Marginal Spaces: constructing “other[ing]” home

“... we can read ourselves against other people's pattern, but since it is not ours ... we emerge as its effects, its errata, its counternarratives. Whenever we try to narrate ourselves, we appear as dislocations in their discourse.”

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Nishat Awan
Sixth Year Dissertation [2003]
Introduction

1 - home[place]

2 - space[power]

3 - [other spaces]

4 - [everyday places]

5 - [re]constructing [an]other space

Appendix
Illustrations

6. Lace, source unknown.
Introduction

The discussion carried out in this dissertation involves two issues whose relationship has only recently been the subject of critical debate. This relationship, which at the first reading seems fairly arbitrary, is something that affects millions of people across the globe. In order to study it, it is necessary to state clear definitions of what the two terms imply.

Architecture is placed where the historical cultural and sociological domains meet. In this definition of architecture identity and representation take on a newer and much higher significance.

Race, as seen in its true form is an "essentialising trope of difference." In the biological sense there is no such thing as race, it has been constructed over a long period of time starting around the fifteenth century, as a means of subjugating certain groups of people. Therefore rather than talking about race, I would prefer to talk about Cultural Identities, a term that is a far more lucid description of the situation faced.

The relationship between race [read cultural identity] and the representation of it, and architecture [read the intersection of historical, cultural and sociological domains] has had an increased interest in recent years. This is of no coincidence, it is the product of an emerging breed of academics and practitioners, within the field of architecture, who are also people of colour. Thus a subject which may have been considered taboo by others is now free to be explored in detail. Of course it is also true that this subject holds a much greater significance for this new generation, as these relationships and their realities are the stuff of everyday experience for them.

This area of architectural critique involves a wide variety of people with very specific concerns all gathered under the same umbrella. There is the question of Black identity, whose urgency is felt especially in America, and it is also the subject that has attracted the most debate within the architectural context. But of course the issues of cultural identity and representation do not end with this exploration, there is also the term diaspora, whose meaning has expanded from its original use to describe the displacement of the Jewish population from Israel, to the displacement of any group of people across the globe. Then there is the rather confusing term, post-colonial, which can have a number of different meanings, starting from the discussion around the issues facing nations that were colonised by the West, to the issues concerning the diaspora from the said countries, now living within the West.

With such a number of diverse conditions to be examined, it is the proposal of the dissertation to critique the issues that are closest to home for the author, namely the situation that concerns Pakistani people living within the United Kingdom. Thus the dissertation will not only encompass issues concerning the diaspora, but also those concerning the coloniser/colonised relationship. I will try to define how a home can be constructed in a country that is foreign; where being called British does not automatically lead to a sense of belonging and does not fully describe who you are.

People express their identity through a practice of space and the space of the city is a canvas for the many identities it is home to. But the modes of representation that are dominant can erase the identities of the minority. Through a privileging of space over place I am seeking to find ways in which minority identities, their histories and modes of representation can be made visible in space. A number of tools will help to achieve this aim, most importantly perhaps the work of the feminists; the first minority group to try to achieve these aims.

In the first chapter I will try to define place as an inclusive space and I will look at the dialectical relationship between the margin and the centre and how the margin can become a home for those of us that choose it. I will also try to reveal the importance of the figure of the mother in both creating this home, and an identity, within the margins. In most situations where there is a struggle for ethnic identities, it is the mother who holds the key to the language and the culture of origin. It is also through a reconceptualisation of space as mother and through the analogy of birth, that we can reach this inclusive space.

The second chapter will look at the work of the Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre, and his analysis of space. This should provide the basis for an understanding of space as a social product, rather than an abstract concept.

Through such an understanding of space, the site of a “third” or “other” space [to use the terms of E. Soja and M. Foucault] is revealed – a space that is situated within the margins described above. By analysing the work of Michel de Certeau, a French sociologist, I will show the importance of “everyday practices” in constructing identities and making visible the “ordinary man.” His work will provide the tools used by contemporary urbanists in their analysis of the city.

A separate thread running through the dissertation is the “thirstspace” of my work, it is where I write about space and city as I see it through my own eyes, as a Pakistani/British woman living in Sheffield, England. Here I will use walking and photography as experience and tool to reveal the hidden identities within a city landscape. As such the tools that I will be using throughout this dissertation are Western and I feel it important to use other tools that are more specific to the situation that I am studying. Therefore I will use the only Eastern tool I have at my disposal – that of the urdu language; to analyse words and expressions used by Pakistanis in describing their space. Thus by a combination of Eastern and Western tools, it is my aim to derive another logic - a third logic which will better describe the one space that I can write the most authoritatively about, the space that I live in.
home[place]
Place
If architecture is the intersection of historical, cultural and social practices, then the immediate question is, where does this intersection take place? Surely the answer is a place. But what is place? What is the relationship between a place and its identity? In her book, Space Place and Gender, Doreen Massey states the need to look at place as a non-essentialist concept, emphasising ‘Becoming’ rather than ‘Being.’

The essentialist definition of place consists of a certain identity that is not only static but provides a stable centre for the group of people that inhabit it. Thus place is immediately linked to the idea of communities and their identity without any real thought, as even a cursory attempt at deconstructing this argument leads to a number of questions. Firstly, how can a place be identified with a community when communities can exist without being in the same place. Secondly, it is almost impossible to find a place which a single community inhabits, therefore how do you give an identity to a place. At best a single place can have a series of identities but these too are ever changing - as people move in and out and form differing relationships. Even if a place was inhabited by a single community, the experiences of the individuals within that community would be very different, leading to a unique sense of place.

In her book “Nomadic Subjects,” Rosi Braidotti describes identity as, “retrospective; representing it entails that we can draw accurate maps, indeed, but only of where we have already been and consequently no longer are.” She speaks of the need to become a “nomad” – to re-locate in order to survey the past and to understand our own ‘transformative trajectories.’ My journey into my own past begins in Pakistan, in Lahore, where I grew up.

Being a minority in England I am aware of what it is to inhabit the margins, to be an insider as well as an outsider. But returning to Pakistan after seven years, I was not expecting to experience a similar feeling.

According to Massey, this definition of place has been formed due to a misreading of Marx, or rather a mis-response to Marx’s idea of ‘the annihilation of space by time.’ Thus, what is now known as “time-space compression” is seen as a new phase in the domination of time over space, with the increasing frequency of global travel, easy access to the internet and the rising concern with the global economy. Set against this backdrop the rose-tinted view of the past as a single homogenous community with shared concerns is appealing. And this is the trap that is so easy to fall into, it is exactly what leads to the essentialist idea of place. As Massey suggests, it induces;
“...defensive and reactionary responses – certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalised recovering of sanitized ‘heritages’, and outright antagonism to newcomers and ‘outsiders’.”

So how is it possible to conceptualise place without being exclusivist and yet also be able to acknowledge the character of a place? Massey uses the concept of social space as the articulation of social relations within, it to give a definition of place. These relations overlap, intersect and form a “net” over space and time. This “net” evolves over time as social relations form, die out or revive. The points where the relations intersect, the “nodes” at a certain moment in time can be recognised as her definition of a place.

