am taken apart, from causal interloper to suspect of a potential crime. A thoughtcrime? To return...*

[ion...migrancy...deter]

Call through remote dawn of back yards and ash pits- plaintive ghost in the turnstile—Shadow cars and wind faces came to World's End—street light on soiled clothes dim jerky far away dawn in his eyes. Do you begin to see there is no boy there in the dark room? He was looking at something a long time ago. Changed place?—Same position—Sad image circulates through backwards time... (Burroughs 1961:66)

[cny...deterritorialization...det]

March 10th, 1998. Treasure Island. 7:45 p.m.

Searching the pews of slot machines, I find one of the ones with the 'assistance screen' on it that I had seen last week. I pivot the chair to squeeze my legs and bookbag through the narrow space between seats. I still manage to accidentally rub my knee against my new neighbors thigh. I mutter "Oh, sorry..." but he does not seem to notice. I finally sit down, turning towards the slot machine.

I stare at the motionless wheels, a silver line bisects a 'BAR' and a double 'BAR.' Above the wheels a grid tells me exactly what I will win if I hit BAR BAR BAR. I stare at the gray screen and assume that this is where I can call up a talking head, helping me to spend my money faster. I can only imagine what my losing-money-assistant will say: "The money goes in first, then you pull the handle... You can put your coins in a bucket... No, just because you are losing your money does not mean that the machine is broken." I catch a glimpse of my reflection in the screen and notice a double image—one on the outer, clear plastic face of the machine, and another image on the screen itself. I see myself, I am watching myself watch me. I wonder if anyone can see me? Who exactly is on the other side of the screen? The machine becomes a bizarre mixture of consumer culture and Orwellian voyeurism.

It was starting, it was starting at last! They could do nothing except stand gazing into one another's eyes. To run for life, to get out of the house before it was too late—no such thought occurred to them. Unthinkable to disobey the iron voice from the wall. There was a snap as though a catch had been turned back, and a crash of breaking glass. The picture had fallen to the floor, uncovering the telescreen behind it.

"Now they can see us," said Julia.

"Now we can see you," said the voice... (Orwell 1983:182-83)

The telescreen trumpets are replaced here with electronic bells and whistles. WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, and IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH is replaced with COIN REDEMPTION HERE, FIVE CENT SLOTS, and WIN THIS CAR. In 1984 Winston pulls a coin out of his pocket and notes that on the back of his twenty-five cent piece the eyes of Big Brother 'pursue' you (1983:26). I slide down my chair, and reach deep into my own pocket, to find three quarters a dime and a small ball of bluish lint. I examine the quarter, roll it in my palm and feed the telescreen. I pull down the lever and watch the wheels spin.

[on...deterritorialization...con]

My voyage into the abstract realm of language, into the dematerialized world of concepts, meant the removal of architecture from its intricate and convoluted element: space... space is 'real,' for it seems to affect my senses long before my reason. The materiality of my body both coincides with and struggles with the materiality of space. (Tschumi 1986:39)

[aztion...control...objec]

...to return to Foucault's discussion of the panopticon, I wonder how this concept has been transformed in the postmodern moment in Las Vegas. Is the tall, central tower now the proliferation of security cameras, or the slot machines themselves? Has the small 8x8 viewing screen in the Treasure Island slot machine produced an even more watchful technology? I am not so sure that we are far from the Orwellian telescreen. 1984 connects us back to Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Adorno notes that technologies effect every aspect of our daily lives (1964:xlvii), Winston in 1984 writes in his diary carefully, vigilant of every movement as to not reveal anything to the telescreen. Orwell is mapping out the affect of new technologies upon our bodies. We watch ourselves not through our own eyes, but through the telescreen, the television screen, the security camera.

One hundred years after Jeremy Bentham's creation, the Las Vegas panopticon has been lifted overhead and flipped, while its properties are kept intact. Bentham's panopticon was intended to provide the surveyor/voyeur with a complete view of the inmate. Here, in Las Vegas, security can view the gambler/patron in a similar way— someone could be watching the gambler from a screen two feet away from her head, and she would be unaware. Visibility has been transformed over and over again: once through positioning, another through technology, and again through internalization.

Similar to the panopticon, Binion's Horseshoe (before videocameras) used an 'eye in the sky' to watch their tables. Now the term applies to the helicopter on Channel 13 used to monitor traffic problems, informing us on which route we should drive home on. The early Las Vegas version used ladders and catwalks, men would stand above the players, dealers, and tables. The security guard at Binion's told me a story that has been passed around between other guards over and over again. In the days of the catwalks, late one night a guard dosed off, then flipped over a railing and fell from the catwalk onto a 21 table. Supposedly, the next player 'bet fifty on his ass.'

The advent of videocameras provides the next step in surveillance, a transformation different from previous models. Unlike Bentham's panopticon, where inmates are in a state of conscious and permanent visibility, the 'eye in the sky' has become digitized and covert. Hidden in palm trees at The Mirage, shaped and painted like rocks at Treasure Island, opaque black spheres hovering overhead at Binion's. They look less like cameras so that those of us who are law abiding can move about unaware, and those of us who are looking for 'the eye' can find it. Whether we can find them or not, we know that they are there, and this can affect our body politic.

The most recent transformation, the most effective, 'the eye' upon us becomes our own. The surveillance "induces the formation of habits of self-surveillance and self-policing" (Foucault 1989:59). I realized that I was watching myself with vigilance as I wrote my ethnographic notes. I kept my back against the wall, carefully noticing the ways we watch ourselves, and yet we still do not see what our bodies are...

[trol...objects...migra]

[ects...migrancy and event...ret]

October 27th, 1997. The Fremont Street Experience. 9:53 p.m.

The flow of traffic begins to slow, people talk among themselves and sip their beer as their heads crane upwards. Like blood beginning to clot, people begin to gather together, other people in the flow notice and then coagulate as well. It starts towards the center, the traffic a little slower there anyway, and works its way outwards. A loose congregation forms and begins to look upwards for divine inspiration.

"Morons. I tell ya." I look behind me and notice a cluster of Las Vegas Club employees watching me write in my notebook as they take their cigarette break.

"What makes you say that?" I ask.

"Look at 'em. Milling around as if something really spectacular will happen." The employees of the Las Vegas Club take their breaks in a harmless alleyway between the Club and Glitter Gulch where I had positioned myself appropriately. I kept asking what they thought made everyone behave the way they do downtown. "All it takes is one of them to stop, then two more, then more and more." Lucy says.

"But everybody looks up and stops and takes pictures in this town."

"Yeah, it's like the planets all linin' up, though. It's like they can feel it coming." The music fades out rapidly and all the casino lights snap off at once. Cameras are readied, necks are crooked.

"Can you feel it coming?" People who were still walking stop, most look up, but I do see one older couple look around in utter confusion. There is a slight appearance of disappointment as if they thought that Las Vegas may, in fact, be closing down for the evening.

"I've seen the experience so many times, it's like the sunset to me. You know it's coming when it's coming. Like you can feel dusk." The planets align just right. A female voice echoes down the arcade:

"5...   4...   3...   2...   1..."

There is an explosion, a stream of gold light cascades from the far end of the arched roof to the other. The image of five fighter jets fly overhead, with a trail of red, white and blue ribbons unfurling behind them. An electronic eagle chirps. "This is the best one," Lucy murmurs behind me, and it barely registers in my head that she keeps track of which show is which. I begin to look at the crowd, but find it difficult not to look up. The crowd appears to sway at the movements, pointing and trying to yell over the loud music to their friends. People clap with the lights. Trees appear to grow out of the buildings and on to the

sign-ceiling, hula girls dance to bongo drums, bodiless white hands appear to cup the hula girl's breasts. Two teenage girls are dancing below and immediately stop when they see me looking at them. I sheepishly look away in time to watch a man sheepishly scurry into the Glitter Gulch under the cloak of distraction. Bird sounds come from all around me, much like ones at the Mirage. I wonder if they migrate from one show to the next, like 'The Summit' in the early 1960's moving from one of their gigs to another. An electronic 'Rat Pack.'

A couple of moments later, the lights of 'The Experience' die down, the casino lights around me fire up. The show is over. A voice above states:

"Thank you for watching The Fremont Street Experience. Please join us for our next presentation: 'Viva Las Vegas' at the top of the hour."

Lucy tells me she needs to get back to work and I thank her for talking to me. Right before she leaves she tells me "Hey, this here..." she points to the crowds behind me "...is the only melting pot left." I think about it for a second and shows on my face. She qualifies her comment: "We're *all* morons." She puts out her cigarette and walks inside through tinted doors. Instead of heading back to my car I go to the Golden Gate hotel and get a $1 strawberry margarita.

[ent...reterritorialization...sp]

No craftsman's care here, no guiding hand, just a monkey-fingered poke at a key-mon-key—and the database scrolls up before my eyes, the automatic outliner orders my thoughts into the algorithms of logic and procedures, and replaces the steadiness of contemplative formulation with an excess of dynamic possibilities, turning my private solitude into the public network, destroying my authorship by making a totalized textuality in which the text

is only ancillary... yet I internalize it as calculative power, total manipulative control, abundant resource, speed, complete management of instantaneous processes as I zap from one frame to another or from text to picture, split screen, cursor through the menu, unwind dynamic sequences of images, rotating them, adding and deleting components, free-styling, flaming from one formulaic phrase to another, hypnotized by the phosphorescent glow of symbols... I have the instantaneous and total knowledge of god and am ONE with the movement of thought... I AM THE MOVING MATRIX!! (Tyler 1991)

[on...spaces and identities...rete]

...our bodies are drowning in a crowded sea of image and bodies. If we can agree that we are lost in this sea of image, lost in the winding corridors of a grand casino, how do we get out? It is not a supreme realization that these spaces are deliberately designed to confuse and manipulate. There are obvious economic gains to be made by doing so. However, I do believe that we need not explore how these events occur. To not deem them relevant, for academia or otherwise, leaves us unaware of an ever increasing array of technologies that seek to control our purchases, movements, bodies and identities. This is not just about Las Vegas, but about all spaces, televisions, advertisements, objects, images and events.

I believe that through an understanding of the self that we can fashion some sort of floatation device in these dizzying waters, and in this particular case, Las Vegas. To understand the points in which the identity of the individual is deterritorialized and reterritorialized, is to understand these points as loci of control, but also points in need of critique and possible resistance. This Beat ethnography is a slow uncovering of these points, the loci of control and conversely, of resistance. I believe that the only way to find these points, or moments, is to investigate the lived experiences within these spaces— amidst the objects, images and signs that construct a space. Only through an experiential

understanding, through an understanding of how identity alters and how the body moves and flows, can we then begin to connect our own personal lives with social issues. One of these points is the moment of revelation, several of which have been noted here. Fights of good versus evil at Treasure Island, the magnitude of natural events at the Mirage, the sheer spectacle of light and sound at Fremont. Each event offers a moment in which the individual is invited to change, to instill a sense of good fortune, newfound enthusiasm for spending money, or to become that wild, mad youth s/he once was. That is what vacations are all about. There are, however...

[ities...reterritorialization...obj]

So came upon my self

in that darkest place

where lay the golden bough

upon that shadowed ground

And saw myself awaking there

as in a mirror made of air

And saw how self still tired

to rise from there

and fly as spirit should

and fly as spirit could

Through the dark wood.

(Ferlinghetti 1984:80)

[ation...objects and spaces...epi]
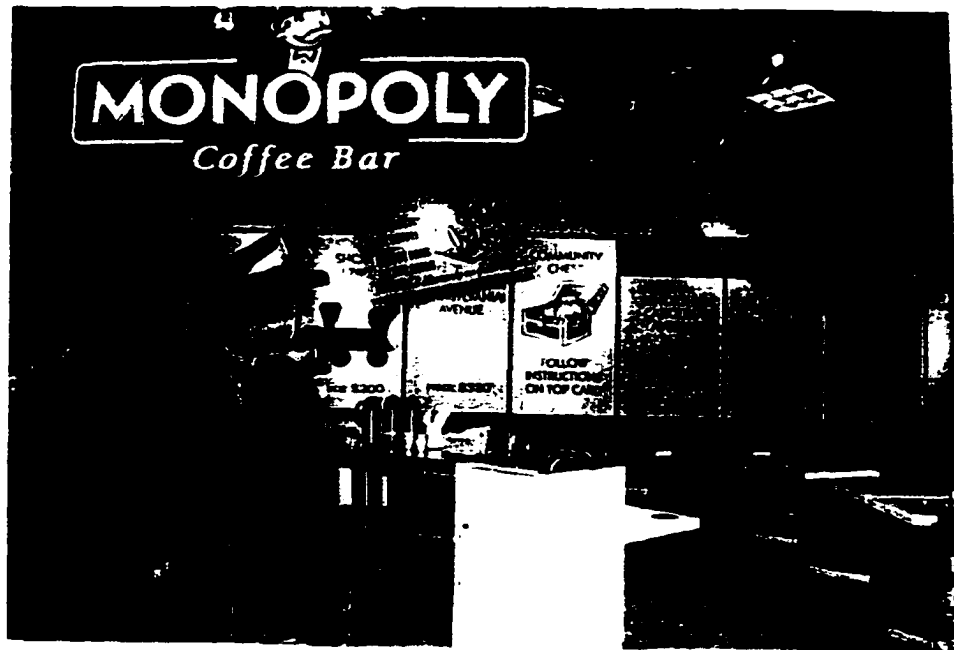
[ces...epiphany...de]

Deconstruction and demolition, expropriation and rapid changes in use as a result of speculation and obsolescence, are the most recognizable signs of urban dynamics. But beyond all else, the images suggest the uninterrupted destiny of the individual, of his often sad and difficult participation in the destiny of the collective. This vision in its entirety seems to be reflected with a quality of permanence in urban monuments. Monuments, signs of the collective will as expressed through the principles of architecture, offer themselves as primary elements, fixed points in the urban dynamic. (Rossi 1982:22)

[hany...deterritorialization and epiphany...even]

...there are, however, even more bizarre moments of spectacle in Las Vegas. There are moments that are seen as yet another event, and yet have (more) disturbing consequences. In the new era of casinos, high-rise multi-million dollar casinos dominate, while the little

casinos (or just old ones) are being demolished to make way for bright shiny new casinos. The Dunes was imploded to make room for the Bellagio. The Hacienda to make room for the Mandalay Bay. The Sands for the Venetian. The Landmark for a parking lot. These are moments wherein the 'event' and epiphany are deeply intertwined, and yet there is little reflection upon how this deeply affects the history and landscape of Las Vegas. These moments are hyped up, media events. The Hacienda casino was imploded on New Year's Eve, to ring in 1997. In a moment that could have rung in postmodernity, the casino was imploded at 9:00 in Las Vegas to ring in New Year's in New York. One by one, several casinos have fallen to the wrecking ball of progress and profit. This is the deterritorialization of old Las Vegas, into a new, themed one. Similar to the body of the postmodern, Las Vegas individual, Las Vegas itself is in a similar process.

These moments of deconstruction, deterritorialization and epiphany are entwined with the identities, spaces and movements in and of Las Vegas. Early one morning I found myself at one of these events, in a mad daze and blur, I witnessed a pivotal event that will forever remain a moment of...

[hany...event...eve]

[nt...event space and epiphany...reterr]

November 15th, 1996. My Apartment. 2:04 am.

I fling open my bedroom door, and my apartment-mate, Andrew stood in the doorway to his pitch black room. "Ready?"

"Really?" he asks.

"Yup, let's go wake up the Uruguayan." Walking through the hallway, we speak into the darkness of the dining room. "Hey, you want to watch a casino blow up?"

No more than a second later he sits straight up and says "Sure." My friend lives in my dining room. After a brief discussion of which TV station would best cover the event, I grab a camera, set the VCR on Channel 13 and head out the door.

We aren't sure exactly what street to turn on, but since it was the Sands Hotel that is being 'imploded,' I decide that Sands Avenue sounds like a good bet. It doesn't take long before we notice cars lining up along the side of the road. Andrew yells "Pull in here! Here!" and I do. Police are directing traffic and I feel as if I am in a stadium parking lot. We pull up next to a late 1970's Camaro and get out of the car. The owners of the car were standing on the hood with a videocamera on a tripod, and a case of Bud Light on the roof. We look down in the same direction as the video lens and look at the Sands. I try to remember the last time I simply noticed the building. I guess that was part of the problem, how do you get attention? Implode!