The temporal nature and sheer number of these relations is what gives any place its diversity and also its identity. This identity is not just one identity but a number of identities co-habiting and sometimes conflicting with each other, thus giving places a political nature. Of course the relationships that define a certain place don’t always remain within the geographical bounds of that place, they can be global, and very often are, thus breaking down the exclusivist boundaries that are formed around any place in its essentialist definition. With the removal of these boundaries, the threat of newcomers fades, making places more open and inviting. Hence globalisation, which is most often seen as a homogenising force, can also create the specificity of a place by the very intersection of local and global relations. According to Massey,

“The global is in the local in the very process of the formation of the local.”

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3 Ibid. p.120.
These relationships combined with the history of the place create its specific character. History in this definition of place can be seen as layer upon layer of the above mentioned social relationships built up over time.

Home
Massey uses her inclusive definition of place to define her idea of home. She attributes the phenomena of the ‘time-space compression’ mentioned earlier, to the internationalisation of capital. Thus a company is able to manufacture the components of its product in one country, assemble them in another and sell them in yet another. This situation allows certain companies and certain groups of people to create social relationships over vast distances. This control over space is perhaps the most worrying aspect of globalisation, especially when considered alongside the reality of this power being concentrated in only a handful of geographic locations; the big metropolises of the world. Cities such as these are the nodes where the social relations intersect and where the power relations that go with them intersect also. Yet none of these relationships would have been possible without new ways of communication, the advent of the internet, the use of e-mail etc. They have all played a major part in creating this situation.

The result of the combination of this fractious world of globalisation, with its concentrations of power, is that the specificity of a place does not come from within that place but instead due to its own “positioning within the globalised space of flows.” The misreading of this situation has lead many people to theorise about a disjointed world where no place feels like home and where everything is alien.

But as Doreen Massey has argued, there can be no single or propre identity of any place, therefore there can be no one identity of the place that one calls home.

“That place called home was never an unmediated experience.”

5 Ibid. p. 164.
It is also important to remember that all the discussion around this subject has always been from a white, western, male point of view. The feelings commonly attributed to globalisation, such as a loss of control, can only be possible if you had some control in the first place. For the dominated minorities or the colonised, there has never been a feeling of control. If as some people have suggested globalisation has broken down barriers and has brought the coloniser and the colonised closer together, then what also needs to be recognised is that for the colonised this closeness is nothing new. The movement of the coloniser into the colony had ruptured local cultures and the home of the colonised a long time ago.

It was with a mixture of feelings that I walked around the Jinnah Library in Lahore, Pakistan, this summer. Once the house of the British governor of Lahore, its splendour is rare in that part of the world, other than in colonial architecture and the older architecture of the Moghuls [see illustration on p. 13]. After the end of British rule/domination in the Indian subcontinent, its conversion to a public library named after the founder of Pakistan must have given some satisfaction. Although Lahore has not been my home for over ten years [in fact the physical location of my home is that of the former coloniser of Pakistan] I still identify with the colonised rather than the coloniser, because home is not only defined by geographic locations but more importantly it is a matter of identity – and a large part of me still identifies with Pakistan and what it is to be a Pakistani.

Thus if we are to theorise place and home and a place as home, we have to think of it without boundaries. A difficult and frightening process for some, but one that makes places, not enclosures. In order to create a place or a home it is not necessary to always place oneself in opposition to the Other. What is then the answer - it must surely come from those of us who have always been the Other and so have not had that bounded, secure notion of a place called “home.”

**Home/Family/Mother**

Perhaps one of the strongest voices in this area is that of bell hooks, in her book *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* she talks of home, both as a place that has to be constructed by the individual for themselves and also as a place of resistance and healing. She uses the autobiographical mode of writing, to speak of her childhood experiences; the strength she gained from the love...
of her mother and the homeplace that she created for her and her family. It was a place of recovery, where the pressures of living as a minority and being subjected to social and economic hardship at the hands of the dominant majority could be eased. Thus the strong sense of community within the black population was no accident, it was a necessity for their self-perception, for the affirmation of their own humanity.

Homeplace in this reading is not a neutral zone, it serves a political purpose – it is political. This places the female, traditionally the keeper of the house, in a very strong and strategic position. It is in her domain that the male and female persons of the home regain their self-esteem and this is especially true in regard to the diaspora and immigrants. Our situation serves to highlight the significance of the mother. It is she who holds the key not only to the language but also to the culture of the family. It is she who most often will not be able to learn the language of their adopted country, bound as she is by that very home she has created. She will not generally go out to the workplace unlike the male and the children who will also leave in order to attend school. Thus it is her who has the most difficult but also the most important role in constructing a homeplace.

Homeplace as a site of resistance to oppression
In bell hook’s own words,

“
I want to speak about the importance of homeplace in the midst of oppression and domination, of homeplace as a site of resistance and liberation struggle.”

This importance of the home is abundantly clear in the practices of the dominant order. Posterity allows us to realise that whenever a group of oppressed people are held down, it is through an effort to deny them the means of creating a home for themselves, whether this be through social or economic means. As hooks points out, this practice can be seen very clearly in the treatment of black people over history.

“For when a people no longer have the space to construct homeplace, we cannot build a meaningful community of resistance.”

Thus a home, this “site of resistance” has to be constructed and fought over, giving it an important place within the discourse. And of course homeplace is also a conceptual place, for me it was a place I reached through not only an acceptance of my dual identity but also through a realisation of the privileged position I was in.

Margin as a homeplace

The play of the screens and the shutters – the opening and closing, formed an unspoken language that they understood well. It was only the privileged few that were allowed inside when all the layers were wrapped close. These screens are called “jaali” in Urdu which is also the word for lace; appropriate since the handmade screens take as much care and attention to make as lace. They are the modern day drapery of the house.

Drapery in urdu is “parda,” a word that shares its meaning with curtain or blind and also with the practice of women shielding themselves behind a veil. When the shutters are closed the house veils itself from outsiders.

In fact this location on the margins is a reality for all minority groups but it is most often seen as an unwanted place, a place that is occupied only through default – when there is no other choice. In her essay, “Choosing the Margin,” hooks offers us a challenge, to look at the margin as more than a place of pain and deprivation, to also think of it as a place of resistance; a place to locate home. The marginality that is the truth of our existence can then be transformed into something positive, it can become the site of creativity and intellectual rigour. But this transformation can occur only at the margin and through a conscious decision to choose that margin – a very different place from the margin imposed on us by the dominant order. To go back to my own example, it was only through finding friends that were actively interested in who I really was I realised the importance of my own marginality.

Home in a globalised world

Through this process a concept of homeplace emerges, a place that can be no place, or any place, in fact it is not a place at all but a choice. And it is this concept of home that can face the challenges of a globalised world. With the advent of e-mail, the internet, faster
modes of travel, the world has shrunk. Although it is true that these are luxuries mostly enjoyed by the First World, it should also be recognised that slowly the internet is allowing those less fortunate to experience a world that they would normally never be able to.

Increasing levels of migration are also a phenomena of this new era, whether it is refugees fleeing from their country of origin or economic migrants in search of a better life, they are all making their home in new locations. As a student my home is both Warrington, where my parents live and Sheffield where I attend university, but home is also my grandfather’s house in Faisalabad, Pakistan and memories of my childhood home in Lahore, Pakistan. It is this open and changing perspective of home, gained through what bell hooks describes as the “experience of decolonisation, of radicalization,”⁸ that is required in a world transformed through new technologies.

**Chora: a homeplace?**

In defining “home” I would like to look at the concept of “Chora” as discussed by Elizabeth Grosz in her essay “Women, Chora,

“Chora” as a concept of space has been drawn from Plato’s “Timaeus” by Jacques Derrida. With reference to the work of the feminist writer Luce Irigaray, Grosz tries to show how Chora has been used to erase the link between spatiality and femininity, rendering the female homeless and thus continuing her domination.

Plato’s binary oppositions of Being as the ideal, intelligible “model” and Becoming as the material, sensible “copy” have been the basis of western thought until Derrida’s deconstruction of it. The transition from Idea to Form must be possible and needs an intermediary condition which Plato called Chora. This transitional stage is described as having none of the characteristics of either of the two [Idea and Forms] and yet with no individual characteristics of its own. These are the requirements of this place that nurtures the Form as it becomes, and is described by Plato as “invisible and formless.” Plato is obliged to invent a “third kind” category between the Intelligible and the Sensible which is the category of PLACE.

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⁸ Ibid. p. 148.
Space as “mother”
The analogy of birth for the transition from one Form to the other is Plato's own. Chora is like a mother or a nurse that nurtures the Forms - the elements that constitute the world. Elizabeth Grosz describes chora as,

“...a kind of womb of material existence, the nurse of becoming, an incubator...”

The importance of chora now becomes clear, it is the basis of the material world, without it would the Forms exist? Does chora need the Forms to exist or vice versa? Through his text “Khôra,” Derrida has shown how this concept of chora has affected all aspects of Plato’s work. The paradox being that the state that was supposed to be neutral and have no effect on the Forms is in fact central to all processes.

"Chora is interwoven throughout the fabric of Plato's writing."10

This concept of a third term that disrupts the binary opposition of a given system can also be seen in Chinese philosophy. The Full of the Yin-Yang needs the space of the Void in order to pass from one state to the other. The Void is equivalent to chora, but unlike Western thought its position is acknowledged. As the film maker and feminine theorist, Trinh T. Min-Ha points out;

“...without the intervention of the Void, the realm of the Full governed by the Yin and the Yang is bound to remain static and amorphous.”11

10 Ibid. p.117.
The Void is ascribed a number of functions. It not only allows the transition from one state to the other, it is also the reason for the separation and autonomy of the Yin and the Yang. It is the mediator and is the third term within a triad which “tends ceaselessly toward the unitary (the oneness of the Yin-Yang circle).”

**Home [economy]**

Derrida showed the central position that the concept of *chora* has towards the “economy of the architectural project itself.” This emphasis on the word “economy” and its meaning is key to Grosz’s reading of Derrida’s writings on *chora*. It is derived from the Greek word, “oikos,” which means dwelling or a home. In contrast with the traditional concept of space as rationalised, measurable, Cartesian space, … chora is space understood as “receptacle,” “receiver” … “home” for the elements [Forms] of the world.

Derrida’s deconstructivist reading of space is directly influenced by the notion of *chora*. It leads to a questioning of the binary oppositions that are the western basis for architectural thought, the relationship between form and function, figure and ground etc. Thus an “architectural economy” as Elizabeth Grosz calls it will not only include the physical attributes that go towards making a building but also the theoretical discourse around architecture and the bodies that occupy it. Space seen as container, receptacle, as home… Hence architecture can now be seen as far more than the simple discussion of aesthetics versus function, it can be thought of including these two terms but also with a different economy – a new way of thinking.

**Home/Without home**

The work of Irigaray, which is also cited by Grosz shows how the history of philosophy has erased the female subject. In doing so the male has also erased all debt to the mother and has relegated the female to having no position of her own within society. She is defined by what the male is *not*;

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12 Ibid. p.233.
“they become the living representatives of corporeality, of domesticity, of the natural order that men have had to expel from their own self-representations in order to construct themselves above-the-mundane, beyond the merely material.”

Thus the woman becomes a support for the dominant male, a role very similar to that assigned to chora by Plato. She has no authority or space of her own, even the house she dwells in is constructed according to the male economy using the masculine modes of thought. In effect she is without home. This physical enclosure of women in the house is likened to their mental enclosure within the masculine universe which refuses to,

“…acknowledge that other perspectives, other modes of construction and constitution are possible.”

This problem is not the feminists alone, it is exactly the challenge that all minorities face and it is useful to refer to the progress that has already been made by the feminists in making the Other visible.

Reconstructing home

Chora becomes a symbol of the active role of a feminine economy of space and the challenge is to construct a notion of home that is other than that assigned by the male - the white, western male. The reconstruction of home must be a space:

“conceived in terms other than according to the logic of penetration, colonization, and domination.”

Thus it is not enough only to speak of the female or the other within architectural discourse, the challenge is to reconceptualise the whole notion of space according to the Other.

Space that receives, that welcomes...

14 Ibid. p.122.
15 Ibid. p.123.
16 Ibid. p.123.
"Henri Lefebvre suggests that power survives by producing space; Michel Foucault suggests that power survives by disciplining space; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari suggest that to reproduce social control the state must reproduce spatial control."  

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Social Space according to Lefebvre:
The work of Doreen Massey, bell hooks and to some extent Elizabeth Grosz has its theoretical basis in the work of Henri Lefebvre. The first to conceptualise the spatiality of social relationships, his work was based on the seemingly simple premise of seeing space as a social product. Alongside this was the deeply rooted awareness of the relationship of and dialogue between the centre and the periphery, something that he had experienced firsthand in his choice of home. Although Lefebvre did not think of himself as a Parisian, that life was familiar to him as was the country life of the Pyrenees, where he was brought up. He has been described as, “the resident alien: the insider who purposefully chooses to remain outside.”

The main goal of Lefebvre’s project was to introduce a new dimension into critical theory, he expanded the well-worn dualism of history and society to include spatiality, which for so long had been seen only as a backdrop to human existence. This triad, which in ideal circumstances would be in perfect balance, was now given more weight towards space as it had been neglected for so long; Lefebvre felt the need to redress the balance.

But to begin at the beginning, with the original hypothesis:

“(Social) space is a (social) product.”

Lefebvre cites a number of illusions that hide this fact from us. The first is the “illusion of transparency,” where space is seen as innocent and the mind is given the power to make transparent, to understand everything it sees with a single glance. Thus

representation is given as much weight as reality, in fact at times it is seen as the reality itself. Writing and especially speaking, which holds such an exalted status within western culture, are also mere tools of representation - yet if they cannot communicate something it is deemed insignificant and forgotten.

“Thus communication brings the non-communicated into the realm of the communicated – the incommunicable having no existence beyond that of an ever-pursued residue.”20

The second illusion, which was rejected out of hand by philosophers as being too naïve, is the realistic illusion of natural simplicity, where the object is seen as more real than the subject. In effect, both illusions instead of being in opposition help to perpetuate each other. Images of nature help historical and political forces whereas the rationality of a western culture that has managed to control nature can still be disturbed by symbolisms from it.

“The rationality is thus naturalised, while nature cloaks itself in nostalgias which supplant rationality.”21

Lefebvre’s analysis of social space leads to a “conceptual triad” which is the basis of his writings on space.

**Spatial Practice** embodies the production and reproduction contained within social space. It is the material base for life - the practice of living, including biological reproduction, the family, and production including work and the division of labour.