The crowds gather and we sit on an embankment across from the Sands Convention Center. I brought my camera knowing full well that my VCR, two miles away, was catching this all with much better lighting. My flash will not work, I know I will get a dark field of black with several red dots on it. We wait, and wait, and wait. Helicopters circle overhead, twice, three times, no doubt multiple angle shots of the hotel are made. The empty building is spotlighted, and gray packages of explosives are strapped to it's sides; the body of the condemned on the scaffold. An elaborate Kafkaesque machine of torture, is set up before us, as if from The Penal Colony (1971). Like the Landmark for *Mars Attacks*, the Sands will no longer be remembered for Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Joey Bishop, Peter Lawford, the Copa Room and *Ocean's 11*. The Sands will be imploded for the benefit of *Con Air*—a big budget action thriller, brought to you from the people who did *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Bad Boys*.

From a set of speakers just out of earshot, a ripple of a countdown runs through the crowd:

"10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1..."

There is a flash from the gray packs. two streams of fire shoot upwards like bottle rockets, just for show. A moment later the sound hits us. a dull boom. The building stands there frozen hanging on for a moment before the real explosives ignite. Like the countdown earlier, a wave of a rumble moves towards us. Smoke lifts and the Sands falls backwards, away from The Strip. A shroud of gray smoke fills the space that was once solid mass. I hear cheers and clapping from The Strip. Two minutes later the wind clears the space and I begin to see the red Caesars Palace sign that was earlier obstructed by the Sands, through the cloud of dust. The guy next to us says, "Man. I've got to see that movie!"

[any...reterritorialization...ev]

...moment where I wonder where does this leave this ethnography? As Che Guevara ponders his own adventures traveling across South America on his motorcycle, he questions not only what has occurred, but how he himself has changed. The process of representation itself is a vehicle on which the reader and writer travel through various experiences. What happens upon the return? Chambers asks: from a trip like this, what kind of homecoming can we possibly ha ? He understands that once the nomad begins a nomadic expedition, s/he can never come back to the same home (1994:5). Similarly, the Beat Sociologist knows that once s/he steps into the fray, a return to that place is problematized. The Beat Sociologist is doomed to an "impossible homecoming" from wherever s/he has come—the nomadic is not only a state of migrancy and in-between, but also a state of exile (Chambers 1994:2).

In the end, I believe there to be a interconnected relationship between the spaces, events and objects of Las Vegas, and the traveler who moves through them. I believe that Las Vegas spaces are fascinating, complex, and confusing. These events and experiences may very well be the one tails out of ten possible heads, but I do not feel this to be the case

whatsoever. This long poem is born of Las Vegas and of Jon Wynn, and whether a head or tail or otherwise, this is what I uncovered. So, the coin was tossed...

[ion...event...epiph]

[ation...epiphany and identities...]

...So, the coin was tossed, turned somersaults; sometimes coming up heads, sometimes tails. Man, the measure of all things, speaks through my mouth and recounts in my own words what my eyes saw. Out of ten possible heads I may have only seen one tail, or vice versa: there are no excuses; my mouth says what my eyes told it. Was our view too narrow, too biased, too hasty, were our conclusions too rigid? Maybe so, but this is how the typewriter interprets the disparate impulses which made you press the keys, and those fleeting impulses are dead. Besides, no one is answerable to them. The person who wrote these notes died the day he stepped back on Argentine soil. The personal who is reorganizing and polishing them, me, is no longer me, at least I'm not the me I was.

Wandering around... has changed me more than I thought. (Guevara

1995:11-12)

[ities...]

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

> The fragmentary is no longer simply a literary style... For postmodernists
> the fragmentary has become a psycho-socio-cultural condition. It is no
> longer a question of whether or not to write fragments, for the fragmentary
> has become our destiny. Even texts that attempt to avoid or repress the
> fragmentary end by fragmenting themselves... (Taylor and Saarinen
> 1994:Styles 4)

Throughout the preceding chapter there are several moments when I wear some of the themes that I have outlined in Chapter Five on my theoretical sleeve. There are several fragments where it is easy to read that I am exploring an event space, for example. There may be, however, moments in which the intent and focus may not be as unambiguous. Through the piece itself there are two separate indicators of the theme(s) I address at each fragment. The first is the running-head above every fragment that indicates the theme for the fragment, as well as for the fragments that precede and follow it (for example: [nts...objects...ev]). Secondly there is a commentary (as noted by the italics) that also places some sense of order on the otherwise completely fragmented text. As I stated in Chapter Five, I am not the sole proprietor of these themes. The reader, in the end, has the

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final say of which fragment connects with which theme.

The reader is invited to come up with his or her own interpretations and reflections on these themes, issues and ideas, that may completely contradict my own. There may be points in my Beat ethnography where I am very interested in Las Vegas images, but the reader finds a different focus, and his or her interpretations become concerned with race. The work of Roland Barthes denotes the difference between a 'closed' text and an 'open' one (1975 and 1979). A 'closed,' or 'lisible' text is intended for a very specific meaning, while an 'open,' or 'scriptible' text is rewritten with every new read of its contents. The lisible text can be associated with modernist writing, including ethnography. The scriptible text, however, is one that opens itself up to the authority of the reader.[1] Once the scriptible text is written, it contains a collage of "relatively unconnected fragments, which challenge the literary code that predisposes the reader to look for coherence" (Fokkema 1984:44). By stating that the Beat Sociology text is open to the interpretations of the reader, I am stating that a Beat text is a scriptible text. The conclusions that I make in this chapter are not the only ones that may be taken from this Beat text—it is the reader, not the author, who completes this text through the connections and interpretations s/he makes. Regardless of who makes the final decisions, for the purposes of this project some conclusions must be made on my behalf.

I have three goals for this conclusion: first, to explore the theoretical 'place' my Beat ethnography has taken me by touching upon the themes I outlined in Chapter Five; second, to explicitly examine the ways in which the Beats, Walter Benjamin and C. Wright Mills facilitated this project; and third, to offer five conclusions I have drawn from my Beat ethnography.

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[1] It is important to note that the distinction between a scriptible and lisible text is not necessarily a postmodern distinction, but can be understood as a structural one (Culler 1983).

Five Themes

Throughout my ethnographic journeys, I kept in mind the three key themes of Beat Sociology (identity, space and migrancy) and my personal axes (deterritorialization/reterritorialization and interiority/exteriority). It should be noted that while these themes occupied my primary attention, there are other themes (discussed in Chapter Three) that are interwoven throughout this ethnography as well (for example the issues of control and epiphanies). In Chapter Six I have made an attempt to weave these disparate issues and themes together in an attempt to produce a tapestry of social life in the tourist zones of Las Vegas, NV. I have also left many ideas and themes without closure in the spirit of Barthes' scriptible text, so that the reader is given a chance to make his or her own connections and conclusions. While Barthes may believe this is an inevitable occurrence, the Beat text makes it explicit. Instead of a 'closed text,' I offer an 'open' one which results in a set of partial conclusions. Nonetheless, as I have mentioned, it is still imperative for me to analyze each theme and explore the interconnections between them.

Recreating the grid I made in Chapter Five, I can now place selected auto-ethnographic fragments in each box. For example, let's look at the auto-ethnographic fragment where I describe the statues (Bacchus and his friends) in Caesars Forum Shops. It is obvious that this easily fits into the 'event space' column, but does this fragment concern identity, spaces, migrancy, deterritorialization, reterritorialization, interiority and/or exteriority? In this auto-ethnographic fragment, my primary emphasis was on the movement from The Strip through the mall. Particularly, I wanted to leave the impression of how the 'event' statues encouraged us to move deeper into the mall and then to the casino. So I would position this fragment in the 'event space' and 'migrancy' box:

	CASINO	EVENT SPACE	FREMONT STREET
IDENTITY			
SPACE			
MIGRANCY		**Example One**	

This, however, is not the only interpretation that can be made from this ethnographic fragment. I also mention how the architecture of the event space is similar to the Pantheon and I examine the role of the security cameras. If I were to focus in on those themes (space and technologies of control, respectively) the example would shift to a different box:

	CASINO	EVENT SPACE	FREMONT STREET
IDENTITY			
SPACE		**Example One**	
MIGRANCY			

For the purposes of a brief example of this grid, I am oversimplifying my conclusions—in the following section I will get into much greater detail on each of these themes. Unraveling these themes from one another is not only difficult, it is impossible and perhaps undesirable. Through just this one example, the reader may already see how difficult it is to focus solely upon two themes when it comes to my Beat ethnography. This grid is intended to guide, not to dictate an understanding of the Beat text. Upon reflection, the reader may realize that there are benefits and drawbacks in using this tool. For readers who are more accustomed to a lisible text, this grid may provide a sociological lighthouse in a dense fog of imagery and experiences. In a confusing ethnographic collage, this grid may offer a device for navigation. For others, perhaps more inclined to a scriptible text, it may restrict free movement from one fragment and theme to another. These readers may find that the grid unnecessary and confining. While I desire that the reader move through these fragments in a partial haze, allowing the reader his or her own interpretations guide them

through the text—much like the experiences I myself explored—I understand that this is a difficult, perhaps frustrating experience for the reader. Stephen Pfohl, a sociologist who is also self-reflexive of the difficulty of his work, understands the concern one may feel reading a text of this nature. In <u>Death at the Parasite Cafe</u> he warns that a fragmented, "collage (w)riting" may be disorienting to the ill-adjusted (Pfohl 1992:99).[2] Nonetheless, this grid is a tool, for the use of the reader and it is up to the reader to decide if they need to use it.

Having given this admittedly brief example, I will now go through the five themes of identity, space, migrancy, deterritorialization/reterritorialization and interiority and exteriority, and select a fragment or two to discuss. While I will not locate each fragment of auto-ethnography, poetry, photography, or theoretical commentary on the grid as I did above, the reader may do so to facilitate a better understanding of the text.

Identity. Returning to Chapter Three, I believe identity to be a central issue that needs exploration through Beat Sociology. Much like the spaces I investigate in my Beat ethnography, my identity—how I construct my own 'I'—is a Beat sociological site. The two are, in fact, intertwined. Chambers notes how languages are not only a means of communication, but "a means of cultural construction in which our very selves and sense are constituted" (1994:22). It is my contention that social spaces are another language that constructs our identity.

A better understanding of the identity of the individual provides a better understanding of his or her social environment. I believe that within the fragmentary, multi-textual, contradictory postmodern moment, the postmodern identity has changed to reflect

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[2] I do not feel that this should be the case, however. My own Beat ethnography has attempted to demonstrate that broken pieces of information, spaces, objects and experiences float by us every second of every day. I believe that the reader may be better prepared for a fragmentary text than s/he would believe.

these characteristics. The project of Beat Sociology is vital because it explores this individual, not through a modernist lens, but through a postmodernist one—using fragmentary and multi-textual methods.

A better understanding of the individual helps make explicit the Millsian connection between personal issues and larger sociological themes. In this way, this ethnography is not only an exploration of the conditions of the postmodern individual, but the postmodern author as well. Perhaps the primary tension that arose in my ethnography was this exploration of my own identity. Within the first several ethnographic fragments I describe my own confusion, not only of how I had identified myself, but also how I believed others viewed me. Through my conversations with Dave I began to realize three things in particular: I began to question how people construct me, how I construct myself, and the identity of the ethnographer in the field.

Based upon my appearances people view me as a long haired, hippie. While I am aware of my physical appearance, this process has made it apparent to what degree these characteristics are interpreted and the repercussions of this. I quote Kerouac between these fragments because I believe he provides a powerful poetic snapshot of this moment, better than a photograph, and perhaps better than my ethnography. Within the poem-fragment, Kerouac shows how a marginalized character, perhaps on the roadside of an affluent suburb, internalizes the image he believes they perceive:

...It's the awful raincoat

Making me look like a selfdefeated self-

murdering imaginary gangster, an idiot in

a rueful coat...

Kerouac then projects what the passersby say:

"He looks like he's got a gun underneath

that I.R.A. coat"...

Similarly, the ways in which I carry myself, the clothes I wear and the hair I have, give the impression that I am of a specific counterculture group, so much so that a drug dealer can target me as a possible customer. As Dave states in my text:

..."Long hair, sandals, loose clothes. You're a hippie-type. So, grass." His
head rolled a little, his eyes dull as if to simulate the 'hippie-type.'

This questioning of myself also resulted in a questioning of my role as an ethnographer, and my effectiveness at this role. Through these brief fragments, I began to explore my own shortcomings as a young ethnographer. It should be apparent that it is a shocking moment as I realize that my new friend, Dave, retains a highly tuned ability to 'read' the people he is interested in. With the notable exception of me, throughout our evening he had effectively 'read' several people. Based on visual information, Dave was apparently able to develop a best possible guess of who would be interested in dealing with him, and more specifically, who wanted pot, who wanted methamphetamines, and who wanted crack.

Through questioning my own abilities as an ethnographer, this text directly touches on the debate of whether or not the ethnographer retains the best possible tools to interpret meanings of a social situation as compared to a 'native.' Modern ethnography has been questioned upon this point in recent history. The assumed authority of the author, denies the subject a voice in the modern text. Tyler notes that this modern conception of subject-object can be deconstructed, through postmodern ethnography (1987:202). For Tyler, the author attempts to offer the 'subject,' or 'native,' a voice in the text. Here, Dave (the 'native'), no doubt demonstrated his abilities. My own experiences and feelings run in

sharp contrast to Dave. In these first ethnographic fragments I describe myself as being nervous, asking questions that lay my naiveté bare, and questioning who is the better ethnographer in the diner at Binion's Horseshoe.

While this is example may appear as being 'straight' Symbolic Interactionism, there are other interpretations to be added. This fluidity, or alteration between different states of identity is an adequate example of the postmodern identity in flux. Similar to the quote from Kerouac, my identity alters from one point to another, but also within each moment. At one point I am a social researcher, engaging with the natives in the field and at the same time, I am also the novice. Dave is the drug dealer, and yet I still feel as if I am the one who is buying and selling on Fremont Street. Infused with these emotions and 'states of being' are fragments of Las Vegas: images of shotglasses and four dollar steaks. While this is one of the fragments where there is a weak link between identity and the objects of Las Vegas (one of the stronger fragments may be one of the fragments concerning the assistance screen at Treasure Island), it still reinforces the connection between the postmodern identity and its Las Vegas surroundings.

Identity issues are central to this project and Beat Sociology in general. Examples of how identity appears in this text are widespread: the deterritorializations of identity as the panoptic gaze reflects in a slot machine, epiphanic moments, and identity transitions. Only through a fragmentary and multi-textual representation could I adequately present these moments. Beat Sociology has provided a method through which my ethnography illuminates the identity of the ethnographer and concepts of identity itself.

Space. Beat Sociology believes that conceptions of identity are entwined with the spaces that surround the individual. A conceptualization of postmodern spaces as being fragmentary, multi-textual and contradictory, can provide a schizophrenic experience for the individual. In Chapter Three I conceptualize postmodern spaces as a fragmented, disorganized pastiche (Dear 1986:367). With its collage of diverse imagery, Las Vegas is

slowly becoming the premier example of this postmodern space. Beat Sociology contends that the individual formulates him or herself through spaces, and if spaces are conceptualized as being fragmentary, so too is the individual. In Las Vegas, this places me directly on The Strip.

Within Caesars Forum Shops I describe one of the 'event spaces' as being similar to the Pantheon. I harbor little doubt that the space was roughly based upon the classic building. Using the images, objects and logic of the Pantheon, designers provide an interesting background for a 'fashion show' of sorts. As people wait for an event (Bacchus, Apollo, Brutus and Venus), people gather to stare at one another. In-between two concentric circles, people seem to walk with confidence, displaying designer-name bags, showing off their shopping prowess. In-between the circles I describe wanna-be models as they walk to impress their friends. Shortly after this 'show' the 'real' event occurs, stone statues 'come to life' to tell stories and then shortly encourage the crowd to "Go forth... and spend!"

In this ethnographic fragment I explore how this space encourages consumerism covertly through this 'fashion show' and overtly through the 'event.' All of this consumerism under a contrived logic, or theme, of classical architecture. Immediately after this ethnographic 'short' is a quote from Kenneth Gergen that notes how the postmodern moment is constructed through a series of similar carnivalesque events. The Forum Shops are literally one sideshow (or event) after another. Las Vegas Boulevard is itself one sideshow after another: the talking statues at Caesars, the White Tigers at the Mirage, the carnival at Harrah's, the Pirate Show, and the clowns at Circus Circus.