“*The spatial practice of a society secretes that society’s space.*”22

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20 Ibid. p. 28.
21 Ibid. p. 30.
22 Ibid. p. 38.
Representations of space are recognised by Lefebvre as the dominant element within western society and also the element that produces the “illusion of transparency.”23 This is the conceptualisation of space, carried out through codes and a knowledge, with intellect and the spoken word having priority. It is what is conceived as opposed to what is perceived through spatial practice.

Representational spaces, the last element within the triad, are what is lived. These are seen as the dominated spaces, the ones given the least importance, and yet these are the spaces of resistance. The clandestine and the subversive, it is in these spaces that the dominant order can be defeated. It embodies knowing rather than knowledge and hence contains complex symbolisms that are not verbal and can be religious or magical. These spaces are studied by anthropologists, certain historians and psychoanalysts, as what is lived and are thus temporal and dynamic. The three kinds of space referred to above can also be seen in a slightly different way, as the perceived, conceived and lived or as the physical, mental and social realms. Every element in the triad does exist in its own right and can therefore be studied and understood in complete and ignorant isolation. But what is of more interest is the possibility that each of these three elements, while being separate is also dependant on the others and in fact cannot exist without them. In Lefebvre’s project, the spatiality of the lived experience within the social realm is given a more strategic place, its existence defending against the bi-polarity of western thought. This reveals in Lefebvre’s work a critique of the notion of history, inasmuch as that history is most often seen as only the history of representations. Surely if space is the product of human existence or being, then the process of its production will constitute history. Thus transforming it from the history of space to,

“...the history of representations, along with that of their relationships – with each other, with practice, and with ideology.”24

23 Ibid. p. 27.
24 Ibid. p. 42.
Thus the study of the spatial codes of a society will help to understand and interpret its space and will tell of not only how that space is lived but also how it is produced. Whilst history must chart the genesis, life and decline of a given spatial code, it must also deal with the interactions and relationships between all the different codes that exist.

**Evolution of [the concept of] space**

Since space is a social product, it follows that each society, each culture, each politics will have its own mode of production and this can only ever be fully understood by someone who is a part of that society or culture. Therefore it is difficult to understand the production of Asiatic space whilst using a logic derived from the West. Each epoch will also produce its own space and therefore it is possible to chart the evolution of space over time.

It begins with “natural space,” the space pre-history, which has gone from being the primary space to being a mere backdrop for all other spaces. Its decline can be attributed to its politicization through its association with social and religious forces - it becomes “absolute space.” This moment of decline is also the point of separation of the producers of space from those with power and domination over that space – bureaucrats and the military; the managers of space. At this juncture, a new space is born, “the space of accumulation,” as introduced by Marx. This space as it accumulates resources, knowledge and labour, creates a separation between the two very basic elements of spatial practice, its production and reproduction, resulting in a hierarchy and an “abstract space” which dominates with its accumulation of wealth and power.

As such there is no space within it for differences; these are forced into highly symbolic forms, losing most of their meaning and potency. The spatial practice of abstract space is a reproduction of social relations, which are mainly perceived as biological reproduction - meaning the equation of fertility with fulfillment and so on. Thus representation of space dominates with its knowledge and power leaving no room for representational spaces which become marginal.

**Abstract space/Universal subject**

To understand abstract space is to understand the wielding of power within it, with the assistance of knowledge. It hides the real subject of its space, the state, by conceiving another subject, the universal “one” that is so often referred to in modern social critique.

*Pakistani art embodies this position too, as in this figure entitled, “Immortal Fabric,” by Ruby Chishti. It squats somewhere between the representation of a human and a doll. The use of fabric is no accident either, there is a recent emphasis on domestic crafts in the arts in Pakistan. A reaction I am sure to its suppression during colonial rule and also to the continuing influence of Western art and media.*
As such the construction of this subject combined with the status given to the written word, leads to the silence of the users of that space, who do not protest as they are manipulated.

“If “civilized” people believe anything, they believe the text that has been written.”

Differential Space
But abstract space has within it certain contradictions that will eventually lead to its downfall. The social relations within it will reproduce and form new relations while older ones mutate or die out all together. This process will create a different space since it will have different modes of production and it will be founded on difference rather than the homogeneity that abstract space relied on. This space which Lefebvre named, “differential space,” is the space of the new cultural politics of difference. It is the space from which to look at issues regarding class struggle, gender, race and any other political issues regarding minorities – it is the space that hooks refers to as a “space of radical openness ... a profound edge.”

Thirdspace
The work carried out by Lefebvre has been expanded on by Edward Soja, a geographer who has written on the increasing interest in spatiality in modern critical studies. He cites a wide and far ranging number of examples of critical theory that have all been influenced by the work of Lefebvre. These include feminist writers, from Dolores Hayden and Doreen Massey to Diana Fuss and Elizabeth Grosz and post-colonial writers such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. Also included are those that straddle the two categories, writers such as bell hooks, Gayatri Spivak and Trinh T. Min-ha.

The triad that has been introduced by Lefebvre has been appropriated and renamed by Soja as “the trialectics of spatiality.” He too is using the introduction of a third term [spatiality] to overpass the binary opposition of historicality and sociality in order to produce a more complete picture of the world we live in. Soja shows how this conception of a third or other space is used by a diverse range of writers to push back the boundaries of critical discourse,

“...through an endless series of theoretical and practical approximations, a critical and inquisitive nomadism in which the journeying to new ground never ceases.”

This new space that allows such a discussion is very similar to the differential space of Lefebvre that has been discussed earlier; Soja names it “Thirdspace”.

In order to get to this space of difference and resistance it is crucial to understand the wielding of power in a society because it is only through a subversion of that power that thirdspace can be reached. Soja cites the work of Michel Foucault,

The air-conditioner in this room is almost a necessity in the extremely high temperatures but the use of the stabiliser is a testament to the lack of reliability and fluctuation in the electricity supply. The fairly regular power-cuts have meant that alongside these technologies there is also a gas-light in the room. The gas-light would be called “laal tain” لا لتين in everyday urdu; derived from the English word, “lantern.”

“...these links between space, knowledge, power and cultural politics must be seen as both oppressive and enabling, filled with authoritarian perils but also with possibilities for communities, resistance, and emancipatory change.”

Soja speaks of the need to recognise that hegemonic power does not manipulate blindly, in fact it uses its knowledge of the practices of minorities and the under-privileged to control them. Thus differences are exaggerated to create social divisions while spatially containing minorities or those of a lower class status within “ghettos, barrios, reservations, colonies.”

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28 Ibid. p. 82.
29 Ibid. p. 87.
30 Ibid. p. 87.
Third Subjectivities

The emphasis on difference, combined with power is used to mark certain practices as the norm and certain groups as being superior. In her book *Nomadic Subjects*, Rosi Braidotti writes of Foucault's work on subjectivity;

“He argues that the constitution of the fragile, split subject of the post-metaphysical era is in fact a process of culturally coding certain functions and acts as signifying, acceptable, normal, desirable.”

This classical notion of subjectivity resting on the concept of binaries such as body/mind, passion/reason, feminine/masculine produces the sovereign subject of Western thought through a privileging of one of the two sides. It is seen as the point of reference for all yet subjectivity changes with time. The notion of the static, continual subject is a myth perpetuated by those in power who stand to gain from it.

Simon Leung in his essay *Squatting through Violence*, speaks of the Vietnamese immigrants in San Jose, California, whose bodies have not yet assimilated to the Western subject. Their newly arrived bodies retain the ability to squat – an ability lost by the West. Where others would sit they squatted, these displaced subjects bearing the mark of the alien. For Leung, the squat is a testament to the power differential inherent in the relations between the First and the Third Worlds;

“The lines of containment created by such positions demarcating the transient refugee/migrant bodies are rewriting always and again those bodies as sub-sovereign – that is, non-subjects of the state, literally abject to the sovereign nation.”

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This situation leaves only two options for the subjugated, to either accept their position as being ‘sub-sovereign’ or to fight against it. Thus the fight here is for subjectivity, your own subjectivity – the right to a third subjectivity that is removed from the ‘transcendental being’ of Western thought and does not identify itself according to the binaries set out by those in power.

The reconstruction/reconfiguration of subjectivities

Referring to the work of Foucault, Soja highlights ‘subjection’ as the primary mode of oppression/resistance in today’s society. While ‘domination’ or ‘exploitation’ are also used in highly effective ways, it is the dual meaning of the word ‘subject’ that describes the situation. Thus the fight could be against dependency on someone else or a fight for one’s own subjectivity – the right to define yourself according to your own criteria.

“...in the “new” cultural politics of difference and identity, subjection has assumed a much more central role, especially with regard to gender, race and the far-reaching relation between the “coloniser” and the “colonised.””

As a person struggling to define themselves between two vastly different cultures, this fight for subjectivity is a daily reality. You find other people, including your own community, think they know you better than yourself. Soja cites a large number of writers who are working around the relationship between “power” “space” and “subjection.” The work of bell hooks, mentioned earlier seems to stand out, especially her essay, Choosing the Margin,34 which could almost be a manifesto for thirdspace. She uses autobiography as a tool to fight for the reconceptualisation of the subjectivity of African-Americans. Cornel West is another writer for this cause and his essay, The New Cultural Politics of Difference,35 sets out a framework for this fight.

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“They? Yes, they. But in the colonial periphery (as in elsewhere), we are often them as well. Coloured skins, white masks; coloured masks, white skins. Reversal strategies have reigned for sometime. They accept the margins; so do we.”

In the realm of architecture and urban space, it is the feminist project that has been the first to take up the challenges of the "differential space" of Lefebvre and the "thirdspace" of Soja. In doing so they have had to fight against a number of different constructs of the Other and the general assumption that the Other or difference is always good or is an improvement on the present situation.

Derrida's différance

This attitude is shown clearly in the work of the deconstructivists who use Derridean philosophy to deconstruct the relationship between form and function in order to produce an architecture that is supposedly 'other.' But the grafting of a text-based philosophy onto architecture is at best simplistic. The result is a discourse on difference that only goes as far as a discussion of formal differences with no political or sociological stance.

As far as the philosophy of Derrida is concerned, reservations arise through his reduction of all that is marginal to a "lack" or an "absence." This leaves females, minorities, in fact all "others" the choice of defining themselves only according to and in contrast with the white Western male. As Mary McLeod asks,

"Do women have any positive identities apart from masculine models? What are women's own desires and social realities? For many women architects, the critical point is not just an undermining of binary oppositions, but the denial of women per se."

The preoccupation with undermining the binaries has also led to a homogenising of the "other," so 'Woman' describes all women, regardless of their many other individualities. Here again the struggle manifests itself in the right to define one's own subjectivity. Thus

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difference becomes an excuse for social exclusion as McLeod’s example of the first ‘Anyone’ exhibition at the Getty Centre shows. An exhibition that was meant to celebrate difference and diversity had a distinct lack of female and non-Western architects.38

“Heterotopias”/“other spaces”
There is another school of thought, one where Other is seen through the eyes of Michel Foucault and his idea of heterotopia as the opposite to utopia; a place of difference and otherness. In this reading of the Other, there is certainly a political stance, indeed that is what has seduced many people, including some early feminists within the architectural domain. Foucault describes heterotopias as spaces that are present in all cultures, they occur where individuals are in crisis or are spaces that are occupied by people whose behaviour deviates from the norm of society. Thus he includes the space where a girl loses her virginity or prisons where people who have broken the law are held. He also sees heterotopias as places where the normal flow of time is disrupted, for example a cemetery which is only needed when a person dies and so has effectively moved out of time or a library that holds information from many different times.

But this heterotopic vision that mainly includes institutions fails to acknowledge the in-between spaces of everyday life. The very spaces that embody the representational practices of Lefebvre and produce the differential space of resistance against the dominant order. The woman of course has resisted in those very spaces of everyday life, the mundane spaces of the home, the playground. This is the domain of the woman and the child and not of the dominant male.

The inadequacy of Foucault’s conception of “other” spaces is also revealed in his view of the colonies, which for him revealed the oppositional qualities inherent within heterotopias. The creation of an illusory space within the real space, he cites the Jesuit colonies of South America as examples;

“...wonderful, totally regulated colonies, in which human perfection was actually reached.”

Here he failed to see the situation from the point of view of the colonised, never being able to let go of his colonisers view. As Mary McLeod has pointed out in her essay on “Other” spaces, contemporary architectural thought, until very recently has been, “...echoing the unconscious biases of Foucault...to posit a notion of the “other” that is solely a question of Western dismantling of Western conventions for a Western audience.”

However, Foucault’s work also contained the idea of power as control over space and bodies through regulation and supervision and it revealed the hidden relationship between power, knowledge and space. The relationship between power and knowledge is important as one needs the other to exist and Foucault’s work showed how architecture can influence that control and power. A slight contradiction can be seen in the fact that Foucault does not include architects in a list of professionals who can exert power over people’s lives. His qualification is that if he wanted to remove a partition in his house he could do so, but as Mary McLeod has pointed out this is due to his own position and power; a person inhabiting a council flat may not find tearing out the walls of their residence quite as easy. Thus the idea of difference according to Foucaultian thought is not enough, the goal is to acknowledge the existence of all types of difference and the effect that this has on the knowledge and power [or lack thereof] of the Other.

Becoming/Becoming Other:
“Becoming” is a concept of the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze who sees his work as an overcoming of Platonism. He sees his position as distinct from that of other philosophers such as Nietzsche or Kant, in that their work sets out to be a reversal of Platonism. However, this position leaves the underlying principles of Plato intact as his work is used as a basis for thought;

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“...this formula of reversal has the disadvantage of being abstract; it leaves the motivation of Platonism in the shadows.”41

The principle of Plato's thought is the distinguishing of dual categories and the setting up of binary oppositions. The separation of the intelligible from the sensible, of Being from Becoming, of the original from the copy and the model from the simulacra. Whereas Derrida has concerned himself with the concept of *chora* as the third term that upsets the balance between the oppositions, Deleuze questions the very idea of Being as a basis for thought. He follows on from the work of the structuralists who placed knowledge within the framework of a systematic structure such as language, and the phenomenological viewpoint which based knowledge on pure experience. Deleuze argues that there is in fact no foundation for knowledge - he is interested in how languages, cultures, political systems, change or 'become.'