It is no accident that I have portrayed Las Vegas as a series of one event after another. In Chapter Five and my ethnographic commentary I described event spaces in Las Vegas as a means through which casinos entice and lure customers. These events often include similar invitations—pirates, talking statues and the like. These spaces are vital for the profit of these casinos, and only expect more of these event spaces to be designed in the

future. In this ethnographic fragment I depict how these spaces facilitate, perhaps dictate social experiences. I believe that ethnographic exploration uncovers these moments in ways that positivist methods can not—only through my own explorations and reflections on these lived experiences can they begin make sense. Through a self-reflexive journey, the Beat Sociologist is prepared to explore the fragmentary simulacra of Las Vegas. While fragmentary, contrived and contradictory, these spaces offer moments when the Beat ethnographer can uncover new interpretations—s/he can lift up a corner to peel away the pristine surface layer, uncovering the deeper socio-cultural significances. In this fragment, I uncover the contrived nature of a seemingly innocent display—these kids are not just playing, but playing a specific game: consumerism.

These are not the only issues raised in this ethnographic fragment. Within this space I also note how the Pantheon is mimicked, and how the oculus is fragmented into dozens of colored lights and surveillance cameras. While Romans once looked up at the oculus as a source of divine inspiration, Las Vegans look up and are reminded that they are in a world of technology and voyeurism.

Throughout my Beat ethnography I made an effort to examine these spaces to represent how they function and how they affect the individual. Casino spaces and event spaces have specific designed affects on the individual, and I believe that it is vital to understand in what ways they do so.

Migrancy. In Chapter Three I noted that social theorists like Tschumi (1994), and Deleuze and Guattari (1986), understand movement as being integral to transformations of the individual. Movements themselves can be understood as moments of transgression, or moments of becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:13). A sense of movement was also vital to the work of the Beats, in particular Kerouac, who not only was inspired by his travels, but that spirit was also reflected in his writing. It is almost redundant to state that migrancy facilitates a better understanding of spaces and the body, and yet movement is ignored by

architects and social theorists alike. Beat Sociology places emphasis on migrancy to promote a better understanding of the affects of spaces, and the epiphanies that can occur through movements.

There is a brief fragment in this Beat ethnography wherein I am walking along a sidewalk, in the front of the Mirage. I notice the movement of the crowd in relation to the undulations of a railing on one side and the street on the other side. Between these points walks 'the ethnographer' in the crowd. As I am walking in this space, I feel the crowd, describe what it is like to move through it, and I am returned to my concerns of identity when a woman asks me where she can find a 'head shop.'

This fragment can, among other things, be understood as a metaphor for the ethnographic piece itself—moving in-between the two spaces of sociology and literature (or Mid-western empiricism and qualitative research; or postmodern theories and critical theories; or Burroughs and Mills; or Kerouac and Benjamin). I have constructed the ethnography as a 'whole' to move through and in-between these themes and issues. The thought is that it is not only 'The Ethnographer' who walks through the crowd of themes and issues, but the reader moves through these varying spaces as well.

The work of social theorists like Harvey (1990), Lefebvre (1991), Sennett (1994), and Soja (1989) all point towards space as a critical concern for understanding the current social context. I believe that it is of utmost importance particularly in the postmodern moment, and in Las Vegas. The fragmented, contradictory and multi-textual spaces in Las Vegas and the larger American context are difficult to understand due to their fragmentary, incongruous nature. Beat Sociology utilizes migrancy as a theme to better understand the spaces—not from the helicopter view I begin my ethnography with, but through traveling in and through these spaces. The 'god's eye' view I begin with is intended to distinguish the modernist, objective observer position, with the position of the Beat Sociologist—not on Goethe's balcony, but in the carnival and traveling through it.

Deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Deleuze and Guattari note that moments of epiphany and changes of identity are vital to an understanding of the individual. It is these moments wherein the reader is provided a window through which s/he can see how the individual connects to his or her environment. They have broken this process into two simultaneous flows of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. I, similarly, believe that these flows, or processes are the points through which I can better understand the social individual. While Deleuze and Guattari philosophize over these joint processes, the Beat Sociologist can explore them.

Moments of deterritorialization and reterritorialization within my Beat ethnography are interconnected with several other issues, in particular identity. In one ethnographic fragment, I find myself being deterritorialized by the technologies of the Treasure Island casino. Staring into an 'assistance screen' I see myself twice—once in the reflection of the machine, and once in a reflection of the screen. Through this reflection I not only see myself, but I see myself through the eyes of the voyeur/assistant screen operator. At this point I cannot help but be reminded of Orwell's 1984. Through these eyes I do not see myself as an ethnographer, not even a casual gambler, but I see myself as the *observed*, the *seen*.

I juxtapose this moment with a discussion of Foucault's panopticon to draw a connection between the controlling, panoptic gaze and the security systems of Las Vegas. I believe that the technologies of Las Vegas reach deep into the individual—affecting how s/he views him or herself. I see the security cameras and viewing screens as affecting the individual in ways not unlike Foucault's description of Bentham's panopticon. The telescreen acts as a eye that surveys the actions of the individual sitting in front of it. Similar to Winston in 1984, the individual not only is watched, but also watches him or her self. As I state in the ethnography the 'assistance screen' at Treasure Island "induces the formation of habits of *self* -surveillance and *self* -policing" (Foucault 1989:59). In turn, I 'watch myself with vigilance, as I write my ethnographic notes my back is against the wall,

and a security camera is over my left shoulder.' It is not only the fact that I view myself, but the ways in which I do it—I see myself from above, and adjust my movements accordingly. Keeping in mind the way I felt walking with Dave in Binion's, the gaze of security surveillance resonates through me every time I walk through the casino. Gregor Samsa is deterritorialized by the pressures he feels from family and work, and escapes this triangulation through a movement, or escape, of becoming-insect (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:54). In the fragment in which I am walking through Binion's, I felt the pressure of security surveillance and began to question if I could eat a banana in the casino, whether or not I could write in a slot machine chair. In this momentary state of mental paralysis, where do I move but to 'The Experience.' I was deterritorialized into a security image, a flow of threat to the casino, and I felt the need to quickly step outside. While I did not change into a metaphoric animal, I took comfort in the glaring white-noise of Fremont Street. Sitting on the street I reterritorialize myself as an ethnographer—I automatically begin writing as if to reinforce the fact.

I believe that these technologies radically affect the identity of the individual. The 'assistance screens' of Treasure Island are an excellent example of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of how social forces deterritorialize and reterritorialize the individual. They constitute a new form of Foucault's interpretations of the panopticon. I use deterritorialization and reterritorialization as a theme to broaden my understanding of these systems of control, as well as augment my Beat explorations and understandings of postmodern identities.

Interior and exterior spaces. Casino architects are confronted with a dilemma—how to design a space that at once allows the occupant to believe that the space they are in is boundless, and yet is still easily controllable for purposes of security and control. It is to the casino's benefit to create the illusion of an endless space, what Deleuze and Guattari call nomadic space (1987:380). In Las Vegas the illusion of endless space is maintained so that

the casino seems larger than it is in actuality, so that visitor will get lost, and so that the he or she will then become a gambler. Casino space is faux-nomadic.

In one fragment I describe the casino space as a forest of signs that at the same time gives the impression of endless space and obscures a means of egress. Through smoke and walls of mirror the casino spaces of Las Vegas literally proliferate into hundreds of spaces. Only when the individual brushes against these reflective surfaces does s/he begin to understand the edges of these spaces. S/he can see the alternative, multiple possible worlds created, when in actuality there is only a wall. Perhaps that mirrored wall is even a two way mirror. Similar to the Fremont Street roof, the interior spaces of casinos provide the perception that there is a freedom of movement, that the space is nomadic, but in actuality there is a contradictory, strict imposition of control: exits are obscured and endless rows of slot machines unfold before you like waves on a beach.

The control of interiority and exteriority is a powerful tool for the manipulation of spaces. There are illusions of spatialities in Las Vegas. Exterior spaces like The Fremont Street Experience find economic advantages for all Fremont casinos by offering the illusion of one gigantic interior space. Other casinos, like Caesars Palace Casino, use mirrors and lights to make spaces seem vast, endless. Spaces like the Forum Shops and Sunset Station (an off The Strip, locals casino) give the illusion of wide open, outside spaces by painting a beautiful sky on the ceiling. Again, it seems redundant to state that these spaces are created for a specific effect. Yet, this is another aspect of spaces where the individual is tricked and coaxed into participating in the event—to gamble and to consume. The wide open space offers the illusion of freedom of movement—the visitor may wish to seek out what is around the corner, but all s/he will find are more rows of slots and tables. These spaces are designed to bring customers deeper and deeper into the casino floor, and to get them lost in a maze of shops, slots and buffets. While s/he is there, deep in the space, why not gamble?

Other issues. In Chapters Three and Four I touched upon several themes that I understand as central to an understanding of Beat Sociology. These include epiphanies, images, objects, fragments, and events. In addition to the five central themes that I have discussed earlier in this chapter, it is obvious that I touch upon some of these other issues. For example, I place a heavy emphasis on Las Vegas events in fragments of the Mirage Volcano and the talking statues in Caesars). I explore objects in fragments that describe Las Vegas signs and cheap Las Vegas souvenirs. I touch on an epiphanic moment in the last fragment where the Sands is imploded. One of the strongest additional explorations is in technologies of control in fragments that investigate the 'assistance screens' and the security cameras. Just like the 'big five' themes, I provided similar juxtapositions and commentary on these other issues, touching upon theoretical and literary connections (for example, I connect my ethnographic reflections of the security cameras with Orwell's telescreens and Foucault's panopticon).

There is a point in the ethnography where I place a quote from Burroughs, describing what he calls 'The Interzone' next to a ethnographic fragment on The Fremont Street Experience. In Naked Lunch (1959) Burroughs describes 'The Zone' as "a vast hive" place where bodies and experiences are fluid, spaces flow into each other. The constant state of flux acts upon the individuals as they "plop" from one place to the next. Juxtaposed against this space is 'The Fremont Street Experience,' a space that is seemingly similar to Burroughs' 'Zone,' yet amid the smoke, lights and mirrors, there is a rigid system that controls the spaces and building that fall under the Fremont roof. This juxtaposition connects the ideal model of movement for Las Vegas, but also gives away the limits of this fantasy. It is for the profit of all casinos, if the customers move from one casino to another. Because at each stop the gambler will continue to try his or her their luck. At each stop at a casino the gambler drops a little money. 'The Zone Casino,' however much a fantasy, would seemingly be the ultimate gambling hall for the customers and for the owner(s).

The juxtaposition of the Zone with Fremont Street brings about contradiction and 'new meaning' to the ethnographic fragment. The Fremont Street Experience provides the illusion of being similar to Burroughs' Zone, and yet there is a strict control system that may go unnoticed. Within my Beat ethnography I describe 'The Experience' as a pulsing living body that in turn produces a confined, specifically contrived cage of experience. Within this cage bodies, objects, signs and flows are confided and controlled. I use the 'Glitter Gulch Girl' being unable to raise her leg as a metaphor for how rigid frameworks (be they architectural or sociological) confine the movement and experiences of others. Not only are the signs and images of Fremont Street confined—'The Experience' designates what is 'safe' space (where you can lose your money legally in the security controlled environment of a casino) from an unsafe place (outside 'The Experience' security weakens, bums and 'undesirables' are not shuffled off into the shadows).

This exploration of event space and control, is only one possible discussion that can occur outside the realm of the grid I offered in Chapter Five. Just like 'The Experience,' my grid may be understood as a mechanism of control. I am self-reflexive enough to know that deeper knowledge may be attained by stepping outside some of the guidelines that I myself have created. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this is a scriptible text: upon each re-read of my Beat ethnography new meanings and interpretations can occur.

Five Men

Throughout this project I have described how the influences of both Beat writers and social theorists can be brought together to examine social experiences. I feel that it is of importance to discuss how the works of Jack Kerouac, Allan Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, Walter Benjamin and C. Wright Mills each helped to facilitate my Beat ethnography. To return to Chapter Two, I believe that there are several components of Beat literature and poetry that I wanted to utilize in Beat Sociology. As I mentioned earlier, I

adopt an element from each of the three 'main' Beat writers—Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs. I needed a theoretical framework that allowed me to reflect upon my own personal experiences and be able to tie them to social issues and concerns. I found this in the work of Mills. By a similar token, I needed a specific method of collecting data and making observations, and I found a strong foundation for doing so in the flânerie of Walter Benjamin.

The use of these five men provides multiple heritages that Beat Sociology can draw from. This not only opens sociology to Beat literature as a way to better explain or describe experiences, but allows the Beat ethnographer to utilize *any* field or framework s/he believes best represents the lived experiences and events s/he would like to address—be it through photography, poetry, anthropology, architecture, even empirical studies.

The Beats. Through my Beat Ethnographic there is an emphasis placed upon the auto-ethnographic fragments. My Beat ethnography is the machine through which my themes and social experiences are processed. These are the moments where the themes literally come to life (or more accurately, where the life literally come to themes). In Kerouac I gain a model for how to write these moments. The expressionist writing of Kerouac focuses on personal experiences and reflections. His writing centered around his sharp, detailed, personal attention to his interactions and surroundings. To what degree of effectiveness I had, my intent in the auto-ethnographic fragments of Chapter Six was to reflect a similar style. My own writing tends to have a focus on objects, interactions and reflections that is similar to the work of Kerouac.

In Chapter Two I described how Ginsberg utilized experimentation and multi-textuality to question the traditional roles of poetry, literature and music. There can be little doubt that the preceding chapter of Beat ethnography is experimental. By using fragments of text from poetry (my own and the work of some of the Beats), literature, theoretical reflections and auto-ethnographic fragments, I intended to capture a spirit similar to

Ginsberg's. As I have stated on several occasions, to be able to utilize multiple texts allows the Beat ethnographer the best possible chance to represent lived experiences. As I stated earlier in this chapter, traveling through postmodern spaces, particularly Las Vegas, the viewer is confronted with a collage of image and meaning: a Roman Empire across the street from Bugsy Siegal's mob-connected Flamingo. New York City is across the street from King Arthur's castle. A text that allows for the use of multiple texts offers the Beat ethnographer the chance to use everything s/he believes necessary to represent a social experience: film and poetry, focus groups and auto-ethnography, music and quantitative methods.

Burroughs may be best known for his use of bizarre imagery and drug induced, hallucinogenic paranoia. Instead of using similar imagery and topics, I adopted the ideas behind his cut-up method. While the cut-up, as used by Burroughs, tended to produce a text that was at times cumbersome and enigmatic, I made an effort to produce a more fluid coherent product through the use of themes and ethnographic commentary. In my Beat ethnography the fragments are not obscured by careful editing as Burroughs had done, the boundaries of the fragments are unmistakable. I believe that this move leaves Burroughs' original intent still intact—to find the meanings and contradictions in everyday life that would remain obscured if not for being juxtaposed against other texts—without utter confusion in an asociological, skeptical postmodern text. Through this juxtaposition of fragments, from one experience to another, I intend to make the everyday strange. This process of juxtaposition (which is not far from the Surrealist project) works to breakdown the assumptions of the social world. For example, in my Beat ethnography I place a discussion of Baudrillard's allusions to casino spaces from his America (1988) after a quote from Kafka's Amerika (1974), and later I place the countdown for 'The Fremont Street Experience' next to the countdown for the implosion of the Sands. In my second example it becomes apparent that I see a connection between the celebration of image of 'The Experience' and the destruction of historical monuments in Las Vegas—a gradual

replacing of history for the excitement of the new so much so that the implosion of the past becomes just another event itself.

Mills and Benjamin. As outlined in earlier chapters, the work of C. Wright Mills lays the theoretical foundations for Beat Sociology. The practice of Beat Sociology is intended to be Mills' sociological imagination in action—using personal experiences to better understand and represent larger social problems. For example, in Chapter Six I intertwine Foucault's theoretical concerns of technologies of control (as discussed in Chapter Three) with my own auto-ethnographic experiences in the Treasure Island casino. This is an excellent example of how I see Beat Sociology being Mills' sociological imagination *in practice.*

A spirit that runs through the entire piece is the flâneur spirit of Benjamin. Moving through the streets and spaces of Las Vegas, I attempted to maintain a similar focus on image, spaces and objects. To quote Susan Buck-Morss again on Benjamin, she states that the strategy of the flâneur is to understand the social world through "the interpretive power of images that make conceptual points concretely, with reference to the world outside the text" (1991:6). Similar to these intentions, the Beat ethnography I have offered connects theories and ideas that have either been conceptualized in a European context, or not at all, with a context on this side of the Atlantic.

Benjamin saw the flâneur as a detective covering a beat (Buck-Morss 1991:306), and in similar fashion, I looked for clues to help understand the convoluted mysteries of postmodern theory. On my beat, Las Vegas, I connected postmodern concerns of fragmentation and applied them to ethnography. I conceptualized Deleuze and Guattari's complex theories on identity and literally breathed life into them by using my lived experiences. I brought Foucault's panopticon to America, and used surveillance systems in casinos to help understand these concepts. In the spirit of Benjamin, these conceptual points (deterritorialization, reterritorialization and the panopticon, among others) are

concretely connected to the postmodern, American context of Las Vegas. While the police detective may be driven to reach facts, the Beat/ flâneur detective is only searching for hypotheses, new ideas, and developing possible meanings and interpretations. There is no place in the Beat text for facts, only possible, tentative, conclusions.