“...for Deleuze the challenge of thought and writing is the *diversity of becoming.*”42

Feminist writing has had an uneasy relationship with Deleuze; although not overtly against the feminist project, Deleuze is neither an advocate of it. As with most modern philosophers he does not have that much to say on the subject. But as Elizabeth Grosz has suggested in her essay, *Intensities and Flows,*43 this should not be a hindrance in the appropriation of his work for feminist, or even minority struggles. Since Deleuze's project does not concern itself with the themes around binary oppositions, it leaves most feminists wondering at the appropriateness of his work of "planes, intensities, flows, becomings, linkages,"44 for the feminist project, the central issues of which are identity and otherness.

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44 Ibid. p. 161.
Grosz sets out a number of reasons why Deleuze's work is not only related to feminist thought but is even beneficial to it. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, his work is not a reversal of Platonism but an overcoming of it, therefore he is challenging the central position of the subject while giving a definition of difference that is not based solely around the “one” of Western thought.

“In conceptualising a difference in and of itself, a difference which is not subordinated to identity, Deleuze and Guattari invoke notions of becoming and of multiplicity beyond the mere doubling or proliferation of singular, unified subjectivities.”

Thus difference is not defined by not being the same but by the ability of something to undergo transformation, to become something else. This definition of difference is based on the opposition, of the model and the simulacra. The copy or model of a Form or an Idea is not only its faithful image but is also its resemblance – it goes beyond pretension. The simulacra on the other hand is a bad copy, one that may be an image of the Form but not a resemblance. Deleuze uses Plato's own example of man made in the image of God, who has gone from being a model to a simulacra.

“God made man in his image and resemblance. Through sin, however, man lost the resemblance while maintaining the image. We have become simulacra.”

For Deleuze the biggest problem with Plato’s project was the suppression of simulacra because for him they are the embodiment of difference, their unfaithful copy of the Form produces difference.
“If the simulacrum still has a model, it is another model, a model of the Other (l’Autre)…”

This model of the Other is separate from the Platonic model of the Same, which is the basis for the copy. Being the Same, the copy does not involve a critical process it possesses a knowledge (savoir) and from it produces a copy. The simulacrum, on the other hand, is outside knowledge, its vastness and incomprehendability is the reason for its apparent resemblance to the Form. Hence, for Deleuze;

“...there is in the simulacrum a becoming-mad, or a becoming unlimited...a becoming always other, a becoming subversive of the depths, able to evade the equal, the limit, the Same, or the Similar: always less and more at once, but never equal.”

“Always less and more at once, but never equal,” that is the definition of difference according to Deleuze, very similar to Plato’s description of chora; it is neither with form nor without form – it is formless, it is neither one nor the other but “both/and.” **Chora then is the space of differentiation.** It stimulates thought and therefore creativity it is the space where difference occurs. In her essay Khôra, or The Impossibility of Thinking Space, Doina Petrescu conceptualises chora as “an invisible moving net, a screen, a filter” between us and the abyss of nothingness. This filter which Plato has described as a sieve, shakes and scatters producing space and form through chance positionings.

“The order established by way of trembling, khôra’s shaking, privileges relations, associations, rather then identities.”

This conception of chora where relationships take precedence can be seen as the type of place that Doreen Massey has described and also as the differential space of Lefebvre and the thirddspace of Edward Soja.

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47 Ibid. p. 258.
48 Ibid. p. 258.
[Everyday places]
The Everyday/marginality

It is at this point that it is necessary to look at the work of Michel de Certeau, who dedicated his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life* to “the ordinary man” and gave everyday practices the importance that they deserve. The “representational spaces” of Lefebvre that are the spaces of resistance for all marginal groups can quite clearly be seen to be located within the everyday practices described by Michel de Certeau. How then can the practices of a mainstream majority that is dominant, come to inhabit these representational spaces? The answer to this is provided by de Certeau himself in one very clear statement:

“Marginality is today no longer limited to minority groups…”51

This marginality that he now attributes to a vast majority of people, is assigned to the fact that there is only a very small and dominant group that is in the business of producing culture; all others seem to be consuming it. Whilst this consumer group is marginal it is by no means homogenous, it still embodies all the varying shades of human existence. De Certeau uses the example of the way in which an immigrant factory worker will consume television, films etc. as opposed to how a white, male office worker might do. The immigrant will have to use his guile in order to bring himself on a similar level to that of the office worker.

Consumers as producers of space

This consumption that occurs during the course of everyday life is important to define; in de Certeau’s own words,

“...it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order.”52

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52 Ibid. p. xii
These ways of the consumer are described by distinguishing the difference between a strategy and a tactic. The two terms, borrowed from military discourse, help to describe the actions of a producer and a consumer. A strategy is the domain of the dominant and the powerful because in order to carry out a strategy, an autonomous place must first be established as a base. Therefore a strategy can only be carried out if one can remove themselves from the whole and assume a separate position. A strategy thus places a higher significance on space over time and uses a long-term vision to prepare in advance. Since none of this can be achieved without that own place, it can be assumed that some power is a prerequisite to strategy.

Tactics versus strategies
A tactic on the other hand is based on the absence of power, in fact it is this lack of power and hence of an own space, that is a tactic's strength.

In Pakistan, painting on the wall has not been seen as a menace until recently, as the practices of the West are slowly being adopted. Traditionally, walls of buildings in urban areas have been used for public announcements, for example the writing in the photo opposite is advertising a demonstration. These spaces have also been occupied by artists, as in this figure of a woman by Naiza Khan entitled, "Henna Hands." She has used henna to make handprints on the wall. The thick paste changes colour as it dries, from olive to brown. When applied to the skin the colour of henna is an orange-brown. “Henna” is “mehndi” in Urdu, the word also used to describe the colour olive.

“The space of a tactic is the space of the other.”

It places a far higher emphasis on time and is opportunistic in its methods. It cannot plan in advance and uses its own deviousness and the element of surprise to get what it wants. Since it does not have a place of its own it cannot accumulate, and yet this is the very reason why a tactic survives; through its mobility. Although contained by it, it is able to reach and infiltrate all corners of this vast state system, increased far beyond the localities of earlier days. In this larger arena it seems that the strategy, through its own success will come to its downfall because the autonomous place it had once created for itself has now become the whole; there is nothing beyond it. In order to survive this crisis the strategy will have to adapt itself endlessly; whether it can or not remains to be seen.

53 ibid. p. 37
The spatial practice of everyday life, the acts of dwelling, cooking, walking, reading etc. are all tactical in their nature as they are improvised and take advantage of all opportunities afforded them. To use a simple example, a housewife will use leftovers from the night before with other things bought at the shop to cook something that will please all members of her family. Yet her choice of grocery may change if she sees something selling at half-price at the supermarket. She will be opportunistic in her decision and make a saving.

**Ways of consumption**

The question that still remains is of how to study these everyday practices. The usual route of statistics is inadequate, because these practices cannot just be reduced to what people do or buy or use because this is only the residue leftover after the act of consumption. In fact this residue is also homogenising, it surgically removes all differences and leaves only abstract information.

“What is counted is what is used, not the ways of using.”

Thus of far more relevance is how a person consumes, therefore how they use or what they do while they consume. In order to describe this practice, de Certeau uses the analogy of “trajectories” because not only do they cover space but also time. And yet this model is still not complex enough because the path of a trajectory can be reduced to a single line. This loses subtle nuances such as the fact that these practices only occur at a given moment in time and at a certain place due to the various opportunities that were available. As these conditions are almost impossible to replicate, there will not be a second chance.