Five Possible Conclusions

It should be apparent that I will not be proving a hypothesis for this project. I am not going to unveil a singular Truth about Las Vegas, Beat literature, identity or Jack Kerouac. I will, however, offer a set of conclusions. These are not mutually exclusive, these are not distinct concepts but interconnected discoveries and findings that I have reached through this inaugural voyage of Beat Sociology. These are my own conclusions that I have gleaned from my own reflections, interpretations, and connections through these experiences. Of course, the reader is invited to make her own conclusions.

Possible Conclusion Number One. Beat Sociology has allowed me to see Las Vegas in a way that was not otherwise evident to me. The value on the glitz and glamour of the postmodern capital has long since eluded me, before I moved here in the sweltering summer of 1996. It is a city that appears to evade all odds: it is in the middle of the desert, a dot on the map between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, yet tourists continue to flock here. This interest in Las Vegas, however, is not solely held by the non-academic. Prior to Learning From Las Vegas (1972) the signs, images and spaces of Las Vegas were hardly considered as constructing a pivotal architectural site. However, spawned form the investigations of Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, Las Vegas has grown as a postmodern center of American architecture (Betsky 1993; Hess 1993; Izenour and Dashiell 1990; Newman 1995 and 1996; Sorkin 1994; Taraban 1996; Ventura 1996). It is well beyond the scope of this project to explore the tensions and characteristics of postmodern architecture.

However, Harvey notes that whatever postmodern architecture may be, one of its chief characteristics is the evocation of *schizophrenic* lived experience (1990:83). It abandons the modernist search for inner meaning, and accepts that all we really interact with are "[f]ragments of architecture (bits of walls, of rooms, of streets, of ideas) are all one actually sees" (Tschumi 1996:95). Architecture can now be read like language, a series of fragments that constitute *a* reality, not *the* reality. In agreement with Barthes, I believe that "the city is a discourse, and this discourse is truly a language" (1975:92), and nowhere is this more true than Las Vegas.

What *is* within the scope of this project is how these schizophrenic, fragmented experiences affect the individual. The Beat Sociologist believes that the way to a better understanding is not solely through the individual, but through an understanding of the interactions between the individual and the spaces that surround him or her. Beat Sociology established a way in which I could investigate these spaces and moments that would otherwise continue unnoticed. By using lived experiences in auto-ethnographic fragments, I could express the ways I believe that Las Vegas controls its visitors. How do you conduct a survey on the panoptic gaze of surveillance cameras? How does one prove the nomadic qualities of Caesars Palace?

It is through my own interpretations of these spaces, objects and events, how I have investigated Las Vegas. Through my own personal experiences I have begun to understand Las Vegas not as a fun 'place in the sun' (the old slogan for the now imploded Sands hotel and casino), but as a contrived, controlling space that maintains its hold on the individual through specifically designed events and manipulation of social spaces. Through statues and sightlines, mirrored walls and cannonballs, winding corridors and pumped in odors,[3] Las Vegas makes an attempt to control every action of the individual.

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[3] Hard to believe, yet true, Hirish (1995) examines the effects of odors on slot machine usage. An excellent example of how casinos desire control of the entire social experience.

Possible Conclusion Number Two. In his final issue of *La Surréalism au Service de la Révolution,* André Breton set out on a project of beautifying the European city. Within he takes European landmarks and buildings and reconfigures them as Surrealist imagery—in affect creating the Surrealist city. As Tschumi describes it, Breton places an obelisk in an enormous gloved female hand and replace a column with a chimney and has a naked woman climbing up the side of it (1990:62-63). In the same issue Tristan Tzara proposes to cut the Pantheon in half vertically and separate it by fifty centimeters. For Tschumi, suggestions for the Surrealist facelift of the European city were endless. The Surrealists used the city the same way they did any other text—they "clashed together urban objects just as they did semantic entities. But real spaces were less important than the symbolic images they contained..." (1990:63).

If Breton and Tzara were alive today, they would live in Las Vegas. This city is the manifestation of their Surrealist dreams. Breton could not have imagined the juxtapositions he could witness in a half hour walk on Las Vegas Boulevard—A pyramid next to a castle, the entire metropolis of New York City located on a city block with a faux-Coney Island next door (the Holiday Inn).Tzara may be disappointed that the Pantheon-inspired space in Caesars Forum Shops is not bisected, but would no doubt be thrilled to see a three story Trojan horse that seems ready to be wheeled into the Pantheon-esque space. Part of the Surrealist project was an "attempt 'to destroy the old antinomy between dream and action,' between imaginary space and real space" (Tschumi 1990:64). I cannot help but believe that Las Vegas is that space.

Possible Conclusion Number Three. Beat Methodology has allowed me to present my experiences, reflections and interpretations in ways that are consistent with the ways in which they arose: fragmented and contradictory. In Chapter Four I described Beat Methodology as a balance between the nihilistic anarchism of Surrealist-Burroughesque

representation and critical sociological analysis. While the collage of fragments I have collected and pasted together in Chapter Six, may appear as a nihilist frolic, I must insist otherwise. This bricolage is not an exercise in futility, but a project that works to uncover some of the same findings as Burroughs searched for through his 'cut-up' method and then connect to explicitly stated themes and ideas.

I believe that the Beat ethnography provides a strong set of theories and methodologies that the ethnographer can use like acrylics on a palate. The multi-textual opportunities for this project were only limited by my own imagination (but perhaps more so by the requirements of the Graduate Collage): I could use poetry, literature, social theory, auto-ethnography and photography as I saw fit. This was not just a collage of textuality, but also a collage of experiences. It should be pointed out that the photographic image was not set in juxtaposition to a poem, but it was a photographic image of an epiphanic event that was set next a poem about incongruous objects. Therein lie the deeper juxtapositions, not just on the page, but in the experiences and interpretations they evoke.

Unlike the work of Burroughs, the reader of Beat Sociology is offered a set of guides, a multi-headed Virgil descending into the limbo of postmodernity—my five themes. While these themes may seem confusing and difficult to maintain a working understanding of, Benjamin in his Arcades Project used dozens of themes (Buck-Morss 1991:50-2). I believe that my five themes have provided a more than adequate foundation for a discussion and presentation of sociological themes and social spaces.

Possible Conclusion Number Four. Through this exploration in Beat Sociology I believe that there are three critical new insights that have been brought together in the Beat text that would otherwise be lost in a conventional sociological text: one, it is an exploration of the ethnographer; two, it deals with the crisis of representation; and three, it alters the role of the reader.

First, Beat Sociology contains ways for the ethnographer to explore his or her own issues and construction of identity. In the spirit of Kerouac, the author of the Beat text explores his or her issues of self as much as s/he explores social experiences and problems. As I described in Chapter Two, the work of Kerouac centers around personal experience and interpretation. Taking from this tradition of American prose (from Emerson, Whitman, Wolfe, Kerouac and others), Beat Sociology continues this exploration of the self into the postmodern moment.

Second, reaching beyond the individual, Beat Sociology directly addresses what Richardson (1994), Vidich and Lyman (1994) refer to as the crisis of representation through new methodological techniques. This crisis has called our ability to adequately represent the social world, as well as reach any level of validity, reliability and objectivity. Patricia Clough states that this crisis has been met with only a "self-consciousness about writing" (1992:136), and I must insist that while Beat Sociology does contain this element of self-reflexivity, it offers so much more. I believe that Clough is correct—self-conscious writing is at most only half of an exploration in Beat Sociology. Because identity is so crucial to the project of Beat Sociology, the other half is for the author to make these reflections and understandings about the self explicit, and then to connect them to larger sociological issues—just as I have with spaces, migrancy, and events. Part of the project of Beat Sociology is not just reflection, but also to situate the self in a broader socio-cultural context.

Third, Beat Sociology explicitly increases the role and influence of the reader in social theory. In conventional, modernist ethnography the reader is passive and does not engage in the text. Classic, or modern ethnography maintains the values of positivist empiricism: objectivity, a singular Truth, the authority of the ethnographer, as well as validity, reliability and generalizability. Modern ethnography attempts to validate its own existence, as well as the existence of the ethnographer (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:7-8). One of the ways Beat Sociology is unlike modern ethnography, is that it attempts to undermine

these constructions of 'Author' and 'objectivity,' 'Truth' and 'validity' through an element of self-reflexivity in the author and through new constructions of the ethnographic text.