**“Enunciation” as a tool for study**

De Certeau used linguistics as a starting point in analysing everyday practices. The idea of enunciation was used as a framework for deciphering practices other than speaking. Enunciation is the use of language with an awareness of the circumstances of its use, thus it requires a speaker to have prior a knowledge as well as a level of competence in order to appropriate the language. The act of

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54 Ibid. p. 35
speaking engages a person in a contract with the other as well as being temporal thus creating a present and therefore a past and a future;

“...the speech act is at the same time a use of language and an operation performed on it.”

Hence one can look at another everyday practice, that of **reading**, in the same manner. Reading is an activity that is normally perceived as being passive; it is in fact an act of consumption. While reading, a person is not just on the receiving end of the information being given by the text, in reality the person is interacting with the text. Thus the mind of the reader inhabits the text as his eyes move across it at will. The reader appropriates it with his own interpretations and experiences, but as with all other acts of consumption there is no tangible product at the end. The only product is in the mind of the reader while the act of reading is taking place.

The linguistic tool is used again by de Certeau to analyse another everyday practice, that of **walking**. To him walking is analogous to speaking and thus becomes an enunciative practice, through the appropriation of the “topographical system” by the walker, just as language is appropriated by the speaker. It is also,

“... a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting-out of language);”

Thus a contract is established during the act of walking, creating a ‘here’ and a ‘there’ in relation to the space of the walker. It is just these qualities of walking, or speaking or reading that create the unimaginable diversity that is at the very heart of the everyday practices and in their roles as sites of resistance. This quality helps them to fight against the homogenising power of the regime.

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55 Ibid. p. 33
56 Ibid. p. 98
Walking then, as with the other practices discussed above, is a tactic; it manipulates and takes advantage of the spatial structure of the dominant order. It subverts it with reference to the walkers own personal, social and cultural factors, distorting space by fragmenting it in some places and by completely skipping over it in others. These movements, referred to by de Certeau as “forests of gestures” cannot be documented in an image or text. Yet the act of walking needs the space of the dominant order, it cannot exist anywhere else as it does not have a place of its own. De Certeau imagines an extra layer above the existing urban fabric, made of the countless trajectories of walkers across the city;

“... a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning.”  

The act of walking is carried out in the space of the other and can sometimes be affected by this, an example is the effect of the names of places. Each place is given a name but over time that name can lose its value but increase in its significance. Thus a name is related in the mind to a certain place but this relation can hold different meanings for different people. Such a wearing away of the original meaning results in the liberation of space; again a new layer is formed above the original layer of meaning.

This imbuing of meaning within a place can become suffocating, the “local legends” which are referred to by the dominant order as “superstitions” are what makes the identities of a place. Thus the “local legends” or stories about a place are made up of various fragments and work against the homogenising force of the dominant order; de Certeau describes them as “tears” within the fabric of that order. Here he notes an important distinction between a story and a rumour. While the story helps to create variety, the rumour in fact does the complete opposite; it is the product of the totalising power of the state. Aided by the media, it provides blanket coverage and is just as homogenous as the constructed order.

It is winter and the sun has set by the time we finish the walk. All the shops have stalls projecting out on to the pavement like a market. Rukhsana calls it a “meena bazaar,” مينة بازار which surprises me as she has never lived in Pakistan. I ask her if she knows what it means but she is not sure, its what she always calls shopping areas like these.

57 Ibid. p. 105
Space as opposed to place
This construction of a place made of individual histories does create diverse stories and identities for a place but the problem, as referred to in earlier chapters, is that people begin to want their identity of a place to prevail. This creates boundaries due to an inward-looking stance which will eventually make a place hostile to newcomers. The answer to this problem is hinted at by de Certeau when he explains the difference between space and place.

"... space is a practiced place."

Thus place for him embodies the idea of a designated place for everything and "implies an indication of stability." A space on the other hand is more dynamic, as there are many ways of practicing space. It takes into account, time, movement, flows and going back to a linguistic analogy, space is "like the word when it is spoken." Thus the place defined in the first chapter can be seen as the equal of the space here defined according to de Certeau.

Walking as an urban tool/a critical practice
The everyday practice of walking has had an important place in the discovering of the modern city. From Baudelaire’s nineteenth century flaneur [the bourgeois male losing himself in the crowds] to its use as an urban tool today, walking renders the city a surface to be explored. For the male flaneur it is an object to be consumed, much the same as the female. This flanerie of old was a strategic walk, in the sense that the walker had his own place from which to view the rest of the city. Although he was losing himself in the crowds, the flaneur was not becoming part of the crowd.

Helen Scalway’s attempts to walk the city of London form a stark contrast to the experience of the male walker. For her walking is a tactical practice and using Steve Pile’s definition of walking as being a lack of place, she explains how she uses it to her advantage;
“...because I cannot easily stand in the city street – so walking is what enables me to look round, while precisely, not occupying any space.”

The Lettrist International group organised the first derives or drifts, laying an emphasis on the city as a cultural subject. This aimless wandering through the city was given a political stance by the Situationists who saw it as an alternative to the modern ideals of urban planning, theirs was a vision of the city based around everyday personal experiences. Whilst this is a populist approach, the underlying sexism of the Situationists must not be ignored; their practices still marginalised women.

Using walking as an urban tool can reveal the territories of the city, the hidden boundaries that are made visible through attempts to cross them. Helen Scalway describes her walking as,

We return to her home, a terraced house much the same as all others in the area. Although the rigidity of the structure does not leave much room for innovation, it is through the decorations that the identity of the householders becomes clear. The arabic prayer cards on the mantlepiece and the “tasbeeh” [beads for prayer, just visible in the gold container] are all ways of marking space and appropriating it.

The photograph on the wall of her living room is of “khana kaaba” خانة كعبة, the muslim pilgrimage site in Saudi Arabia. Rukhsana showed me the Islamic bookshop where she had bought it, and where she also buys english translations of Islamic texts. She can speak urdu but cannot read or write it – a situation common among the second generation of Pakistanis living in England. Aware of this easy loss of language through the generations, Rukhsana is learning to read and write urdu from a neighbour so she can teach it to her own child.

“a threading between the ill-defined edges of more ambivalent territories of belonging and not belonging. Being critical of what belonging entails; yet needing to belong; and being unable fully to do so.”

59 Contemporary Flaneuse by Helen Scalway in Radio Temporaire – National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Grenoble. p. 252.
60 Contemporary Flaneuse by Helen Scalway in Radio Temporaire – National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Grenoble. p. 256.
The work of the Italian group Stalker, is also based around the discovering and uncovering of these hidden territories. By walking they seek to “actualise” space, this is actualisation in the Deleuzian sense; to make present that which is hidden, the becoming other, the potential of space.

Walking inscribes the city with one’s own reading of it, just as storytelling includes the inflections of the speaker – the teller of the story. The introduction of the first person produces thirdspace; the ‘i’ that walks the city, the ‘eye’ that sees. The boundaries of the city that I can cross, the liberties with the city that I can take. The photographs that I am allowed to take and those that you cannot. In Urdu, you would not “take” photos you would “pull” them, the photographs that I can pull from the depths of the city. They are all mapping a certain city – the city that I see and hear and experience. This is also the city that is inscribed with my story, the places that I have seen, those that I have yet to go to and those where I will never go. They are inhabited by those people that I have met – it is the space that I create through my walking – it is my “home.”

Thus the simple act of walking is used as a critical tool which allows for a different reading of the city, one that includes marginalised viewpoints. How different is the city through the eyes and modes of representation of Pakistanis living in Britain? Which are their “local legends,” how are their “gestures” different? What images could they help me pull out of the city? What are their words and descriptions of the spaces they occupy? My walk through Moseley, Birmingham with a Pakistani friend combined with my own story[elling] seeks to answer just a few of these questions. And to try to piece together an alternative view of the city.
Conclusion

Marginal spaces
As a minority, the spaces that you are obliged to inhabit are marginal, but through making an active choice to be in the margin, it is possible to transform a space of domination into a space of creativity and rejuvenation – into a space that can be called “home.” This space is produced through the active choices we make in our everyday consumption. As a former immigrant from a post-colonial country, who is now living in England, my choices will be very different from those of a person who has always lived in England. Consumption then – consumption of knowledge, culture, mentalities, is influenced by identity.

Reconstructing home involves reconstructing identity
Therefore the construction of this space that “home in the margins,” firstly requires the construction of identity. Of course this is not simply a construction of identity, it is a RE-construction of identity. This is the identity that has been repressed by the dominant order through a process of homogenisation. The dominant order does not in fact deny the existence of minorities or the “other,” on the contrary it enhances the differences between it and the “other.” Women for example are weak and temperamental – this is a myth that has been perpetuated by the dominant male, regardless of the fact that women can be the complete polar opposite. Thus women are all homogenised into a single entity that is Woman.

Another example; I am often asked where my home is, mostly the answer “Warrington” is not sufficient, “Sorry, I meant where is your original home?” Is that original meaning where I was born? Because even then I doubt if I would be able to provide the answer to the question that is really being asked. I was born in Durham. Or is it original meaning where my father was born, perhaps? Hmmm ... you still won’t get the answer you’re looking for – although maybe you’ll think you have. My father was born in India. If the real question were asked, of the origins of the colour of my skin, or the colour of my hair, or even the features on my face and the body-shape I have, maybe then I would answer, “Pakistan.” Because as a person I do not have an original home – I would not like to be so restricted. In fact I am continually constructing or more accurately, RE-constructing my home. Pakistan then is only the original home of me as biological being, not as a sociological being.

Identity of places/places of identity
Thus the question of space collapses into the question of place, which in turn is a question of identity. “Location! Location! Location!” That familiar adage of estate agents everywhere may well be more accurate as “Identity! Identity! Identity!” The identity of places has for too long been defined only by the needs and desires of the dominant order. Within the homogenising abstract space described by Lefebvre the spaces of minorities are erased. Whether that minority is defined by ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, the basic question remains the same. How do you go about expressing and reconstructing these repressed identities and desires? As Elizabeth Grosz has pointed out, it is not simply enough to talk of “her” or to make “her” visible; it is time to reconceptualise the whole notion of space and place including “her.” The same can surely be said for all other dominated groups. The identities then have to be sought out and [re]constructed.
Constructing “other[ing]”
The “other” has been written into architectural discourse fairly often but it is important to understand this concept in its inclusive non-homogenising form. The construct of the “other” according to Derrida is based on an absence, it is what cannot be represented. Simply deconstructing binary oppositions is not enough, the denial of minorities has to be addressed. They must be defined on their own terms rather than those of the oppressor. Although it is true, there “ain’t no white without black,”61 should we still speak, write, discuss within this narrow framework? Identities have to be sought out and [re]constructed.

Identities have to be sought out and [re]constructed continually – it is a process of “becoming” in the Deleuzian sense, to never be but to always become. This becoming of identities is intensified with the mixing of cultures through generations. What it means to be British, the British identity is changing. Although colonial overtones still remain, a shift is emerging. Hanif Kureishi’s hero in his novel, “The Buddha of Suburbia,” is far indeed from the usual image,

“My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don’t care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it)...”62

What is my identity, am I an English[wo]man? I came from Pakistan, I was becoming English but now I’m [re]discovering. I am becoming Pakistani again. Pakistani-English or English-Pakistani? How we name ourselves is important too, it is part of the seeking out of, the [re]construction of identity. To become always other – “othering.”

“Other[ing]” home
Naming is part of making one’s identity visible because it is not enough just to reconstruct these identities, they have to be made visible - we must tell our own stories, our own histories. The autobiography, according to Trinh T. Min-Ha, is an effective strategy for such an endeavour. Its blurring of the distinctions between public and private subvert the dominant order. It is a tool often used by women writers, Min-Ha describes the role of memories,

“When she creates, they are the subsoil of her work. Thus, autobiography both as singularity and as collectivity is a way of making history and of rewriting culture.”63

Marginal spaces: constructing / “other[ing]” home
I have walked through my own memories as well as literally walked with “[an]other” to write about this question of margins and of a home within those margins. Both the physical and conceptual places I have visited have revealed how such a home can be made possible and it has much to do with the fight against assimilation – a fight for one’s own subjectivity. From the graffiti on the walls and

the signage in urdu – and my own use of my first language, to Rukhsana's insistence on wearing clothes that cover her from head to toe, in a culture where everyone ‘shows a bit of skin,’ these are all the everyday ways in which people fight against assimilation, fight for their own subjectivities and construct their “home in the margins.”
Endnotes


ii Ibid. Rosi Braidotti speaks of the need to, "trace paths of transformation of our lives here and now." p. 6.


iv Said, Edward. Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient. Penguin Books. (1978) The term "Orientalism" has been used by Edward Said to describe the way in which the Western [defined more specifically as British, French, and to a certain extent more recently, North American] economic, political and academic powers have developed a discourse in which the West is juxtaposed with an Eastern Other [the orient] according to terms and definitions specified and determined by the West itself.


viii "Space , such as it is always "other," to the "other." A description of Khôra in Petrescu, Doina. Khôra, or The Impossibility of "Thinking" "Space" Old Paradoxes New Strategies in Architecture and Theory.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>برهد</td>
<td>curtain/blind/practice of women shielding themselves from public view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>جوراهة</td>
<td>crossroads/junction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سجاوت</td>
<td>decoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إرايش</td>
<td>decoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تفصيل</td>
<td>in detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>روز مره</td>
<td>everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خلال</td>
<td>“halal” meat prepared according to muslim religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مهديٌ</td>
<td>henna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خانة كعبة</td>
<td>“kaaba” muslim pilgrimage site in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>باورچی خانه</td>
<td>kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لالتنین</td>
<td>lantern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>کناره</td>
<td>margin/edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مینه بازار</td>
<td>“meena bazaar” a type of fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>جالی</td>
<td>net/grille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خانه بدوش</td>
<td>nomad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اسلام عليكم</td>
<td>“salaam” muslim greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بیتهنا</td>
<td>to sit/sitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>پیسکزا مارنا</td>
<td>squatting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>انتیبیالنی</td>
<td>squatting/sitting at ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تسبيح</td>
<td>“tasbeeh” muslim prayer beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مندر</td>
<td>temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>باریک</td>
<td>thin/detailed work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>برامده</td>
<td>veranda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>هیرت</td>
<td>wonderment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تعجب</td>
<td>wonderment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


22. hooks, bell. “Marginality as site of resistance” in Out There: Marginalisation and Contemporary Culture and “Choosing the Margin as a Space of radical openness” in Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics.


32. Petrescu, Doina. *Pl(a)ys ofMarginality*.


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