In the place of a singular 'Author' the Beat ethnographer offers co-authorship with his or her reader. The Beat reader, unlike the modern reader of ethnography, is encouraged to explore the text and question it. While I believe that this is increasingly occurring as all readers begin to realize the affects of the crisis of representation, Beat Sociology deliberately offers the reader opportunities to enter the text. These invitations are evident throughout the construction of the text, but particularly in three ways: one, by questioning the role of author, the reader offered the opportunity to pass 'final' judgment on the text; two, the fragments that I have woven together are partial and offer the reader the opportunity to connect and to conclude; and three, the text itself offers no singular conclusion or 'Truth'—only interpretations and 'possible' conclusions—so the reader is forced to construct her own conclusions based her own interpretations of the issues and themes raised within the text.

James Clifford notes that in the place of the modernist notion of a singular 'Truth,' these new ethnographic truths are "inherently partial—committed and incomplete" (1986:6). I believe then, in suit, so too must the author and text itself be explicitly partial and incomplete. If there is no oue Truth, then how can there be only one conclusion?

Possible Conclusion Number Five. In the end, where is the Beat ethnographer left? Oddly, in the concluding fragments of my Beat ethnography I begin to question not where the ethnographer has taken this text, but where the Beat ethnography has taken the ethnographer. As Tyler's "Moving Matrix" (1991) hits the road, Deleuze and Guattari note that there is nothing but an endless series of relays with no destination (1987:380), and Chambers (1994) and Guevara (1995) remind us that there is not even a point of return. Roland Barthes notes that once the author returns, and creates the postmodern text there is

an exchange: "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (1977:148).

As I have stated earlier, the Beat Sociologist is a distant cousin of Deleuze and Guattari's nomad, and perhaps both are damned. Both nomad and Beat Sociologist are situated in a privileged position—the in-between, and yet both are exiled from where they had once come from. Chambers states that the exile may presume "an initial home and eventual promise of return, [but] the questions met with *en route* consistently breach the boundaries of such an itinerary [his emphasis]" (1994:2). Similarly, by establishing Beat Sociology, I find the possibility of return a distant possibility. As author, I may be able to delete words and texts, but I cannot erase the experiences, thoughts, meanings and interpretations I have developed over the course of this project. Just as the Beat text is never complete, I have doomed myself as author to remain fragmented and eternally partial. Like the Beat text, the Beat ethnographer is situated in the intermezzo.

No Endings

Tyler states that postmodern ethnographies are fragmentary because they cannot be otherwise (1987:208). In similar fashion, this text has modeled itself on the push of a button, the blur of experiences: channel surfing through different spaces, watching a volcano explode, juxtaposed against a circus, against a pirate show and against a building implode. Through films, television, and books 'history and past experience are turned into a seemingly vast archive instantly retrievable and capable of being consumed over and over again at the push of a button' (Harvey 1990:85). An example of how this 'channel surfing' of cultural images affects the postmodern text is the film *Aria*—a fragmented collection of shorts by different directors including Altman, Goddard, and Temple. Each short had little to no dialogue and different arias for each. Between the shorts there are Tschumian 'cinegrams' of a man wandering around the empty rooms of a concert hall. The author here

is the wandering man, imagining different senses in vacated quarters. The man resides in the 'in-between', making connections between the scenes—a cinematic flâneur.

In the introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus, Mark Seem states that "a schizophrenic on a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on a couch" (1983:xvii), and I feel that the case in front of you is comparable to the a good, long schizophrenic walk. Both are against the linear thought, one-to-one relationships, and reductionist notions of the grand narratives of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Talcott Parsons. Fortunately, or unfortunately, in this text both the author as well as the reader are schizophrenic. The author and reader become nomadic, like the man wandering in the intermezzo of Aria. Here, then, there are no endings, only middles.

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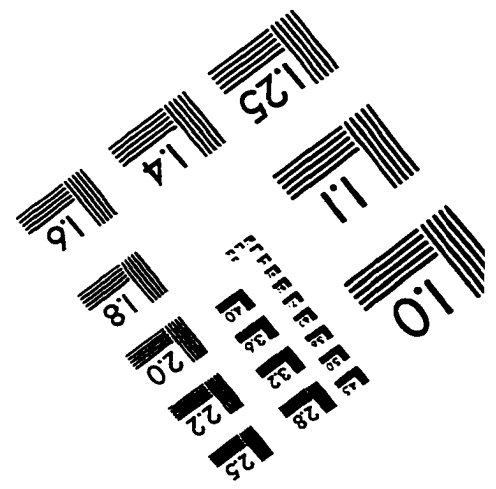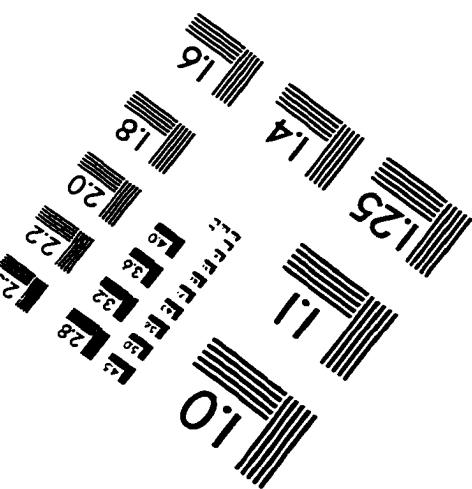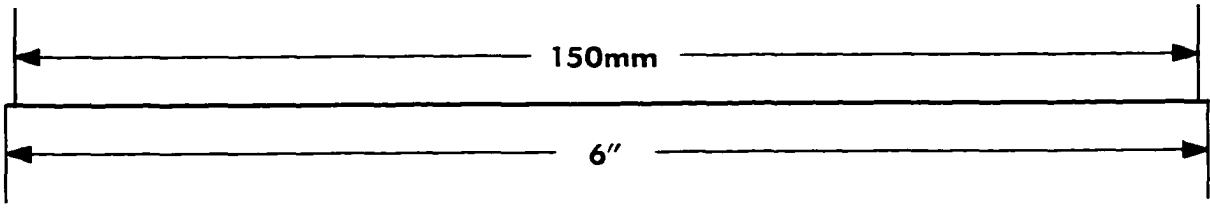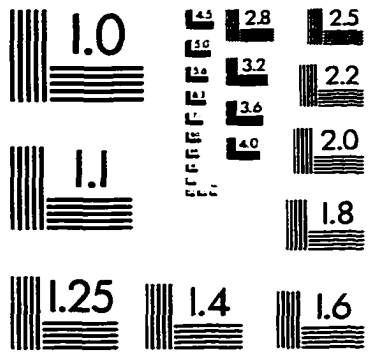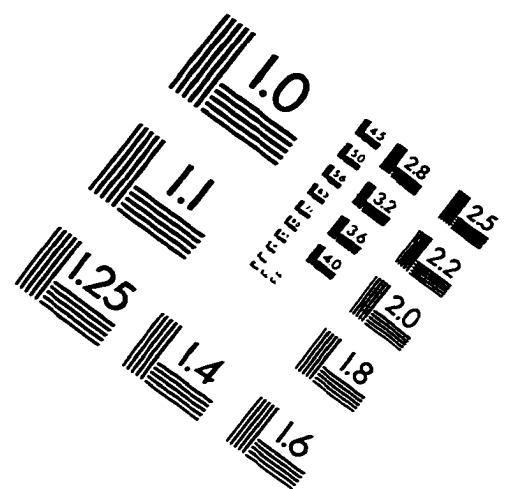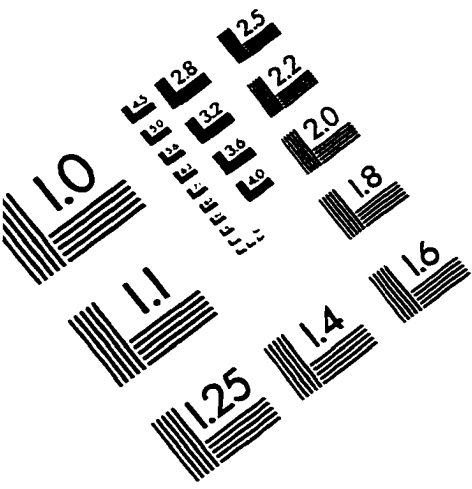
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